

Two Way Conversation:
The Interplay of Cultural Models and Teacher Practices
in the High School Literature Classroom

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Susan Leigh Brooks

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Richard Beach, Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Seven high school literature teachers were studied to determine how their cultural models of literature affected their teaching practices. Participants were interviewed and observed to determine whether they primarily viewed literature as having fixed meaning which must be extracted by the reader or whether reader interaction with literature created new meaning. Those teachers who viewed literature primarily as having fixed meaning elicited less meaning-making from their students. They also viewed themselves as having less control over their teaching setting.

Keywords: high school teaching, literature instruction, cultural models

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Much debate has occurred in the field of English about the texts that are chosen for high school literature classrooms (Hirsch, 1987; Pollitt, 1995, and Applebee 1989). However, Freebody, Luke & Gilbert (1991) point out that “there is more to a tradition than the construction of a canon of texts” (p. 435). They insist that “traditional” literature instruction is also a result of particular methods, “particular practices and positions” (p. 435) that are also pre-selected for students.

Calls for changes in texts and techniques occasionally meet with some success. For example, the Advanced Placement reading lists continue to include more books by women and authors of color than they have in the past (“Titles,” 2007). New approaches such as drama in the classroom (Wolf, 1998) or book clubs (Daniels, 1994) occasionally make headlines, but many students tend to attend literature classes that are very close in texts and techniques to those that their parents and even their grandparents attended (Applebee 1989). These classroom texts and techniques have remained eerily similar over time, even as society has undergone significant changes. “Displays of these techniques in turn, come to count as reading” (Freebody, Luke & Gilbert, 1991 p. 435). This definition of “reading,” when believed and acted upon by teachers could be a factor which explains why many literature classrooms today are marked by disengagement.

Statement of the Problem

Both achievement in reading and success in other areas in school are tied to reading engagement, but there is significant evidence that reading engagement, although important, is declining. Stanovich and Cunningham (1992), found that 93% of 12th

graders do not read daily for school and 69% of 12th graders “almost never read for enjoyment” (Guthrie, p. 2). On the PISA 2000 assessment, (Kirsch, et al) on an index of reading engagement which included time spent reading, interest in reading and the type of materials students read, students in the United States ranked 20 out of 28 developed countries listed. Guthrie (2008) discusses a number of ways in which research is finding disengaged readers, but one does not have to visit many high school English classrooms to see that students, particularly those that aren’t targeted for honors or advanced classes, seem disinterested or even hostile when they are asked to read literary texts. Teachers familiarize themselves with *Cliff Notes* (Pace, 2003) or *Sparknotes* so they can recognize when their students read these secondary sources instead of the text. Students spend time given for reading in class sleeping or socializing with other students.

In my own experience as a student teaching supervisor, I have often been puzzled by this. I observe teachers who are enthusiastic themselves about the study of literature and who often are teaching students who have been successful in school, but often, those students are not engaged in lively reading or discussion of literature. Even when those teachers use some of the methods that are thought to be most engaging, such as drama in the classroom or reading groups, they don’t always pique students’ interest. On the other hand, at times I see teachers who seem to be unconcerned with the texts and methods that are thought to be most engaging able to get students very engaged and interested in discussing and reading literary texts.

Research Questions

If literature teachers’ activities in the classroom have remained relatively stable over time, and visible teaching methods do not produce predictable results, what unseen

forces could be at work? Growing interest in literary theory for secondary teachers (Appleman, 2002) suggests that beliefs about the nature of literature affect how people read, and by extension how they teach literature. This study was designed to investigate the interplay between teachers' cultural models of literature and their classroom behaviors. The study centers on the following questions:

- How do these cultural models manifest themselves in teaching decisions and activities?
- What factors help teachers teach in ways that are consistent with their preferred cultural models?
- What factors hinder teachers from teaching in ways that are consistent with their preferred cultural models?
- How do these cultural models of literature itself relate to student engagement?

Seven high school literature teachers were interviewed about their beliefs and then they were observed teaching literature lessons in their classrooms. Follow-up interviews were then conducted to provide data that gives insight into these questions.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Although much of the debate in literary studies focuses on adopting texts and adjusting techniques, less work has been done investigating the ways in which teacher conceptualize literature and the ways those conceptions relate to their practices. In the July 2008 issue of *English Education*, Brauer & Clark outline some of the competing reasons for literature instruction that teachers must manage. They discuss the idea that the study of literature “still usually clusters around a fairly static, not to mention overwhelming, set of historical purposes. . . .As a result of this, high school literature instruction, “often ends up as a ‘grab bag’ of approaches, topics, texts, and experiences” (p. 296). The following literature review attempts to isolate and discuss many of these purposes and ideas.

Although there are dozens of theories, both formal and informal that attempt to capture the nature of the literary work and its relationship to the reader, most of these theories can be distilled into those theories that consider literature as having a fixed meaning and those that consider literature to be a vehicle by which the reader creates meaning.

Beliefs in Texts as Fixed

Many high school literature teachers teach as if they believe in the text as a stationary object, something that is to be examined and dissected (Davies, 1997). This examination and dissection have does not affect the text at all, and the reader’s role is to uncover the “true” nature of the text. Cavanaugh (1995) surveyed 150 high school

English teachers with at least five years of experience, asking them what knowledge or skills they thought new teachers needed most. He reports,

The strongest need indicated was a more substantial knowledge of the major literary works that are or should be included in the literature curriculum.

Comments of those surveyed indicated that new teachers are not well-read in what they will be expected to teach. Those surveyed indicated that teachers must have a strong understanding of the literature they will teach so that they can discuss the symbolism, allusion, historical background and relation to other works. (43)

According to this study, teachers needed to be more prepared to “teach” texts, and in order to do that, one had to have read them as fixed texts and be able to recite a wide variety of fixed features.

For example, my son, a high school student was studying for his American Literature class test on Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. I was helping him study for the test. As I looked over his notes, I asked, “What might the river symbolize?”

“It symbolizes equality,” he replied

“What else could it symbolize?” I asked.

“Mom, it symbolizes equality. Our teacher lectured for a whole class period on why the river symbolizes equality. That’s what I’m putting on the test. Next question?” he requested. My son’s teacher appeared most concerned about transferring “correct” information about the text and testing students’ recall on this “correct” information. The method of lecturing and testing about symbols in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* forced students into a set of particular beliefs about literature. These fixed belief models

can result in a number of views of authority or beliefs in what or who holds the most “true” meaning.

Author as authority. Sometimes the author of a text is viewed as the authority—the one who somehow holds the “true” meaning of the text. Testing of reading comprehension frequently depends on this authority of the author. For example, in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment of Reading, Grade 10 (2002), after reading a selection, students are asked to identify “the author’s main purpose in writing this article” (p. 9) and are given four options from which to choose.

Paul Reuben’s *Perspectives on American Literature Research and Reference Guide*, especially intended for high school teachers, lists such questions as, “Langston Hughes’ central purpose in writing was, in his own words, ‘to explain and illuminate the Negro condition in America.’ How do the poems in this volume illustrate his attempt?” (Study Questions). This kind of question gives the author the final authority on what the purpose or the message of the text is. Many teachers spend significant time explicating the author’s time period and biography so they can figure out what Shakespeare intended when his character, Hamlet, tells Ophelia, “Get thee to a nunnery” (*Hamlet*, Act III, Scene 1). What were the connotations of the word “nunnery” in Shakespeare’s time? What experiences did Shakespeare have with nunneries? With this information in hand, students should be able to determine what Shakespeare “really meant.” As the author, even many years dead, Shakespeare continues to hold the authority over the text.

This approach does not serve the reader. Theorist Roland Barthes (1977) in “The Death of the Author,” insists that depending on this authorial approach reduces it and gives the author power over all. Louise Rosenblatt (1978) discusses this approach, where

in the past the text has been synonymous with the poet, then the text became a work in itself with the reader as an “invisible eavesdropper” (p. 2). If the author is the unquestioned authority in the classroom, the teacher and the reader have essentially no power. They are reduced to interested observers at best and helpless bystanders at worst, particularly when the author’s meaning is not readily available.

The physical world as authority. This “true” nature of text sometimes depends on the authority of the tangible world. A number of forces including textbooks and large-scale testing encourage readers to treat the text as a copy of the material world.

Glencoe/McGraw Hill’s (no date) supporting materials for the novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* include four pages of background information on World War I and the time and place of the author’s life. The book is treated as an artifact of war, with “Did you know. . .” sections that explain facts like, “Soldiers in the trenches could distinguish kinds of shells being fired by the sounds they made in the air” (p. 5), or “Trenches, typically about ten feet deep, were built in zigzags” (p. 4). Characters are treated as real people as students are asked to list “attitudes, traits and actions in the chart below” (p. 6).

Corporations and government organizations that create tests also encourage this approach. Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments for Grade 10 (2002) group questions into three categories, one of which is “Literal/explicit.”

Literal/explicit questions focus on ideas explicitly stated in the text, but not necessarily word for word. The information to answer these questions is often contained within three to four sentences of continuous text. Information in the text may be restated in the question. These questions often refer to key concepts or supporting details. (p. 6)

Treating texts as representational is convenient for teachers and administrators. The idea that text is anchored in the “real world” makes testing easier because the “real world” acts as kind of a proof text. If something is true in the real world, it should be true in the text as well, and if something can be proven true, it also can be proven false, thus giving a convenient way to “measure” student understanding.

This kind of approach, although convenient and simple, does not open the text to its fascinating complexities. Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975) finds problems with this approach as well. He discusses the lack of mystery and joy that is found when texts are treated as purely representational. He warns, “the text is not an imitative structure” (56), because for Barthes, when texts are treated as such, they rely on stereotypes. “So in this regard the stereotype is the present path of ‘truth,’ the palpable feature which shifts the invented ornament to the canonical, constraining form of the signified” (43).

In many schools, students have diversity training which encourages them to recognize and prevent stereotypes in their dealing with humans, but sometimes in the same schools, students are encouraged to stereotype characters and situations in the literature that they read. A tragic hero is a tragic hero is a tragic hero. Oedipus is Othello is Holden Caulfield. This is particularly difficult when literature is treated as representational because if literature is representative of the real world and stereotypes are useful, they will be useful in the real world as well. However, Barthes asserts that the pleasure, or “bliss,” in the text can be found in the “distrust of the stereotype” (43), not in the correspondence between text and some other external reality.

The discipline as authority. If the real world is not the authority in searching for meaning in text, sometimes the authority is the field of literature itself. Often literary selections are viewed as artifacts of the discipline called literature. New Criticism continues to be the most commonly embraced strategy for “studying” literature in high school classrooms (Applebee, 1991). Again, this type of study requires students and teachers to regard literary selections as a collection of fixed elements that can be labeled. If they are labeled correctly, the reader has been successful. Applebee (1991) found that 86% of the literary selections in the anthologies that he studied had accompanying discussions of “specialized literary vocabulary or concepts” (Literary Terminology section). His findings emphasize again, that this approach to teaching continues to prosper, stating,

At a time of debate and change in the profession at large, the . . . anthologies seem . . . caught in an earlier tradition of text comprehension and analysis rather than attempting to implement any of the recently offered alternatives. . . What all of the texts lack is an integrated, cumulative, and coherent effort to involve students in the ongoing cultural dialogue about the human condition that literature at its best demands and to which it contributes. (Conclusions section)

The Advanced Placement examination (1994) provides another example. It asks students to “write an essay in which you show how such a character functions in the work. You may wish to discuss how the character affects action, theme, or the development of other characters” (Open Ended Questions 1994 section). Again, the emphasis is on a students’ abilities to use particular strategies to analyze literature, not their ability to focus on the literature itself.

French-Bulgarian critic Torodov (2007) asserts that the aim of this kind of instruction is not to promote knowledge of literature, but knowledge of “the instruments which literary analysis uses” (p. 18). Essentially what is being taught and tested is the student’s ability to effectively use a set of tools, implying that acquisition of the tools is the goal, rather than students’ ability to use those tools to construct meaning. Torodov (2007) asserts that schools have lost sight of the goal and continue to focus on these tools. “Never should the study of these means for entering the literary work be substituted for the study of meaning, which is the literary goal” (p. 21).

The ubiquity of the fixed-text approach. Applebee (1991) confirms that these are not isolated examples. In a study of the most-often used high school literature anthologies, he found the textbooks, although they represented a wider variety of author backgrounds and cultures than they had in a 1961 study, continued to place significant emphasis on, “recitation.” About two thirds of the questions and activities related to literature selections were characterized as recitation, where there is a “presumed correct answer,” (Emphasis on Recitation section, para.2) implying that the textbook literary selections have a fixed meaning which can be learned by students.

Samantha Caughlan (2007) has recently developed cultural models of literature that are often manifested in high school literature instruction and in the standards of two Midwestern states. Several of these manifested models regard literature as fixed. In her Model 1, literature is the “autonomous and opaque text for analysis,” (p. 181), which echoes the authority of literary studies, particularly New Criticism. Model 2 looks at literature as a means to an end, citing literature as a tool for “teaching critical reading and/or thinking skills” (p. 182). Her third model looks at literature as an artifact, citing

literature as “an expression of place and time” (p. 183). In her 2004 study, Caughlan found that these three views of literature were most common in the high school classes she observed. Her 2007 analysis of literature teaching standards in Minnesota and Wisconsin shows that the standards most often assume that literature is fixed—that there is a single fixed purpose or meaning in the text (Caughlan 2007). Caughlan and Beach (2007) posit that these fixed views of literature are a way to simplify the very complex activity of teaching and learning into a more manageable form. Smagorinsky (2001) indicates that these views fix texts and readers in order to more easily assess them and that they isolate the act of reading from mediating activities such as “discussion, reflection, research, inquiry, and other efforts at engaging with the signs of the text—all surely actions that successful readers take when reading difficult texts for their own purposes” (p. 144).

Beliefs in Literature as Transactional

On the other hand, theorists like Louise Rosenblatt (1983) advocate a transactional mode of reader response where the reader holds authority. She states,

The poem, then, must be thought of as an event in time. It is not an object or an ideal entity. It happens during a coming-together, a copenetration, of a reader and a text. . . . under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, he [*sic*] marshals his resources and crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, thought, and feeling and new order, a new experience, which he sees as the poem. (p. 12)

For Rosenblatt, meaning is a result of the transaction between the reader and the text.

The reader and the text are in equal authority and each reading is a new transaction.

Bakhtin (1973/1982) discusses a similar concept, saying that transactions with literature take place in the zone of contact, the place where many voices and speech genres come together, even clash, to make a difference in each other. When this language synergy, called heteroglossia by Bakhtin (1982), occurs, language has the most power. The power of the combined far outpaces the power of the individual. The voices present—those of individual students, the outside world, the teacher, and the text bring “mutual illumination” (Bakhtin, 1973/1982, p. 362) to each other.

Fecho and Botzakis (2007) discuss how Bakhtin’s ideas of texts as heteroglossia can open texts for students and teachers. The idea of the dialogic text can be useful for interaction with literature because the text is placed within contexts that include readers, writers, readings in other places and times and social powers all of which enter into a student’s interaction with text. Fecho and Botzakis (2007) posit that classrooms where this belief is embraced may exhibit

- 1) raising of questions and the authoring of response by and among all participants
- 2) embracing the importance of contexts and the nonneutrality of language
- 3) encouraging multiple perspectives
- 4) flattening of our disturbance within existing hierarchies and
- 5) agreeing that learning is under construction and evolving rather than being reified and static (p. 550).

This underscores Rosenblatt’s (1983) transactional theory of the way that texts and readers interact. “Both reader and text are essential to the transactional process of making meaning” (p. 27).

Several of Caughlan's models reflect the belief that literature study is transactional. The model in which, "Literature provides personal enjoyment" (p. 185) requires the reader to engage emotionally with a text. "Literature is a multi-faceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives" (p. 185) is an additional cultural model which places the reader in authority, choosing the critical perspective from which to look at literature. This model also calls literature multifaceted, reflective, reinforcing the idea that the reader and the text are acting upon each other as light shining upon a diamond might result in an entirely new design or shadow on the ceiling.

Readers as authority. Fixed beliefs about text can diminish the role of readers, making them passive receivers of the text, or as Rosenblatt (1978) says, "a tabula rasa, receiving the imprint of the poem" (p. 4). When faced with these fixed ideas about texts, a reader may also be reduced to one who "extracts" (Sumara, 2002, p. 92) meaning from a literary text. However, new possibilities are opened up if teachers believe that readers create or construct meaning during the transaction of reading..

Bronwyn Williams explains, "Beyond decoding words and sentences, we [teachers] think of a reader as a person who makes particular kind of intertextual connections, who asks particular questions of a text. . .who talks more about the text's meaning and analyzes its nature" (2002, p. 687). He further points out that this isn't necessarily the definition that students or the culture at large use when they describe someone as a reader. "Such conflicts can be. . .frustrating for students and teachers" (Williams, 2002, p. 688). How, then, should a reader be defined?

Rosenblatt's (1978) theories of Reader Response can be particularly helpful in envisioning the roles of readers when texts are opened to complexity. The reader becomes an essential part of this transaction as s/he "brings to, or adds, to the nonverbal or socio-physical setting his whole past experience of life and literature. His memories, his present preoccupations, his sense of values, his aspirations, enter into a relationship with the text." (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 81). This new experience is added to the reader's bank of experiences which are activated when a reader reads a new poem. The text is a stimulus which focuses the reader's attention and activates all of the connections between "concepts and verbal signals" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 11). The text also serves as a regulator which cues the reader what should receive the most attention. The text is not fixed, but rather is constructed as it interacts with a reader. Rosenblatt calls the reader a "link in the 'universal intercourse' between the world of 'reality' and the world of poetry" (1978, p. 34).

Judith Langer (1995) discusses the kind of ideal experience students should have with literature, "where students' thinking is at the center of concern, where students are granted ownership for their own growing interpretations, and where they have practiced engaging in conversations about their growing understandings" (p. 5). She describes these kinds of experiences as resulting in "envisionments, a text-world in the mind" (1995, p.9). Readers have four stances toward these envisionments: "being out and stepping in to an envisionment; being in and moving through an envisionment; stepping out and rethinking what one knows; and stepping out and objectifying the experience (Langer, 1995, pp.16-18). All of these "envisionments" require the readers to construct meaning as they interact with text in different ways. This moving through envisionment

has some parallels to Rosenblatt's "event," or a reader's experience with a poem. "The reading of a text is an event occurring at a particular time in a particular environment at a particular moment in the life history of the reader. The transaction will involve not only the past experience but also the present state and present interests or preoccupations of the reader" (1978, p. 20).

Evocation and response. How, then do these many influences manifest themselves in the event? Rosenblatt (1978) describes two kinds of reader behavior that may or may not lead to more meaningful interactions—evocation and response. These two activities often blend together but each of the activities adds to the reader's transaction with literature.

According to Rosenblatt, evocation is "paying attention to the images, feelings, attitudes, associations, and ideas that the words and their referents evoked in them" (1978, p 12). Evocation seems to be the way thoughts and feelings are affected when a reader experiences a text. Rosenblatt continues, "The reader's attention to the text activates certain elements in his past experience—external reference, internal response—that have become linked with the verbal symbols" (1978, p. 11). Many elements of the reader's situation and background contribute to evocation. "Meaning will emerge from a network of relationships among the things symbolized as he senses them" (1978, p. 11) Readers may not even be aware of external or internal forces which enter into the response through evocation.

Evocation is not trying to recapture the author's intent (Rosenblatt 1978), although there are some similarities between the author's process and the reader's process. Both make choices about what to pay attention to or ignore. Both employ a

creative/imaginary process. Rosenblatt describes this event as a “synthesizing process” (1978, p. 52). Readers take the signs and symbols on the page and attach them to expectations and frameworks that the reader already contains. “Each sentence, each phrase, each word, will signal certain possibilities and exclude others” (1978, p. 55). However, the reader in the reading process, just as the author is the authority in the writing process. The author’s authority does not extend to the reader.

Reader response. As a result, response is the way that those thoughts and feelings manifest themselves. Some examples of response are identifications with characters—empathy and the variance of paying attention to different aspects of a character. Readers may stop and consider how the text does or does not meet their expectations. In the response activity, readers must be active and aware of those forces that are working in the transaction because they are responding to them (Rosenblatt, 1978). Readers are tuned to both the outside world as well as their inner thoughts, which helps readers engage in a true transaction.

When the reader is the authority, genuine conversation about literature and its complexity can be fostered. Barthes asserts, “In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered; the structure can be followed, ‘run’ (like the thread of a stocking) at every point and at every level” (p. 7). Bakhtin’s (1986) critical work asserts that every individual text or speech act is connected to every other text and speech act. The high school student reading and discussing the text in class then becomes part of this ongoing dialogue and adds his or her own voice to the heteroglossia, a term used extensively by Bakhtin (1986) to explain the multiple voices which contribute to a particular utterance. Benjamin (1968), in his essay, “The Task of the Translator,” echoes

this kind of multivoicing. “This language is one in which the independent sentences, works of literature, critical judgments, will never communicate—for they remain dependent on translation; but in the languages themselves, supplemented and reconciled in their mode of signification, harmonize” (p. 77).

Russell Hunt (1996) has done extensive work with college students trying to determine the mental processes that occur in effective readers. He found that the most effective readers saw connections between the text at hand and other texts and connections between the text and the situation. He recommends that the text be viewed as a medium of social exchange, which opened the texts for even less skilled readers.

Smagorinsky (2001) also advocates that teachers consciously recognize the authority of readers. When readers are in authority, talk and response to text is very different than when the teacher seeks to simply recreate his or her own reading of the text. Readers need to experience texts as authorities and teachers who do not believe in the authority of readers may have difficulty providing these experiences.

The conventions that they impose are grounded in particular traditions of understanding and talking about texts, with the conventions that accompany those traditions potentially modified as instantiated with particular groups of participants. The conventions that teachers endorse and reinforce take on the kind of official authority that interpretations of flags can achieve; that is, they have official sanction and therefore render other ways of reading texts less authoritative and thus less likely to be adopted by novice readers or readers without the capital to vigorously invoke other conventions that might have authority in other settings. (p. 138)

Efferent and aesthetic. When the reader is in authority, an aesthetic reading is made possible. Rosenblatt discusses two reader stances that a reader may choose to take—efferent and aesthetic. In efferent reading, “Our attention is primarily focused on selecting out and analytically abstracting the information or ideas or directions for action that will remain when the reading is over” (1978, p.32). Rosenblatt calls this “residue” (1978, p. 23) implying that it is not the most important thing, but rather the result of some other action being taken. Rosenblatt (1978) cites the example of a mother whose child has drunk poison and she reads the label to find out what she should do to prevent the child’s death. The efferent reading is goal-oriented and the information gained through efferent reading is perhaps not as important as the result of that information. The mother reads the label in order to save her child’s life. The success of this reading is not judged on whether the mother could list or recall the facts about the poison, but rather the information is used for a wider larger purpose.

This efferent stance can be placed on a continuum with the aesthetic stance. Rosenblatt explains, “An aesthetic purpose will require the reader to direct more attention to the affective aspects” (1978, p. 33). It requires the reader to experience the text, perhaps in ways that it has not been experienced before, which reinforces the authority of the reader. Rosenblatt asserts, “No one, however, can read a poem for us” (1978, p. 33). Teachers who do not believe in the authority of the reader may very well step in to read a text for their students as in the example of *Huckleberry Finn* stated above. During aesthetic reading, the focus should be on the process—the reading event (Rosenblatt, 1983). However, an aesthetic reading is not only a strong emotional response or even a strong identification with a character or his/her actions—even an efferent reading can still

produce these responses. The aesthetic response always includes a cognitive element as well as an emotional one (1978, p 45). Teachers might resist aesthetic reading because it leaves no residue. It's difficult to evaluate a student's ability to read and understand literature if there is no "residue" to test.

Rosenblatt does not view the aesthetic and efferent as being two sides of a coin, but rather as two ends of a continuum. "The reader's stance toward the text—what he (sic) focuses his attention on, what his 'mental set' shuts out or permits to enter into the center of awareness—may vary in a multiplicity of ways between the two poles" (1978, p. 35). Rosenblatt cites Dewey's story "there is nothing to prevent the man sipping his tea from also enjoying the shape of the cup" (1978, p. 35) demonstrating that there is considerable interplay between efferent and aesthetic in students' and teachers' daily lives.

However, she emphasizes that the reader should be given authority to select and stances as the context or situation dictates. "The distinction between aesthetic and nonaesthetic reading, then, derives ultimately from what the reader does, the stance that he [sic] adopts and the activities he carries out in relationship to the text" (1978, p. 47). Readers decide how to approach particular texts. "What does the reader pay attention to and what does the reader ignore? If the reader has "turned his [sic] attention toward a full-lived fusion with the text," (1978, p. 47), then the reader has had an aesthetic reading experience. Langer (1995) discusses how people form discourse around these two purposes "People approach meaning in essentially different ways when their reasons for reading, writing or discussing are primarily to experience (to live through the situation in

a subjective manner), as opposed to when their primary goal is discursive (to gain or share ideas or information” (p. 25).

Conflicting Authorities

However, students’ response is often limited by teachers, textbook manufacturers or test makers who focus on efferent responses from readers, particularly if they treat texts as artifacts or objects. If a literature teacher asks the reader to read a chapter, summarize the plot and find the definitions from context to six vocabulary words, the teacher may be requiring the students to take an efferent stance, even if the reader may want to explore a text that has significant aesthetic possibilities. Sumara (2002) discusses his experience with reading literary texts with an efferent stance. “Literary fictions read for school purposes, then, were considered by me to be akin to reading my sociology or psychology textbook: I read in order to prepare for class seminars and to develop analyses for papers I was assigned to write” (p. 148).

In the past, many have asserted that the kind of reading that needs to be done dictated by the text (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 22). However, the reader is the one who surveys the text and determines the kind of reading that is necessary, so the reader’s belief about the nature of text essentially opens the door or closes the door to different kinds of transactions. The teacher should not be the one who chooses the stance. However, Rosenblatt asserts, “It is not possible here to detail the methods of the teaching of literature in school and college that tend often to develop an efferent attitude, even toward the literary work of art” (1983, p. 79). Rosenblatt (1978) talks about when teachers ask students to list all the ways that a woman is like a rose, teachers actually have destroyed the metaphor. The metaphor is about synthesis which is destroyed when

it is dissected. She talks about Richards's discussion of the tone of the poem which is a combination of many elements. "The reader is weaving his responses to all of these cues into an attitude, a voice that can be named "the tone" of the work" (1978, p. 96).

Although there might be texts that lend themselves to particular kinds of reading, the difference is found in the reader. The efferent and aesthetic stances are found in infinite combinations on the continuum, but if readers are not given the authority to choose and adjust those stances, they will not interact fully with the text. Certainly, creating meaning rather than discovering it or extracting it is the highest kind of engagement. However, it appears (Davies, 1992) that many teachers do not hold these beliefs and hold to authoritative discourse, creating nothing new but simply transmitting the what has already been established (Bakhtin, 1986).

Teachers Relinquishing Authority

If a teacher is teaching from the belief of literature as transactional, s/he is required to give up significant authority. S/he is no longer the one who insists that students must have background information before they read the text so they can determine "what the author means." S/he is no longer the one who knows the most literary terms and the one who can require a literary treasure hunt. If the reading is a transaction, rather than an excavation of fixed meaning, the teacher's role changes as well. Harboring a transactional view of literature and being willing to situate it requires a relinquishment of authority that could be difficult for many teachers. "The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it. The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone,

organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher” (Rosenblatt, p. 342). Authoritative discourse limits the actual learning that can take place because it does not allow space for response from the reader.

As a student teaching supervisor, I recently observed one of my preservice teachers as she taught at a local high school. After I was done observing the lesson, her cooperating teacher pulled me aside, “I need to talk to you. I have some serious concerns about ‘Sarah’s’ performance.”

“Oh?” I replied. “I thought things went well in the lesson I just observed.”

“Well, she’s teaching *The Scarlet Letter*, you know, and I asked her to design a unit about it,” the teacher shook her head.

“Was the unit not acceptable? Was it not done in time?” I was puzzled.

“Oh, she spent a lot of time and effort on it, but she thought the book was about identity, and she designed the whole unit around questions of identity.” The teacher was mortified.

I still didn’t get it. “So, what is the problem?” I asked.

“The book is not about identity. It is about guilt and shame. You are *familiar* with *The*

Scarlet Letter, aren’t you?” I could understand her fascination with guilt and shame immediately.

This authoritative approach allows for just one correct answer. There are no questions left—only the answers that have been determined far away and out of the reader’s power. Langer (1992) referencing the work of Probst posits that all of these

approaches tend to reaffirm the teacher's power in the classroom because the teacher then becomes the expert, reifying the hierarchy of student, teacher, professor, literary critic.

The Interaction of Cultural Models and Teaching Practices

From the beginning of their education as teachers, most teachers have been taught what to do, rather than encouraged to examine their beliefs (Smagorinsky 1995).

Teachers are evaluated on what they do, not necessarily on what they believe, causing some teachers to think that their methods are not belief-driven, but rather practical decisions. Solas (1992) in his discussion of theories in action recalls the work of Mackay and Marland (1978) who conducted numerous interviews with teachers, hoping to elicit what they called "action meaning," the idea that teachers choose to behave in certain ways according to particular beliefs or meanings. However, "the analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that the teachers were focused on the immediate concerns of practice, not on theoretical issues or decontextualized decisions" (1992, p. 5).

Commeyras and DeGroff (1998) had similar findings when they surveyed over 1500 literacy professionals on their beliefs about the use of several popular teaching strategies, such as book clubs. They found, for example, that high school teachers reported being in a book club frequently or most frequently (21%) of all of the different groups of literacy professionals surveyed. However they were also the group that most frequently reported "never" using book clubs in their own classrooms (61%). Conversely elementary teachers were mostly likely to use book clubs as a teaching strategy, but were the least likely to be a part of a book club themselves. There was not a strong connection between teachers' practices in real life and those practices they invoked in the classroom.

The cases above seem to indicate that some teachers may see the methods they employ as being “practical” without theoretical basis. Rabinowitz and Smith in their book *Authorizing Readers* (1998) quote Arthur Applebee:

In our case study of programs with reputations for excellence we also asked teachers directly about their familiarity with recent developments in literary theory. Some 72 percent of these teachers reported little or no familiarity with contemporary literary theory. As one teacher put it, ‘These are far removed from those of us who work the front lines!’” (p. xiii)

This echoes Bhaba’s (1999) concern about the division between theory and politics—the idea that many people consider theory as a luxury for those who have the time for reflection. Zavarzadeh (1999) in his article on the relationship between theory and classroom practice calls people with this belief humanists, “who assume that theory is a metalanguage occupying a space distant from, and barely related to, their concerns: the importance of ‘practical’ and not ‘speculative’ thought, the celebration of ‘common sense,’ and so on” (p. 6). However, everyone who reads, from the first grader sounding out her first words to the graduate student traveling through hundreds of pages a week, does so from a theoretical perspective. Everyone who reads has certain beliefs about texts and his or her role as a reader, although those beliefs are not always explicit. Teachers who ignore or deny that they are working from a theoretical basis may be resorting to the status quo, simply accepting and working from an unconscious set of beliefs.

The Link Between Conceptual Models and Practice

Solas (1992) cites Clark and Peterson's (1986) work which investigated teacher decision making and planning. They expected that teachers would have conceptual frameworks or content goals that they wanted to meet, and that teachers would plan and sequence activities according to those goals. They found, however, that teachers spent the majority of their time sequencing content rather than planning ways in which the content would be meaningful to students. "Teachers appear to be more concerned with the technical aspects of information transfer than with the sense students make of the information. It seems that the focus of instruction is the target skill or knowledge itself, not the process that facilitates the acquisition of these" (p. 205). A target skill or knowledge focus echoes the idea that literature is fixed and students who read it acquire a skill or a bit of knowledge. A teacher who believes that texts are fixed would be likely to focus on sequencing content information in building block form.

Langer (1995) notes that, "In both literary and discursive experiences, the meanings we develop are guided by our sense of the nature of the whole. . . a sense of the overall purpose that causes us, from the very beginning, to orient ourselves in particular ways" (25). This ability to adjust to the needs of the transaction, must grow from a confidence in one's teaching identity. Bronwyn Williams (2006) discusses the identities that he performs as a teacher and the importance of making those identities consistent with practice. Williams insists that this congruency is what makes him a better teacher, not the application of particular actions.

I have tried to pay less attention to simply grafting the latest nifty pedagogical strategy onto my teaching and more attention to my inner sense of self and how I can translate that into effective classroom performances. I know that I cannot

perform effectively, and through such a performance make my teaching effective, if I cannot find a way to make my teaching connect with my internal psychological and moral self. (p. 540)

In *Teacher Identity Discourses: Negotiating Personal and Professional Spaces*, Janet Alsup (2005) echoes this philosophy. She found that preservice teachers who were best able to navigate the very difficult transition from student to teacher were not necessarily those who had the strongest command of current methods. In this study, the participants who were more confident in their growing professional identities told stories describing their ability to embrace a variety of different ways of approaching classroom decision making and a number of context-specific strategies they might use when responding to students. “The students who were able to believe that there was not always a single correct way to teach or one rigid cultural model of teacher. . . were able to make decisions that were based on student needs and were more consistent with their professional priorities and personal ideologies” (p. 181).

Rosenblatt talks about this as well, stating, “These overarching considerations will protect the literary specialist from the danger of a dogmatic application of scientific theories or a substitution of scientific terminology for scientific insight” (1983, p. 134). One has to have a certain theoretical foundation in order for a scientific insight or concept to make sense, and the set of beliefs should govern methodological choices. These beliefs should be congruent with identity.

Alsup (2005) describes the consequences when discord occurs. “Tension between discordant subjectivities and associated ideologies lessens the chance of developing a satisfying professional identity” (p. 183). Tension is not always bad—it can be an

impetus for change, but too much tension in Alsup's 2005 study was overwhelming for newer teachers. Even veteran teachers have trouble reducing "gaps between their assigned roles and their identities by traditionalizing the literature curriculum. . . . Developing the teacher identity involves embodying the discourse of the teacher" (Alsup, 2005, p. 185). Teachers have to negotiate their identities as teachers with how they look, talk, and behave as well as the methodological choices they make. Those teachers who negotiate this well are more successful. However, some research suggests that teachers adjust and take on multiple identities during their teaching, resulting in situated pedagogy.

Situated pedagogy. Stillwaggon (2008) discusses "performative identities" where the teacher's role is somewhat dependent on the ways in which students interact with literature. The teacher may take on a number of possible roles including community builder and mediator, facilitating student interaction with literature instead of dictating students into fixed responses. These performative identities and practices grow out of beliefs about the nature of literature and reading. However, it's possible that teachers are not particularly concerned with how their roles are rooted in belief.

Ketter and Lewis (2001) facilitated a two year long book multicultural book group with rural white teachers and discuss this experience as a good example of Orner, Miller and Ellsworth's "situated pedagogy" (p. 85). In this book group, the facilitators were required relinquish their automatic authority and step in to facilitate group members' transactions with the text and with each other. Although Ketter and Lewis had a particular agenda they wished to achieve, they often had to mediate their agenda in order to allow readers to bring their own ideas to the transactions of reading and talking about

books. “Situated pedagogy’s only life, therefore, is in relation to its context and moment” (p. 85). They add that because such pedagogy “leaves no visible trace afterward and cannot be reproduced” (p. 85) it is often discounted by the educational establishment.

Whether one believes that teachers have fixed or multiple identities, Day, Kingdon, Stobart & Sammons (2006) list four categories of influence that teachers must negotiate:

1. macro structures: broad social/cultural features usually referred to in discussions of social diversity and/or government policy as it is implicated in the order of an education service;
2. meso structures: the social/cultural/organisational formations of schools and teacher education;
3. micro structures: talked of in terms of colleagues, pupils and parents;
4. personal biographies: values, beliefs, ideologies (p. 611).

These structures have varying influence on teachers and their practices.

Discussion Which Reflects Cultural Models

Nystrand, et al (2003) outlines how he and his associates tracked monologic and dialogic classroom discussions about literature. Taken from Bakhtin’s (1982) work, the term monologic indicates whether, in Bakhtin’s words, a text “pretends to possess a ready-made truth” (qtd. In Nystrand, 2003, p. 139), whereas the dialogic discussion invites multiple voices and points of view. Monologic discourse discourages connection with others and with the text. Nystrand describes the artificial nature of one kind of dialogic discourse, called “recitation” (p. 140), shaped by Mehan’s (1979) IRE (teacher

initiation, student response, followed by teacher evaluation) pattern of whole-class discussion. The teacher retains the power to change topics, choose which students get to talk, and how long a particular line of questioning might take. Nystrand's (2003) work also takes into account whether teachers used authentic questions, whether they responded to those questions in student-centered ways, and whether they require higher-level thinking. Peak periods of student engagement were cast as "dialogic spells. . . characterized by engaged student questions and an absence of teacher test questions. . ." (p. 150).

Opposing forces. There are many forces working against the belief that texts are flexible and that readers construct meaning. Students' abilities and talents to read, to pay attention, and to critically think all affect their engagement with literary texts. American media culture is sometimes blamed for shortening student attention span and limiting student experience so students don't have the kind of persistence or desire to interact with the kinds of texts that are used in school. The nature of the text itself may encourage or discourage engagement for particular students (Kleitzen & Taylor, 1992). Some teachers may feel overwhelmed by these factors—after all, they have no control over student abilities or the cultures in which student live.

The profession itself does not encourage teachers to work from this theoretical base, which requires teachers to be flexible decision makers in their classrooms. Alsup (2005) cites examples of Ginsburg's idea of the "deskilling" (p. 194) of teachers and asserts that schools and communities sometimes view teacher as delivery agents rather than decision makers in their classrooms. If teachers do not consciously resist their delivery agent status, there are many forces which reinforce it. Alsup cites Lortie's

apprenticeship of observation as one of these forces. “Apprenticeships of observation postpone cognitive dissonance and borderland discourse” (2005, p.190). The preservice teachers who were the subjects of Alsup’s work were anxious to duplicate the experiences that they had in school, often without being receptive to other models. It is important that teachers acknowledge this apprenticeship of observation and that they know both the dangers and the usefulness of this apprenticeship. Often the apprenticeship of observation narrows the ways in which teachers can embody successful teachers because it reinforces the ways teaching has always been done.

The pressures of curriculum and coverage also may limit the time that teachers feel they have to spend on a particular work. Sumara (1994), however, advocates that students read texts more than once.

Not only would spending time re-reading and re-reflecting on a text be understood as a sign of ineffectiveness, it would create a hitch in the materials distribution system. It would be like missing a bus. And in schools one is not supposed to miss busses. One is supposed to be on time, on schedule. Times and places are things to be mastered, which, ironically, make both teachers and students slaves to them” as well discusses the ways in which school structures. (43)

Furthermore, communities and schools may have certain views on the purpose of literature instruction which may pressure teachers into certain decisions. Deanne Bogdan (1988) discusses a censorship case in which a community’s beliefs about literature led to censorship of Margaret Laurence’s *The Diviners*. She argues that when a community insists on “thinking of literature as direct communication, as a verbal correspondence to life,” (p. 236) literature becomes a sort of role-model for students. This belief would

drastically limit the kinds of texts that teachers choose, causing them to work against their own beliefs or choose to change their beliefs about the nature of literature. Lewis and Ketter (2001) also found strong differences between their own theoretical stances and those of teachers from a rural community who were taking part in a multicultural book group.

These cross purposes were at the root of misunderstandings among all involved—parents, teachers, and researchers. Making visible the different purposes everyone brings to any multicultural educational reform is essential in order to honor the complexity of the project and get past the naive discourse of policies that disregard the social politics of the classrooms and the communities they serve. (p. 182)

Regardless of these pressures, however, beliefs, particularly beliefs about the nature of texts and readers, cannot be divorced from discussions of methods. Kleitzen & Taylor, (1992) found little relationship between student engagement (using Langer's envisionment definition as engagement) and teacher-required strategies for reading. Some students were highly engaged while using particular strategies for reading and others were not. Other students were highly engaged but didn't use the particular strategies required by their teachers. It appears that some students took authority as readers in opposition to the teacher-directed strategies. Their beliefs were ultimately the deciding factor in their own engagement. Student readers took authority regardless of whether the teacher believed they should have it.

It is expected, then, that teachers insert themselves somehow into the transactions between texts and students. However, even if there are some factors which cannot be

changed or controlled by teachers, most teachers have significant decision-making power over what goes on in the classrooms where students and texts meet. This meeting of students and texts, as facilitated by the teacher, is where a teacher can exercise his or her abilities. Parker Palmer (1997) reemphasizes the important role of the teacher in *The Courage to Teach*. “In our rush to reform education, we have forgotten a simple truth: reform will never be achieved by renewing appropriations, restructuring schools, rewriting curricula, and revising texts if we continue to demean and dishearten the human resource called the teacher on whom so much depends” (p. 3).

Langer (1995) notes that, “In both literary and discursive experiences, the meanings we develop are guided by our sense of the nature of the whole. . . a sense of the overall purpose that causes us, from the very beginning, to orient ourselves in particular ways” (25). Rosenblatt talks about this as well: “These overarching considerations will protect the literary specialist from the danger of a dogmatic application of scientific theories or a substitution of scientific terminology for scientific insight” (1983, p. 134). One has to have a certain theoretical foundation in order for a scientific insight or concept to make sense, and the set of beliefs should govern methodological choices.

At times, though, these cultural models and identities cannot be aligned. Alsup (2005) describes the consequences when discord occurs. “Tension between discordant subjectivities and associated ideologies lessens the chance of developing a satisfying professional identity” (p. 183). Tension is not always bad—it can be an impetus for change, but too much tension in Alsup’s 2005 study was overwhelming for newer teachers. Even veteran teachers have trouble reducing “gaps between their assigned roles and their identities by traditionalizing the literature curriculum. . . Developing the teacher

identity involves embodying the discourse of the teacher” (Alsup, 2005, p. 185).

Teachers have to negotiate their identities as teachers with how they look, talk, and behave as well as the methodological choices they make.

The work of Grossman (1990) underscores how these underlying beliefs, called “conceptions of English” (p. 29) combined with a teacher’s own classroom experience and his or her formal training (or lack of it) have a strong influence on teaching practices. In Grossman’s case studies of first-year teachers, these conceptions served as powerful drivers of how teachers taught in their classrooms, even when those teachers were not successful. She described one of her cases, “Lance,” who had difficulty reconciling his conceptions of English with ways in which his students would be engaged. “Without a clear way to conceptualize high school English and the factors that differentiate it from college English, Lance continued to fall back on his disciplinary knowledge to frame and ground his decisions about teaching.”

Possible Teacher Roles

Teachers may embody a number of performative identities if they believe that their pedagogy is centered in the belief that reading is a transaction between flexible texts and readers. When teachers’ classroom practices stem from those beliefs, the role of the teacher in the classroom may be quite different from the teachers who responded to Cavanaugh’s 1995 survey. In this survey, 88% of practicing English teachers listed these six concerns as “most important” in the preparation of new English teachers:

1. Curriculum Awareness: Literature, Grammar, Writing, Vocabulary, Reading, and Thinking
2. Planning: Daily Weekly, Monthly and Semester
3. Classroom Management
4. Details of Daily Teaching
5. Teaching Different Levels and

Ages of Students and 6. Communicating with Students, Faculty and Parents. (p. 43)

Rosenblatt (1983) does not include a list of activities or skills like the ones above that will bring “reader response” about. Reader Response is essentially a theoretical stance that grows from particular beliefs about human behavior. She insists that the performative identities of teachers who embrace this theoretical should grow from the interaction with the text. How might these performative identities be described?

Teacher as community builder. One possible performative identity is that of community builder. For example, Janesick (1982) conducted an ethnographic study of the personal perspective of a sixth-grade teacher about his role. She defined perspective as a “reflexive, socially derived interpretation of experience that serves as a basis for subsequent action” (p. 162). The teacher's perspective combines beliefs, intentions, interpretations, and behavior that interact continually and are modified by social interaction. Working from this definition of perspective and looking at this teacher's overall beliefs about teacher, Janesick found that the broadest and most dominant aspect of the teacher's perspective was his or her commitment to maintaining a stable and cohesive classroom group. He made plans and interactive decisions and interpreted classroom events in terms of their impact on the cohesiveness of the class. He defined the most important aspect of his teaching role as that of group leader

This teacher may have viewed this social context as an end in itself, but this social context is also necessary for readers' interactions with texts. “The genesis of literary techniques occurs in a social matrix” (Rosenblatt, 1983, p. 28). Literacy evolves from a social world and requires a social response. These social factors must contribute to the

experience of literature, not detract from it. What might it look like if students could, “Experience the text, not simply receive information about what it means?” (Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998, p. 49). This literary community must maintain some commonality but balance it with the very different transactions may have with texts. “The literary transaction. . .always embodies an interplay between two sets of codes, two sets of values. Even when the author and the reader share the same culture. . .their uniqueness as human beings would insure this interplay” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.56).

Bakhtin (1986) might expand this idea to say that the literary transaction embodies an interplay among infinite sets of codes, not just two sets. Bakhtin’s (1986) concept of heteroglossia invites genres and voices to work together. Some of those codes are those of the unofficial or the “folk” (1984, p. 3). There needs to be room for both the “official” and the “folk” and the sharp contrast between them. The limiting power of the official needs to be recognized and the legitimate importance of the folk needs to enter the classroom as well. Authentic transactions with literature may often include both. However, Williams (2006) asserted, “But by middle school the sense of play and pleasure all but disappears as an explicit area of by a focus on "competencies" that allow students to complete their "work" (and prepare for the workplace) and then have their competencies assessed” (p. 339).

Williams (2006) calls for classrooms to be communities where students do the kinds of transactional work with literature that will “feed their souls as well as work that addresses their material conditions. It is a matter of encouraging all students to find the pleasure in critical, intellectual work that teachers and scholars do” (p. 341). This doesn’t mean that the classroom community is always concerned with pleasure and fun, but it

does speak to a community ethos that helps students develop a deep satisfaction in their work with texts.

Probst (1986) also discusses the kinds of activities that students could be doing to build communities like this. He suggests that teachers invite an immediate spontaneous response to a particular work, even if it is as simple as “I like it.” (p. 62). The teacher might further involve students by asking them to free-write a response to the work. Another strategy he suggests is to ask students to identify the most significant word in the poem. However all of these strategies are meant to open up discussion about the poem, not to guide students into the teacher’s predetermined interpretation. These strategies must be accompanied by transactional beliefs about literary study. He cautions teachers against the accepted hierarchy in which a critic or expert gives an interpretation which is then passed down to the professor who passes it down to the teacher who passes it down to the students.

However, opening texts in this way can be very risky. Teachers must create an atmosphere where they and their students are comfortable and confident that half-formed ideas or unpopular ideas are welcome. Teachers must accept that the kinds of interaction that they might expect or even prefer might not be the kinds of interaction that are significant to students and they must be ready to interrogate those ideas which are not conducive to community (Lensmire, 2000).

Sometimes this role as community builder may include introducing students to the wider community of the text, perhaps helping students know more about the socio-political setting and the declared genre. This pursuit may occasionally give teachers a reason to present “facts about the social, economic, and intellectual history of the age in

which literary works were written. . . Yet all such facts are expendable unless they demonstrably help to clarify or enrich individual experiences of specific novels, poems, or plays” (Rosenblatt, 1983, p. 27). In other words, background information is presented as a service to the community of readers. It may help readers answer the question of Rabinowitz and Smith (1998), “What would this mean for the audience the author was writing for and how do I feel about that?” (p. 31).

However, this background information or supplementary material must never supersede the actual reading. Rosenblatt (1983) describes a teacher who teaches *The Divine Comedy*. “One might even hold forth on its relations to the dying medieval culture and the dawning Renaissance. Without acquaintance with the works themselves, all this information would lack essential substance” (p. 58). The problem that the teacher faces first of all, then, is the creation of a situation favorable to a vital experience of literature” (1983, p. 58). This kind of reading is best done in community. Classroom or book club discussions are ways in which students can try out these roles, but if the teacher does not believe that readers have a transactional relationship with literature, these practices may not have the full effect.

Teacher as mediator. Although facilitating a classroom community where interaction can thrive is essential, at times it may not be enough. Students are sometimes inexperienced with textual interaction, and at times the teacher must be a mediator or go-between to facilitate student transactions.

Lesley Rex (2001) in “The Remaking of a High School Reader” discusses the various roles that teachers take on as they guide students in their reading activities.

The teacher's role is viewed flexible, characterized by constant shifting of student and teacher roles, power relations, voices, and understandings that are themselves in continual flux and intercontingent. With dialogue as the medium of these dynamics, what people say to one another becomes the medium, the means, and the common record of reader identity and knowledge. How the teacher mediates the dialogues over time is key to successful remaking. (p.293)

Lensmire (2000) discusses this role of go-between and compares the role of the teacher to the novelist Dostoevsky, who weaves the voices of the characters together to create a whole (the novel) which then joins the ongoing stream of speech acts. The teacher is stepping into the transaction at times when s/he is needed, joining the stream of meaning making as students read.

Smagorinsky (2001) describes the transactional zone where meaning is made and indicates that sometimes the teachers mediating role is to help students gain access to the codes that a text might be using, thus increasing their capital. The teacher may have more access to this "capital," or not, depending on the text. Alsup (1995) also talks about Gee's encouragement for teachers to be bi-discoursal—able to bridge the gap between the educational community and the students and the wider community. This ability to be bi-discoursal is a kind of capital that teachers can help students acquire.

Students' desire to interact with texts more fully may require the teacher to act as mediator by presenting background or genre information. Rosenblatt (1978) asserts, "The desire to understand a particular work will produce ever-widening circles of interest. Yet the focus of these concerns should continue to be the students' own sense of the work and his (sic) desire to clarify and refine his perception of it" (p. 111). This

mediator role can also be helpful when students encounter texts that do not meet their expectations of coherence (Rosenblatt, 1978). If the reader doesn't have this expectation or if the text does not meet this expectation, transactional reading will be difficult. For example, if the reader expects a strong resolution and the book doesn't give one, a teacher-as-mediator may need to help the student make sense of that transaction.

Rosenblatt describes this process as follows:

Or, there may be unfulfilled expectations, unanswered questions, details that cannot be assimilated, so that much is held in suspension until it all 'falls into shape' or there is a 'click' of insight. . .if such a putting-together, such a composition does not eventually happen the cause may be felt to be either a weakness in the text, or a failure on the reader's part. (1978, p.55)

Rex (2001) describes a classroom where the dialogue is started by

Following the classroom reading motto: "If anything is odd, inappropriate, confusing, or boring, it's probably important." they were to find places in the text they thought were "probably important." They were to figure out the probable importance of these pieces of text and make a case. or a reasoned reading supported by evidence from the text. Finally, they were to formulate a "so what" by embedding their reading into the whole structure of the text, into the world created by the text, or into readers' critical and historical understandings of the text. (p. 294)

She describes the motto as a "heuristic, a place to stand from which readers could organize their thinking" (p. 294). Teachers who do not have interactive beliefs about readers and texts could view this as a method that can help students uncover a fixed

meaning, but this kind of heuristic could be helpful for teachers who are helping students construct their own meanings from text.

The challenge with this mediator role is to know when to step in and when to let students work things out for themselves. Rosenblatt (1983) warns of teachers' tendencies to step in too early and dictate or evaluate the form which these responses must take, which then limits the literary transaction. Probst (1994) talks about a kind of curriculum that respects the reader response. "How do we teach so that the experience with literature is its own justification, so that the time spent talking and writing is compelling enough that it doesn't require formal defense?" (p. 37). He charges teachers first to allow the text to exert its natural influence on readers without "getting in the way, substituting other matters for that vital influence" (p. 37). Implicit within this vision of literary experience is a respect for the uniqueness of the individual reader and the integrity of the individual reading.

Risks. There are significant risks to teachers backgrounding the roles that Cavanaugh's survey lists as "most important" and taking up the roles of community builder and mediator. If a true transactional reading is going to take place, the teacher must hand over the power in the classroom to students and texts, giving up control over many of the things that s/he once had control over.

In acting on these transactional beliefs, teachers may no longer be viewed as the experts they once were. And, if knowledge is power, teachers may appear to be giving up some power in the classroom. Rosenblatt (1983) acknowledges that this kind of transactional reading is difficult and may appear to be fruitless at first. This, too, may make teachers appear for a time, maybe even a long time, to be ineffective, creating an

even greater loss of power. Miron and Segal's (1978) survey of university students listed the two most important characteristics of a "good teacher" to be "interesting presentation of material" and "preparation and organization of lessons" (p. 30). These goals are not particularly congruent with teaching in a way that values the transactional nature of texts.

Agee's 2004 study of a beginning teacher details the reasons and the ways that the teacher gave up many of her ideals about teaching to join the predominant ways of teaching in her department. Agee reports,

Thus her mission as a teacher was deeply complicated before she entered a classroom. She wanted to change the literature curriculum and help students become thinkers, and she also wanted to help them do well with traditional skills like literary analysis and perform well on standardized tests. Some would argue that these goals need not be incompatible, but for Tina, they proved to be an ideological minefield. She would find that her goals were incompatible with the mainstream ideologies driving curriculum and assessment (p. 758).

This complicated dance between beliefs and roles, played out in groups of adolescents and texts requires research approaches that allow for this complexity.

Research Approaches to Complexity.

I believe that teacher beliefs about literature and practice are intertwined, but that interplay may manifest itself in many ways. For example, teachers may choose to apply practices that might be associated with a "fixed" view of literature, such as lecturing about the author's life. However, further study may reveal that the teacher is providing that information to students to enhance the quality of their transactions with literature. On the other hand, it may be that a teacher may use a practice that is associated with a

more transactional view of literature, such as asking students to complete a dialogue journal, but that practice in itself may still be used to promote a fixed view of literature. Teachers may have very different approaches to reconciling their beliefs and their practices. This complexity can be overwhelming, so a bounded focus, looking at teachers' beliefs, practices, and their students' responses allows for a way to isolate this complexity.

Stake (2000) talks about case study being a form rather than a perspective or philosophical approach (p. 20), but certainly theoretical assumptions inform the choice of case study as a form. This research will take on a rationalist-constructivist view. As Stake (2000) discusses:

Many researchers today appear to take the rationalist-constructivist view, that an outside world, reality #1 exists, corresponding suitably to our notion of it, reality #2. They acknowledge that correspondence cannot be tested, that nothing of that outside can register independent of our constructed interpretation. (p.101)

The aim of constructivist research is to "construct a clearer reality." (p. 101)

Alvermann, O'Brien & Dillon (1996) as well as Patton (2002) discuss the importance of beginning with the research question and letting the research question dictate the methodology, calling this approach "pragmatism" (Patton, 2002, p.13). Qualitative methods are able to address the complexity of community phenomena because they depend on the researcher who spends significant time observing, interviewing, collecting, analyzing and reflecting on the data to allow for rich, detailed description.

The case study is a good choice within the qualitative field because it allows for a very close focus. Merriam (1998) describes the purposes of the case study as follows: “A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (p. 19). She (1998) has developed three important descriptors of case studies. They are “particularistic. This specificity of focus makes it an especially good design for practical problems—for questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences arising from everyday practice” (p. 29). Merriam also discusses the descriptive aspects of case study as well as the heuristic aspects, which “discover new meaning, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known” (1998, p. 30).

The use of quantitative case study methods allows for the discovery and discussion of this complex interplay. Observation and interview give insight into both the actions and the thoughts of teachers as they teach literature.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the interplay of high school teacher beliefs about literature with their classroom teaching practices. Ethnographic case study methods were used to allow the researcher to ask high school English teachers specifically about their beliefs about the nature of literature study and also observe how these beliefs played out in classroom practice. To explore the relationship between teacher beliefs about literature, classroom practice, and student engagement, a multiple case study of seven high school English teachers was undertaken. Teachers were individually interviewed at the beginning of the study, then they were observed teaching literature classes sessions, then they participated in follow-up interviews.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through the contacts made while the researcher observing student teachers. Two schools visited seemed particularly suited for this study because they were similar in size, age, and curriculum. However, they had very different locations which resulted in very different student populations. After permissions were obtained from the University of Minnesota and the individual school districts, all of the English teachers in each of the schools were contacted by email with an outline of the study and a request to participate. Eight teachers originally showed interest in participation, but one had to drop out because of a family emergency. Therefore, the study focused on this convenience sample of seven participants at two different schools. Logistical correspondence with these participants occurred primarily through email with interviews and observations taking place at the school sites.

Time and benefits. Participation in the process took up to five hours of interview time for each participant as well as the time of scheduling and answering informal questions about classroom observations. Participants expressed appreciation that they had an opportunity to deliberately reflect on and discuss their beliefs about literature. As a courtesy, the researcher made herself available to the participants as a guest editor for student writing or other classroom tasks, but none of the participants chose to accept that offer. Participants also were given a \$20 gift card to a local book store—certainly not enough to compensate them for their time, but as a token of appreciation.

Schools

This study included seven participants from two different high schools in the same large Midwestern metropolitan area. Pseudonyms are used to refer to the schools and the individual participants.

Townville High School. Townville High School is located in a third ring suburb of a major Midwestern metropolitan area. Just outside the area's "beltway," it is one of two comprehensive high schools in the district which serves several third and fourth ring suburbs along with three middle schools and six elementary schools. According to the school's website, 85% of students pursue schooling beyond high school and the school's graduation rate is 99.35, so the school generally caters to a college-bound student body. The school had 1549 students in 2008, 82 percent of which reported themselves as white, with 7% reporting as Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% Black, not Hispanic, 3% Hispanic and 2% American Indian. Ten percent of students receive special education services and three percent receive services for English Language Learners. At Townville, 23% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, compared to a 31% statewide average.

Townville students generally do well on almost every measure of school success. Townville has received a 10 of 10 rating by GreatSchools.com and was recognized by *Newsweek* magazine as one of the best schools in the country four out of the last six years. It also was recently also recognized by *US News and World Report*. The passing rate on the state reading test in Grade 10 was 79%, compared to a 71% state average. In ninth grade, 94% of students passed the writing test, compared to a 89% state average. Two thirds of the teachers in this school have a masters' degree or higher and the school spends just about \$100 a year per student above the state per pupil spending average.

Townville English curriculum. Like all other schools in this midwestern state, Townville requires students to take four years (eight semesters) of English. In the ninth and tenth grades, students take English courses which reflect all areas of the language arts. These courses are simply English 9, Honors English 9, English 10, or Honors English 10. In the junior and senior years, students may choose from the following: Mass Media (I and II), Film Study, Mythology (I and II), College English, College in the Schools Literature, AP Literature, AP Composition, Creative Writing, Focus Reading, Poetry, Honors British Literature, Journalism (I and II), World Literature, American Literature, and Focus Composition. The school is very committed to the Advanced Placement program, offering courses that support 22 different Advanced Placement examinations.

The language arts curriculum of Townville High School is closely focused on particular literary analysis and reading/writing skills. Two years ago all of the English teachers agreed that they would include what they call "pre-AP" terms in all of their ninth and tenth grade English classes. The major organizing body curriculum is the unit . Next

to each unit, there is a column for skills which includes the pre-AP terms that are required with that unit. The following column aligns that unit and those skills to the Midwestern State Standards for the Language Arts and the final column includes assessments for the unit. Each teacher is expected to give a common assessment at the end of the course. This assessment focuses on reading skills and the mastery of the pre-AP terms for that grade level. In the general English courses and in the literature courses, all of the units, with the exception of grammar and vocabulary, are based on the literature. For example, in ninth grade the students are required to do two research projects. The teachers have chosen to make one a Shakespearean research project which is completed right before the students read *Romeo and Juliet*. The other project must relate in some way to the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Townville personnel. On the ninth grade team, teachers must work very closely together because many students change to a different section and teacher of ninth grade English at the semester break. Therefore, all of the teachers must have covered the same material during the first semester. The ninth grade teachers that were a part of this study were enthusiastic about the ways in which this team of teachers works together. Caroline Jordan states,

We all have very different styles, but to know what each other is doing and to have access to all of those materials is amazingly helpful. I would never go back to the old way of doing it. We also switch students at semester, so I know about his kids coming in and he can tell me information about them. They don't have to be surprised when they go over there. We all do vocab, we all do this book. Even

though the assignments might look a little different, it's not a big surprise for the students.

The English department also has vertical integration teams which look at how the standards are being met from grade to grade and discuss how to best prepare students for the next step. The eighth grade teachers from the feeder middle schools are also a part of this conversation, to ensure that students are prepared for the kind of close literary analysis that is expected in the later years of high school and post-secondary education.

Smith High School

Smith High school is located in a first ring suburb of the same midwestern metropolitan area as Townville. It too, is one of two comprehensive high schools in its district and has a student population of 2007 students. Smith features a well-established International Baccalaureate program, with 550 students involved in some facet of the program during the 2008-2009 school year. This resulted in being named one of *Newsweek Magazine's* "Best High Schools." The student population at Smith is 53% white, 32% black, 9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% Hispanic, 1% American Indian, and 1% not specified. While the state average of free and reduced lunch eligible students is 31%, Smith High School has 41% of its students eligible. The school has a graduation rate of 94.25%, with 13% of student receiving special education services and 4% of the students being served by English Language Learning programs. However, students represent a variety of home backgrounds, and the district provides official liaisons to those who speak Spanish, Hmong, Somali, and Russian. The average ACT score for students at this school was 22.7, just .1 above the state average. Sixty-two percent of students passed the state mandated reading test in 2009, below the state average of 71%.

Smith English curriculum. The English curriculum also reflects a strong emphasis on the IB program. In ninth and tenth grade English, test scores and teacher recommendations result in a placement in one of three options, a reading class designed to improve reading skills, an English class that includes selected literature, writing and speaking tasks, and a pre-IB English class. The ninth grade year focuses on literary themes and the tenth grade course focuses on American literature. In students' eleventh and twelfth grade years if they do not participate in the International Baccalaureate program courses, students can choose from several course combinations such as Modern Literature and Composition and Speech and Composition. In addition, students may take electives in College Composition, Journalism, and Yearbook. Smith also participates in the AVID program, which targets average students without a history of college attendance in their families. These students are provided with additional support to encourage them to apply for and attend college.

Smith personnel. In general, individual teachers are autonomous when teaching within the descriptions of their assigned courses. Ninth grade teachers generally teach *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Miracle Worker*, and *Romeo and Juliet* while preparing for the state mandated writing test required for high school graduation. Although teachers do informally share materials and meet occasionally to discuss curricular issues, an ongoing system is not in place to review and revise the curriculum. In tenth grade, teachers may choose from over a dozen novels, so the sophomore curriculum tends to be even more varied than the ninth grade. Students must also take the state mandated reading test during the 10th grade year, so strong emphasis has been placed on this as well.

Data Collection

Case study relies on two kinds of sampling: purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) which is concerned with finding the case to be studied, and theoretical sampling (Merriam 1998) which looks for the data sources within the case. Merriam describes this as theoretical sampling through the words of Glaser and Strauss (1967), “The process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (p. 45). Although this case study focused on data collection at first, as field notes were created, further questions were developed. Data collection took place in three phases: Each participant was interviewed individually, then observed while teaching high school literature classes, then interviewed again as a follow-up. All interviews were semi-structured and individual (See Appendix A: List of Questions). The first set of interviews centered primarily on what the participants believed about the nature of literature and how the teaching of literature grows from these beliefs.

Generally interviews took place at the participants’ schools, but some interviews were conducted in local coffee shops if the participants preferred that location. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Transcriptions of the preliminary interviews were reviewed before the observations and follow-up interviews so I could remind myself of the stated beliefs of each participant. Only the researcher had access to these recordings, which did not contain any identifying information other than a code assigned by the researcher and available only to her, kept in a locked file drawer.

The interviews began with the interview guide, but they soon came to resemble conversations focused on literature and engagement. Although there was an interview guide, often the interviews focused on specific classroom practices that were observed. Stake (1996) talks about forming the questions around issues, recommending that the questions not be too broad or too informational. He discusses Pavlov (1931) using the term “gradualness” (p. 21), the idea that the data reveals results little by little. This was the case in these interviews. At times, just as the researcher thought the interview had provided the necessary information something that was extremely valuable.

Although it was helpful to ask teachers about their beliefs, it was not enough. Beliefs manifest themselves in practice. In this portion of the study, each participant was observed during his or her classroom teaching at least three times during literature lessons. Every effort was made to observe the teacher in a variety of literature teaching activities with a variety of students as scheduling allowed. The researcher watched specifically to see what activities the teacher required of students and the ways in which the teacher introduced these activities and judged their success. This connects to my assumption that teachers have strong reasons for choosing and executing particular classroom activities. It was particularly interesting to observe how and whether these practices were based in the beliefs expressed in the original interviews.

During the observation portion of the study, the researcher took scratch notes on the computer, quickly typing so the notes were almost transcriptions. These scratch notes were converted to field notes as soon as was practical after the observation occurs. Although in this portion of the data collection, students were present, the researcher did not have contact with students in accordance with the reviews and permissions process.

Lesson plans, assignment handouts, curriculum guides and other written materials were also examined. After observations and document examinations, follow-up interviews (Appendix B) were conducted with the teacher to gain a better understanding of the practices that were observed.

This study received Institutional Review Board approval at the expedited level and both school districts granted approval through their directors of assessment. As a part of the follow up interviews, a grid based on Caughlan's cultural models was developed (Appendix C). This grid listed the models that were referenced most often in the preliminary interviews as well as by Caughlan herself in her examination of standards. The models listed as "rarely seen" (p. 188) were omitted to make the grid less overwhelming. Each participant was asked to indicate which of the six listed models from Caughlan they thought were most important in their teaching, indicating a first, second, and third choice. They also were asked to indicate which model they felt their school's curriculum was most like and which model their school's practice was most like. This provided an additional source of data about teacher beliefs that allowed for triangulation.

Data Analysis

As with all ethnographic studies, data collection and analysis were recursive. Even though official analysis did not take place until data collection was complete, patterns and themes began to emerge throughout the data collection and the writing of the field notes. After the field notes and transcriptions were complete, all of the interview transcriptions, field notes, and handouts were input into QDA Miner, qualitative data analysis software manufactured by Provalis.

Categories. Through the use of this software, data was then categorized. The first set of categories was based on Caughlan’s models, with the category labels as follows:

Table 1

Caughlan’s Cultural Model Categories

Code	Cultural Model	Key Terms	Example of Response or Activity
Texts for analysis	Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis	Setting Symbolism Metaphor Theme Point of View	Identifying symbols “Is the author using direct or indirect characterization in this passage?”
Teaches skills	Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills	Plot summary predicting making inferences	“What happened after Atticus shot the dog?” Making predictions about how the story will end
Expression of place/time	Literature is an expression of place and time	Historical context author background	“How would this story be different if it happened in our town today?”
Personal enjoyment	Literature provides personal enjoyment	Emotional response getting “caught up” in the story	“Did you like the story?” “What made you want to keep reading?”
Multifaceted	Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives.	Lenses theoretical approaches other than New Criticism	Using different explicit theoretical approaches to examine the story Multiple meanings of texts were accepted by teacher

Values and dispositions	Literature is a tool for mediating pastoral relationships	Choices morals lessons about life	“Do you think it was right for Scout to lie?” “Have you ever had an experience where you really didn’t know what to do?”
Aesthetic	Literature is a work of art which can be interpreted and evaluated as such	Capital “L” literature	Evaluating literary quality
Social worlds	Literature is a text that sheds light on the social worlds of both its creator and readers	Experience	Discussion centering on multiple meanings based on the readers’ experiences
Ideologies	Literature expresses and reveals ideologies	Critical analysis Societal critique	Analyzing power dynamics in the societies portrayed in texts
Connect with others	Literature enables us to connect with others through examining the differences and similarities of culturally-specific ways of making meaning	Cultural Response	Response through culture-specific representation

The participants reflected on whether they were able to teach in ways that were consistent with those models and categorized those items as congruent indicating those factors which made teaching to the preferred model(s) easier and incongruent, indicating those factors which made teaching to the preferred model(s) more difficult. These factors were listed as

Background Experience—Factors in the teacher’s education, background or experience

Community Expectations—Factors that include how the school structure or the larger community influences teaching, but not factors related to curriculum

Preparing for the Future—Pressure or expectations that students need to learn a particular skill or concept in order to be ready for the next level of education

Staff Collegiality—Factors that are related to the working relationships of departmental teachers

Student Motivation—Factors related to whether students have the desire to learn or participate

Student Preparation—Factors related to whether students have the background and/or ability to learn or participate

Teacher Confidence—Factors related to whether the teacher feels able or comfortable to teach from beliefs

Testing—Factors related to school, district, or state mandated testing

Time—Factors related to schedule and time

Text—Factors related to the curricular texts

Curriculum—Factors related to the required goals and activities of the curriculum

Each instance in each of these categories was also marked as to whether in this case it enhanced congruence with teacher beliefs or contributed to incongruence.

Another group of categories was related to adjustments teachers made to try to enhance congruence. It is understood that teachers are in the process of adjusting and decision making throughout their instruction, but this category was only coded when a teacher explicitly stated that s/he was making a particular adjustment. Some teachers discussed factors which inhibited their ability to teach according to their beliefs, but this

category indicates how and when teachers discussed adjustments. The subcategories under this category included

Schedule--When a teacher changed the schedule to accommodate for particular teaching practices

Presentation Style—When a teacher chose to change the way material was presented

Questions—When a teacher chose to ask different kinds of questions either in discussion or in written assignments

Text Selection—When a teacher either changed or supplemented required texts

Reading Support—When a teacher adds assignments or technological support to help students read the texts

Assignment—When a teacher adjusts an existing assignment or creates a new one

The final coding group focused on student response during observed lessons. Work samples that were on display in classrooms were also included in this category. The following subcategories were a part of this group:

“Meaning” was coded when a student articulated an observation or insight that was not directly stated in the text. For example, when a student argued that a character knew all along that his wife had not been unfaithful and supported this theory even though the teacher disagreed, this code was used.

“Response” was coded when a student articulated a fact that was directly stated in the text or directly stated by a teacher. When a student answered a question like, “What did the ladies talk about at the tea party?” this code was used.

“Procedural” was coded when a student asked a question or made an observation regarding the procedures surrounding an activity or assignment. For example, when students asked how much time they had or whether they had to take notes, this code was used.

“No Response” was coded when a teacher asked students for a response and there was none.

“Unofficial Meaning” was coded when students created meaning that was unrelated to the text.

Validity Patton (2001) outlines three important aspects of credibility: “rigorous methods, researcher credibility, and the philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry” (p. 553). Every effort was made in this study to increase validity, the extent to which the study can be linked to the prevailing research questions. This study relied triangulation (Patton, 2001), or looking for results or patterns that appear in data collected by different methods. Data was collected from three different sources on each teacher—interview, observation and documents. Because of the multiple interview format, I was able to clarify or ask for additional information from the participants throughout the study and although this was not formal member checking, it served some of the purposes.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Although all teachers teach from a combination of beliefs, the seven participants in this study fell into two general categories—those that primarily believed that literature has fixed meaning and those that primarily believed that readers create meaning through interaction with texts. Each of the participants was assigned a pseudonym that is known only to the researcher. Pseudonyms are used throughout this study.

Fixed Meaning Belief Participants

Carolyn Jordan

Carolyn Jordan student taught at Townville High School while attending a local religious private university. She was hired the following year and has been teaching at Townville for the past four years. She is a regular teacher of the mythology courses, which are English electives and also teaches regular ninth grade English. She describes herself as being very structured and this was evident in her classes. She states,

Even if it's just silly and we think we're wasting paper on worksheets, when they have something to write down I have less behavior problems. There's more work getting done. I've just found that it's very effective. I feel like kids are more willing to work if they see the pattern and know what to expect and they're kept busy. It works for me and it keeps me calm. I get a little crazy when things are out of control. Ninth graders need structure—they won't say that but you can tell when it happens—they automatically do it.

Beliefs about literature. In her initial interview, Ms. Jordan indicated a love for and described positive reading experiences as a child that influenced her decision to work in the field of English. However, in her final interview as well as in her teaching,

Caughlan’s descriptor, “Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading and thinking skills” (p. 182) was the strongest. She cited this cultural model as being the most important in her school’s curriculum, in her school’s practice, and in her own teaching. This was confirmed because it also was the most often observed model. She listed “Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis,” as her third most important model, but it was the second most observed model in her teaching. Although Carolyn indicated that she also valued literature as a “multifaceted, reflective object,” this was the least observed model in use along with the other interactive models.

Table 2

Carolyn Jordan Cultural Models

Cultural Model	Self Report	Observed Instances
Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis	Self 3	12
Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills	Curriculum Practice Self 1	22
Literature is an expression of place and time		7
Literature provides personal enjoyment		4
Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives	Self 2	4
Literature is a tool for mediating pastoral relationships—clarifying values, attitudes, dispositions, etc.		4

This evidence of Ms. Jordan’s commitment to a fixed model of literature and to teaching skills was seen in her use of vocabulary instruction and plot-based quizzes,

which included knowledge and comprehension questions like, “Whom did the children sit with at the trial?” During the *To Kill a Mockingbird* unit, Ms. Jordan’s policy was that if over half the class failed the quiz, there would be another one the following day on the next assigned reading, usually 2-3 chapters. During the unit, students took quizzes almost every day with largely the same group of students passing and failing on each of those days. Students also completed journal assignments with each assigned reading. These journal questions allowed for longer, more developed answers, but still remained largely focused on reading skills or the terms of New Criticism. For example, one journal assignment was, “Discuss two examples of hypocrisy from these chapters.”

These journals provided the basis for class discussion. Discussion consistently followed the pattern of teacher-student-teacher, described as “Asymmetrical Turn-taking” (Beach & Marshall 1991, p. 53). This generally was by design. Jordan states, “I know when I don't give my kids pointed questions a lot of times, I don't get answers or the answers that I get are so surfacy that they weren't thinking about it and so, I've noticed time and time again—especially with this group of ninth graders I have to point them where I want them to go. I have to have specific questions. I have to have specific examples.”

Congruence. Although Ms. Jordan taught according to her beliefs, she stated that her students did not respond as she has hoped. Caroline cited a number of factors when she discussed whether she was or was not able to accomplish her goals with her ninth grade class, citing 11 times that student motivation was the reason why her teaching was not congruent with her goals.

Table 3

Carolyn Jordan Congruence Factors

Congruence Factors	Congruent	Incongruent
Background Experience	0	0
Community Expectation	3	5
Preparing for Future	1	0
Staff Collegiality	3	0
Student Motivation	4	11
Student Preparation	2	6
Teacher Confidence	0	2
Testing	3	2
Time	0	7
Text	2	8
Curriculum	2	0

Ms. Jordan indicated that she felt she could not influence these factors. She explained,

Hopefully when they get older, like juniors and when we get more toward the end of the year they're able to do that, but you gotta know your kids and ninth graders, I don't know. When you ask, 'What do you think?' some of them will have an idea, but most of them won't. Honors is probably different. Those kids are more ready for that, but these kids aren't ready to be independent like that yet.

Although texts were also cited a number of times, when Ms. Jordan discussed whether the texts were congruent with her goals, she always discussed texts in relationship to students, indicating that the students were able, but not willing to “work” to engage with the text or that weren’t ready to tackle a difficult text. She also discussed how she felt rushed throughout the unit, but not having the flexibility to adjust the schedule as students fell behind. Although Ms. Jordan was enthusiastic about how her department worked together and said that her teaching was enhanced, she did discuss the objections that the wider community had about controversial texts, particularly the 10th grade text, *Catcher in the Rye*.

Adjustments. However, Ms. Jordan made few adjustments during the unit. Consistent with a fixed view of literature, she tended to view her unit as fixed as well, thinking in terms of “next year” rather than adjusting the next day or within the class period. She stated, “I like a lot of the tools that I came up with this year. I did the journals differently and those language lessons I think went really well and I want to do more of those. So, yeah, there were some good things although they (the students) tended to struggle more than they needed to.”

Table 5

Caroline Jordan Adjustments

Adjustments	Observed Instances
Schedule	0
Presentation Style	0
Questions	2

Text Selection	1
Reading support	0
Assignment	3

Ms. Jordan indicated verbally and the observations also indicated that she adjusted both her assignments and the types of questions she asked to try to increase engagement. Ms. Jordan, however, did not question the use of the text itself. When asked why she thought students were not doing the reading, she replied,

Um, I think they could read it, but they weren't. One thing—a lot of these kids—this ninth grade class—they're just not big readers, so *To Kill a Mockingbird* might be kind of scary for them . . . they get to this book and right off the bat there are words that they don't know. The chapters are long and so some of them got intimidated and they weren't willing to get through it to get to the good parts. The kids who did very much enjoyed it—they wanted to know what happened next—they looked forward to it and even if they didn't get everything, they got the basics.

For Carolyn, the classic text, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, was a “hump” that she had to somehow help students get over. She recognized that there were many aspects of the text that were difficult for students, but she was committed to the text that her department had chosen and indicated that the students were the source of the incongruence, citing, “this ninth grade class.” For Ms. Jordan, not only did texts have largely fixed meanings, but the texts themselves were fixed, and students were credited as the main source of incongruence. She was not willing to adjust the text.

Student Response. Overall, Ms. Jordan reflected that she was unhappy with her students' engagement with literature. She described her students as, "Not quite as self-directed as I'm used to. It might just be the class—it might be something else. We'll see how it goes next year, you know." Ms. Jordan's classes consisted of rapid-fire recitation where students answered short answer questions in quick succession.

Table 4

Carolyn Jordan Student Participation

Student Participation	Number of Instances
Meaning	14
Response	71
Procedural	11
No Response	13
Unofficial Meaning	6

Ms. Jordan's classes had more discrete instances of participation than any other participant in the study, but the vast majority of them were where students responded to direct questions from the teacher with short answers that were then evaluated by the teacher. Even when students were engaged, they tended to respond in teacher-prescribed ways instead of making their own meaning through interaction. Ms. Jordan extensively used whole-class instruction when discussing a chapter and the vast majority of student participation was centered around response, which means that students were supplying predetermined answers to teacher-generated questions. For example, in a discussion of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the following the following conversation took place.

Ms. Jordan began with a question, “What connection does Mrs. Merriwether have to the African-Americans?”

“She has a cook,” a student offers.

The teacher replies, “Yes, she has a cook named Sophie and since the trial, Sophie has been acting ‘nonChristian.’ How has that been?”

A student answers, “She mopes.”

“Yes, she calls them the Darkies—what a horrible word,” Ms. Jordan comments, quoting the character Mrs. Merriwether, “‘If she keeps this up, I’ll have to fire her.’ Why is she a hypocrite?”

Another student comments, “Oh! She’s trying to help people who are sad, but she doesn’t care about the people around her.”

Ms. Jordan agrees, “Yes, they are worried about the people far away, but they are upset with people with problems right in their hometown.”

Although Ms. Jordan had by far the most instances of participation in the class sessions that were observed as a result of her rapid-fire recitation style, only about twelve percent of those instances indicated that students were constructing meaning or bringing their own insights to the discussion.

There were also students who chose not to engage at all. During one observation, “only seventeen of the twenty-nine students appeared to be working with either their books open or notebooks out and writing (or both.) It is silent—there is no one talking. Eleven students are just sitting with their heads down or doodling.” Frequently during class discussions Ms. Jordan’s initial questions were met with no response from the

students. The quizzes as well, with fewer than half of the students passing the quizzes repeatedly, showed that students were not engaging with the text.

Tracy Johnson

Another participant who treated literature as primarily fixed was Tracy Johnson. Tracy Johnson had been teaching five years and taught at Smith High School part time during the year of this study. Originally from the local area, she attended an urban International Baccalaureate school similar to Smith. She completed her teaching degree at the regional major research university in the area and was in her first year of working at Smith. Because she was new and part-time, she did not teach in her own classroom, but had to move from room to room throughout the day.

She taught two sections of regular ninth grade English during the time of this study. She was drawn to teaching English through literature.

High school is probably when I decided that I would be an English teacher, although I had thought I would be since I was four, but in high school what drew me to literature when I decided to be a teacher instead of like math or something? Math was boring because it was straightforward—at least at the high school level. In English I saw the potential for viewing a piece from so many different angles and there's not one right answer all the time. I liked that ambiguity because it was difficult and I had to struggle with it and I liked the challenge.

Beliefs about literature. However, much of our conversation was marked with disappointment and discouragement. When asked what she considered to be an ideal class period, she quickly replied, “I don't know if I have those good days.” In her follow up interview, a similar tone echoed. When asked to describe an assignment that she was

happy with, she replied, “That was a good assignment—they seemed to like that, kind of. . . They never seem to like anything, but they did it and were somewhat engaged. They would never admit if they did like it.” Ms. Johnson’s classes repeatedly employed activities that were intended to engage students and encourage interaction with each other. For example, she started the unit with a tea party, where she encouraged the students to discuss a list of prepared questions in a tea party format, reflective of Southern high society. In most observations, students did complete the assignments, but they did so with a lot of off-task behavior, which required Ms. Johnson to deal with these behaviors rather than the literature itself.

Table 6

Tracy Johnson Cultural Models

Cultural Model	Self Report	Observed Instances
Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis		14
Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills		30
Literature is an expression of place and time		3
Literature provides personal enjoyment	Self 2	11

Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives	Self 1	8
Literature is a tool for mediating pastoral relationships—clarifying values, attitudes, dispositions, etc.	Curriculum Self 3	10

Although Ms. Johnson indicated in her initial interview that she enjoyed the ambiguity of literature, her teaching did not indicate that belief. Her personal preference was for Caughlan’s characterization of literature as a “multifaceted reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives.” Her second preference was for “Literature provides personal enjoyment,” and her third preference was for “Literature as a tool for mediating pastoral relationships—clarifying values, attitudes, dispositions, etc.” There was very little overlap between her beliefs what she perceives as her school’s curriculum, which she says, prefers “Literature as a tool for mediating pastoral relationships.” She declined to answer which cultural model best fit her school’s practice because she didn’t feel she knew very much about what other teachers in her school did. Tracy did not indicate that she valued the idea of literature as a text for analysis through new criticism, nor did she indicate that her school’s curriculum valued it. She also did not value literature as a tool for clarifying values as highly as some other participants.

When she was asked about how she viewed reader response, she replied, “That is more of a means to an end. You get them interested so they are able to do the other kinds

of things. That's the easiest inroad I think, to establish a personal relationship, but then I would hope that occasionally the kids could get beyond that, but I don't know, ninth grade seems to struggle with it."

However, in observations, the majority of her teaching focused on literature as teaching skills and the terms and concepts of New Criticism. For example, during a group activity, students had to answer the following questions:

Who do the main characters seem to be?

What do you know about each character? Be as specific as possible.

What do you know about the narrator? How do you know that?

What does the setting seem to be? How do you know?

What do you think the main events of the story will be? Give support for your predictions.

Predict the theme or message of the novel

Ms. Johnson had the least "fit" between her beliefs about what literature instruction should be and what her practice actually was. She exhibited forty-seven instances where literature was treated primarily as fixed compared to just twenty-nine instances that reflected a more interactive view of literature. Although she had described an ideal interactive model, she was unable to enact it in her practice.

Congruence. Tracy experienced frustration as her desire to teach in a particular way was difficult to achieve. There were a number of factors which prevented her from teaching in the way she chose including student motivation and preparation, time, testing expectations. She also, however, listed many of these same things as factors which helped her reach her goals, including the text.

Table 7

Tracy Johnson Congruence Factors

Congruence Factors	Congruent	Incongruent
Background Experience	0	0
Community Expectation	0	3
Preparing for Future	0	1
Staff Collegiality	1	0
Student Motivation	5	5
Student Preparation	2	3
Teacher Confidence	2	1
Testing	0	2
Time	1	5
Text	5	0
Curriculum	0	0

Running out of time was the most frequently observed factor that prevented Ms. Johnson from teaching as she chose, but in interviews, Ms. Johnson discussed her students at length, focusing particularly on their limitations. She stated,

My type of analysis—where they're expected to consider things at the level of the word and why that word is in the sentence is impossible for them because they don't see the nuances. They don't think, "Why is that alliteration in here?" That kind of thing is not possible for them to do because they don't notice the words or

they don't, um. . . They can't, because they're not good readers or writers, notice the difference between a good sentence and a badly written sentence. They don't notice enough to say, "This is why it's a good choice." I feel like it's not possible.

Her students were extremely active and had difficulty focusing. Much of her time was spent on management and procedures and students had difficulty engaging with the text. She indicated, "One thing that I would do differently, I thought about this towards the end--when we listen in class, I would have them fill out a little answer worksheet so they were listening for something." Ms. Johnson acknowledged that students had difficulty reading the text. When asked, "Would you describe your students as resistant readers or struggling readers? How much did their ability to read or their inability to read color your planning?" Ms. Johnson replied,

I guess the fact that they were resistant caused me to do a lot more reading in class. I don't know if that's the right response or not because it almost takes away the point of them trying to learn how to read. It gets them into the story, but maybe it doesn't help them realize that, 'This is a skill that I do need to work on.' The teachers make it easy for them, so then they don't have to learn to read. I think—I don't know what else to do because I don't have them one on one.

She adjusted the timing of the unit accordingly, comparing her teaching of the unit to that of other teachers, indicating that she chose to do the book in six weeks instead of four weeks as other teachers did. Other teachers had claimed that students weren't doing the reading at home, so Ms. Johnson offered more opportunity to read in class and took the book more slowly, although this cost her the opportunity to do many of the follow-up activities that she desired.

She also discussed that many of her students did not prefer reading fiction.

A lot of these kids, too, tended not to be interested in things they consider fake—they don't like fiction. Um. . .so if I had been able to do that sort of thing—got them interested in the real side of things, like how Harper Lee got inspired to write this story, then maybe it would have been more engaging. When I did tell them halfway through that this story was based on something real, they said, ‘Hmmm, maybe this is a little more interesting than I thought’ . . .they don't like made up stories. A lot of them have told me, “Why should I read something that's made up?”

However, Ms. Johnson expressed repeatedly that she didn't feel that changing texts was appropriate. She was asked, “Would you teach this book again to the group that you had? “

After a long pause, Ms. Johnson answered,

To this group? I guess I would. I think it was an important one. Initially I had thought I would try to get them into the world of it more by having them call each other ‘Miss So and So or Mr. So and So,’ and try to enter the world of the story more, but I just wasn't sure that I could figure out how to do that. . .

Although there were many factors which contributed to incongruence between Ms. Johnson's beliefs and her teaching behaviors, Ms. Johnson maintained a loyalty to the text.

Adjustments. Ms. Johnson was in an almost constant state of adjustment, trying multiple strategies to help her students, including numerous attempts at all of the kinds of adjustments in the study. Ms. Johnson was the most vocal about the adjustments she

made to help students understand and respond to the text, often repeating, even after particular lesson, “I should have,” or “Maybe I should have tried something different.”

Table 8

Tracy Johnson Adjustments

Adjustments	Observed Instances
Schedule	5
Presentation Style	5
Questions	4
Text Selection	4
Reading support	9
Assignment	6

She provided significant reading support as indicated above, checking out the audio book from the public library and playing much of it in class as students followed along. She also made the audio book available later in the day as students could come in during their study halls to continue their reading. Ms. Johnson was very responsive to students and students were not hesitant to ask questions when they did not understand something. An example of Tracy’s responsiveness to the class occurred when discussing the children’s attending the trial.

Ms Johnson asked the class, “Do you think Scout knows? Remember her dad told her that rape was “carnal knowledge of a female without her consent?”

A student asked, “What does that mean?”

“It's a biblical term that means physical knowledge of someone, not spiritual knowledge. So Scout probably didn't know what was going on, but she was offended that the others didn't think she knew,” replied the teacher.

The student is still puzzled, “So if you just know about a lady, that's rape?”

Ms. Johnson explained, “Back in the day, they used that term to say that someone slept with someone. That's why the courtroom is such an uproar. You guys were very quiet, so I'm not sure you got that. “

She adjusted to her students frequently but viewed many of these adjustments as disappointing compromises. She remained loyal to the text, but brought in some supplementary texts such as newspaper articles about the author or the time period as well as showed the film version of the book in class. Verbally, though, she maintained that her students should read *To Kill a Mockingbird*—that it was a good book for her students.

Student Response Ms. Johnson's students had a high number of meaning-making incidents, primarily due to an introductory activity where students were given several quotes from the story before they read to try to determine what the themes of the story were and who the characters might be. Students were quite successful in making meaning as they approached the story they had not read with small, manageable quotes that they could easily read. As students tried to determine the main character, they discussed the quotes, “We were curious about that one guy in the house.”

Another student checked the quote sheet, “Jem and I are second graders.”

The original student celebrated, “Yes!”

Students had to make meaning in this activity, but then they checked their meanings against the “real” meaning in the text as they read, so although the chart indicates that students made meaning frequently, other than in this one activity, students and the teacher were primarily concerned with understanding what happened in the story.

Table 9

Tracy Johnson Student Participation

Student Participation	Observed Instances
Meaning	18
Response	8
Procedural	6
No Response	7
Unofficial Meaning	2

Students in Ms. Johnson’s classes did not show the level of literary analysis that she had hoped for, but Tracy was successful in getting her students to make meaning, albeit on a very basic plot level. However, her profound disappointment over how she was not able to teach to the goals of literature that she really valued colored the whole experience for her. She viewed her students’ reading abilities as a significant limitation and felt somewhat forced into treating literature as fixed, particularly when she was

committed to *To Kill a Mockingbird* as the primary text. Her students were not ready to do the kind of analysis that she valued.

Rachel Beecher

Another Townville teacher with a largely fixed view of literature was Rachel Beecher. Rachel Beecher regularly teaches Advanced Placement and College in the Schools courses with the most motivated and talented students at Townville High School. “I’m in a ridiculously skewed classroom, so. . . That’s a huge responsibility. . . And a huge workload,” she reported. Ms. Beecher has a reputation in the school for being a demanding instructor and a demanding grader. She regularly checks *Sparknotes* and *Wikipedia* before she creates her “DURT” (Did U Read iT?) quizzes. “I get smarter every year,” she says. “They teach me so so much and that’s such cliché to say but part of what sucks and what I love about teaching these kids is that they ask questions--I go home and research and be ready for them tomorrow. I look back at my lessons from six years ago and I think, ‘is that all I thought they could do?’” She has been teaching for ten years, coming to teaching after a number of forays into other fields. She holds a masters’ degree in education with significant graduate course work in literature, all from the area’s major regional research university. She professed, “I hated high school—absolutely hated it. . . but then I thought I might be able to go back and make it right for them.”

Beliefs about literature. Ms. Beecher chose “Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading and writing skills; Literature is a multifaceted object, capable of being seen from multiple critical perspectives; and Literature is an expression of place and time” as being most important in her teaching. She had a significant focus on the skills students need in the future at the expense of other worthy goals. She commented,

That was the one on your chart which made me saddest in a way—where it says, ‘Literature provides personal enjoyment?’ and I could not put myself as a ‘number one’ for that because I’m sending kids off to college and I think literary analysis is the most applicable skill to any major because what they are doing is looking at a text—and that text could be a frog they’ve dissected—and they’re trying to see what’s different in this text.

Table 10

Rachel Beecher Cultural Models

Cultural Model	Self Report	Observed Instances
Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis	Curriculum	14
Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills	Self 1	9
Literature is an expression of place and time	Self 1	4
Literature provides personal enjoyment	Practice	7
Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives	Self 1	8
Literature is a tool for mediating pastoral relationships—clarifying values, attitudes, dispositions, etc.		3

She indicated that students come to her with a good ability to recognize symbols or other literary elements, but the next question is, “And why do we care? I just think literary analysis spans so much.” In Ms. Beecher’s classes, students were rewarded for what she called, “close reading.” This was the ability to focus on specific aspects of the text and showing why those aspects of the text effectively communicate the author’s message. She had nine instances where these reading skills were evident in her teaching.

Rachel insisted that when her students make meaning, they do it within the bounds of literary scholarship. By finding, she often means that students find particular literary devices or techniques used by the author. This explains why although Ms. Beecher did not indicate that she valued literature “as an opaque text for analysis,” the observation of her classes turned up a number of instances. She explained, “Then students must explain how these literary devices or techniques help the reader to understand the author better.” In Ms. Beecher’s case, the author was generally the authority and students get more from the book when they understand more about the author’s meaning. She said, “We’ll make a big star chart on the board of all the synonyms you can think of for this word. How would this have changed the sentence if they had chosen another word? And they love it.”

Although she wanted readers to draw their own conclusions, she still depended on a fixed view of text to validate those conclusions. She indicated that she wants students to find their own symbols and meaning, but what counts as meaning for her is limited.

Most of the discussions we have with ninth and tenth graders and even a lot of our eleventh graders are plot-based, and then theme-based. Most of the questions we ask are like, “In *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden wears this hunting cap and he says,

'this is my people-shooting hat.'" What does that mean and what does it do? We point out the symbols for them. We point it out to them all the time and give them study guides. The more we ask them plot-based questions or the more we point them toward significant symbols or turning points, the less students are validated in what they find in a text. I find that really troubling.

However, many of the assignments that Ms. Beecher used did focus on literary analysis, and they did ask students to find predetermined meaning. The handout for Rachel's College English Class asked the following questions as students were responding to Stephen King's "Strawberry Spring."

What was the author trying to get across by using the word he/she did? What does that particular diction add, imply, suggest, or enhance?

What picture is created by the use of the word? What are the connotations (implications) of that word?

What else comes to mind when you use that word? What feelings come to the surface?

If the author uses figurative language like a metaphor, simile or onomatopoeia what does that figurative language accomplish?

What other ideas does s/he want you to think about in addition to the subject being compared? What effect does this have on you as a reader, on the character, on the theme?

Are any words repeated, either by themselves (scream, scream, screen) or via synonymns (scream howl, roar, shriek, yeall)? What is the author trying to emphasize in this passage?

Although Ms. Beecher works with the most able of students, she believes this experience of “finding” is important for all students. She cited her experiences teaching ninth grade.

I totally think that kids are capable of doing this at a younger age, but we don't free them too much. I think if once per every novel. . .to have a moment when you say, ‘Okay, let's look at this passage—what do you see.’ And stop saying what I see and have them regurgitate it for the test. ‘What do you notice?’ I think it would knock your socks off what they would notice.

So, although she encouraged students to have varied and wide opportunities to choose what they thought was important in the text, she defined importance as those things which enhanced the author’s message or meaning, still reflecting a largely fixed view of literature.

Congruence. Although at times the traditional curriculum and time schedules of school were barriers to Ms. Beecher’s desired way of teaching, for the most part she indicated that she is able to accomplish her goals. Student motivation and preparation were the most salient factors that allow Ms. Beecher to reach the goals she has set out to achieve. She indicated repeatedly that her students were exceptionally motivated and prepared to do the kinds of sophisticated interpretation she expected. In some ways, Ms. Beecher had to swim against the general school tide in order to challenge these exceptional students, choosing more difficult texts than other teachers and expecting more sophisticated discussion. She felt that her curricular choices were dictated more by what colleges want and what the AP overseers want rather than the school’s established

curriculum. She had a relatively equal number of instances where an outside factor influenced her teaching positively or negatively.

Table 11

Rachel Beecher Congruence Factors

Factors	Congruent	Incongruent
Background Experience	0	2
Community Expectation	1	2
Preparing for Future	1	2
Staff Collegiality	0	0
Student Motivation	3	1
Student Preparation	4	3
Teacher Confidence	1	0
Testing	0	1
Time	0	2
Text	1	0
Curriculum	0	2

The most common factors which enhanced Ms. Beecher's ways of teaching were student preparation and motivation, which is consistent with her attitude toward the type of student who is most often in her classes. Having background in a variety of fields and a strong knowledge of what students will need in the future resulted in a laser focus on

what students will need in the future, and at times that focus drove her to move against her own preferences in teaching. For example, she says this about enjoying texts.

My goal is to make them thinking readers and to hopefully (splitting my infinitive) make them want to read broccoli.” She aims for students to take up challenges and to choose more difficult texts. “But I want kids to know the difference—It’s like knowing the difference between the *Bourne Identity* movies and *Memento*—a film vs. a movie—literature vs. just books.

This kind of eagerness to think translates into ideology. Ms. Beecher perceived Townville High School as reflecting a largely conservative political community, which at times also colored her teaching. She talked about her ideological goals for students in political terms, “Yeah—not “no Republicans” although I’m a crazy pinko commie lefty, but no more idiots. I’d elect George F. Will tomorrow—I love that man—not Rush Limbaugh. One of my secret goals is to someday turn out a conservative writer to replace William F. Buckley or George Will—someone who can write well enough to make a reader, no matter how crazy leftist you are—think. Full stop. Yeah.”

Adjustments. Because Ms. Beeches teaches mostly college bound classes and is responsible to College in the Schools and Advanced Placement programs, she adjusted to these programs more than she concerned herself with the school’s curriculum. She has autonomy to choose any texts that may appear on the Advanced Placement test and generally teaches recent or current literary works such as *When the Emperor was Divine*, *Sula*, and *Bastard Out of Carolina*, none of which appear on the official school curriculum. Ms. Beecher also presents in a very demanding and entertaining style and uses this style to get students excited about the puzzle that literature presents.

Table 12

Rachel Beecher Adjustments

Adjustments	Observed Instances
Schedule	1
Presentation Style	3
Questions	2
Text Selection	4
Reading support	2
Assignment	0

Ms. Beecher discussed or exhibited adjustments in texts more often than other kinds of adjustments. Because she had significant freedom to choose texts which would challenge her students, she often chose contemporary works and rotated those works quite frequently. Her other adjustments, in presentation style, in questions, reading support and schedule tended to be as a result of the requirements of the various outside agencies like the Advanced Placement Board, the university which sponsored College in the Schools, and what she perceived colleges would demand from her students.

Student response. This resulted in a number of instances where students make their own meaning, but also a high level of instances when students are responding to the teacher's predetermined meaning. There was an almost equal balance between students making their own meaning and responding to the teacher's predetermined meaning. Although Ms. Beecher's personal style is entertaining and enthusiastic, she exhibited the fewest instances of student input in her classes than any other teacher at Townville.

Table 13

Rachel Beecher Student Participation

Student Participation	Number of Instances
Meaning	10
Response	9
Procedural	3
No Response	0
Unofficial Meaning	0

Even though students made meaning frequently, as evidenced by the ten instances listed above, the teacher expected a very specific type of meaning. When the class had read a Stephen King story Ms. Beecher discussed the ways in which the author created a specific effect in the beginning.

She asked the class, “How does that work?”

A student replied, “It adds emphasis.” He sharply banged on his desk, reading dramatically, “There was someone *dark* among us.”

Another student added, “He has a feeling that he's safe from the killer but he doesn't know that he's the killer. It gives the reader a sense of security but moves the suspense forward.”

Students were making meaning by discussing how the text worked, but they weren't encouraged to make personal connections as one might in reader response. Ms. Beecher recounted,

I'm always telling them, “If you want to make a personal connection in the book, that's fine—this reminds me of my Uncle Chuckie, you know, but why does that

matter? What did that illuminate for you that I wouldn't have seen?" I don't want reader response crap. It sounds horrible to say—it makes me sound like I don't care about them as people. But reader response is so often limited. When you're writing for an outside audience you have to assume that the reader cares about you. And I do in a high school setting. Your college professors might not.

Participants That Showed Evidence of Change

Anne Schultz

Anne Schultz has been teaching at Smith High School for four years. Originally from a small city in a neighboring state, she completed her education at a religious liberal arts college several hours away. She was assigned ninth grade English during the time of this study and had sections of both regular ninth graders as well as pre-IB ninth grade classes, called MYP sections, after IB's Middle Years Program designation. She also taught *Romeo and Juliet* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* during her courses.

Beliefs about literature. Ms. Schultz reported that her primary model for teaching literature was that "literature is a text for teaching critical reading/thinking skills," which was the most observed model with 20 instances. The second most observed model was not listed by Ms. Schultz, but was "Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis." She frequently asked students to use the terms of New Criticism in activities and discussion. Her second and third most favored cultural models, "Literature is an expression of place and time," and "Literature is a multifaceted object" yielded the fewest observed instances of any of the models. Although clearly her most important model was reflected in her practice, her second two models were not reflected in the observations of this study.

Table 14

Anne Schultz Cultural Models

Cultural Model	Self Report	Observed Instances
Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis		15
Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills	Practice Self 1	20
Literature is an expression of place and time	Curriculum Self 2	0
Literature provides personal enjoyment		8
Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives	Self 3	2
Literature is a tool for mediating pastoral relationships—clarifying values, attitudes, dispositions, etc.		4

In Ms. Schultz's initial interview, she emphasized the learning of literary terms and completing literary analysis. The overall goals for her ninth grade courses were as follows:

(1) Students will be able to read and write texts to understand and express the concepts of self, community, and culture.

(2) Students will be able to expand their personal lexicons by completing vocabulary lessons.

(3) Students will be able to communicate ideas through writing and speaking for a variety of purposes and audiences.

(4) Students will be able to read, discuss, analyze, and write about traditional and contemporary works from civilizations and countries around the world.

The course also required the study of the literary terms of setting, narrator, point of view, characterization, plot, conflict, simile, and imagery, all reflecting the model of literature as text for analysis. These terms strongly indicate an emphasis on literary analysis and New Criticism. This was also indicated in her initial interview. In her practice as well, Ms. Schultz treated literature as fixed. A typical class session began with an instructional focus question. Students are expected to begin writing on the question as soon as the class period begins and the question serves as the beginning point for the discussion of the chapters students had read overnight. Students and the teacher would quickly discuss the study guide questions for the chapter but then the teacher would ask for questions that the students had. The students were expected to bring questions about the text. Ms. Schultz frequently told students that if they asked good questions, they would not have as many quizzes.

For example in one exchange, a student began by asking, “Why do they call her a chameleon?”

Ms. Schultz addressed the rest of the class, “What's a chameleon? Why does a chameleon change color?”

“To blend in—to match its surroundings,” another student answered.

An additional student protested, “Hey, that's what I said. . .”

Ms. Schultz interjected, “Raise your hand so I can call on you and get some points.”

“So, what are we saying about Miss Maudie? What does she do?” asked Ms. Schultz.

A student replied, “She blends into her surroundings.”

The teacher continued to question, “What surroundings—what's she doing? What are the two settings that she's in? To student—will you read it for us? After her 5 o'clock bath, she appears in beauty. What do you think she's wearing?”

“A gown or a dress,” another student answered.

Ms. Schultz moved the conversation to literary terms, “When we say that Miss Maudie is a chameleon what literary term are we using? Feel free to get out your notes”

“A metaphor comparing her to a chameleon,” replied a student.

Ms. Schultz added, “And how are they similar?”

Several students chimed in, “They adapt.”

“And they adapt to what?” the teacher asked.

“Their environment,” the students replied.

“Their surroundings, right. Why is this not a simile? Look at your notes,” Ms. Schultz instructed.

Several students looked in their notes and then chimed in, “A simile uses like or as.”

The observations took place during the beginning and middle of the unit before any changes were made, when her Anne's teaching generally reflected these fixed views.

However, she experienced an intriguing development during her teaching of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Ms. Schultz indicated that she had been unhappy with the engagement of students last year and was working to make some changes in her *To Kill a Mockingbird* unit. She explained, “Well, my main goal kind of switched in the middle of teaching this. . . This year just kind of impromptu, I decided that we needed to do a lot more discussion about the themes that they were reading and what the characters are going. . . Maybe that helped them be more engaged too.”

This change included much more personal interaction with the characters and the text. Ms. Schultz also led the students to discuss the more personal themes of the story, namely race. She reported a very lively discussion about the use of the “N” word in the book and Ms. Schultz read Gloria Naylor’s essay, “The Meanings of a Word.” The Instructional Focus one day after she made changes was as follows: “Atticus tells Scout, ‘You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view. . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it’ (Lee 30). Explain what Atticus means by this. Do you agree? Why or why not?” Ms. Schultz was extremely enthusiastic about the students’ response to this change.

Congruence. Generally, Anne was comfortable teaching from her beliefs, exhibiting far more factors of congruence than incongruence, with twenty mentions of factors that encouraged her to teach from her beliefs and only seven mentions of factors hindered this process. Even though she and Ms. Johnson had similar groups of students, Ms. Schultz did not feel that they were unmotivated or unprepared and did not provide the extensive reading support that Ms. Johnson did.

Anne Schultz Congruence Factors

Factors	Congruent	Incongruent
Background Experience	0	0
Community Expectation	4	1
Preparing for Future	0	1
Staff Collegiality	0	0
Student Motivation	6	2
Student Preparation	7	0
Teacher Confidence	2	0
Testing	0	0
Time	0	2
Text	1	1
Curriculum	0	0

Ms. Schultz appeared quite comfortable in her teaching setting. When things didn't go as planned, she took responsibility for it and continued to reflect and adjust both during and after her teaching.

Adjustments. Although I observed Ms. Schultz making eleven adjustments, a quantity in the middle of all the participants, she explained that the adjustments she made were effective. She adjusted her questions and her assignments explicitly to encourage students to engage with the big ideas of the story. Ms. Schultz seemed to strategically make adjustments, focusing on student response to texts rather than on her actions as

teachers. This is shown by her three most commonly adjusted factors which were the questions she asked, the texts she selected, and the assignments she required of students.

Table 16

Anne Schultz Adjustments

Adjustments	Observed Instances
Schedule	0
Presentation Style	1
Questions	3
Text Selection	3
Reading support	1
Assignment	3

Although Anne felt that *To Kill a Mockingbird* was a good text for her class, adding the Naylor article was an adjustment that made a strong impact. Ms. Schultz recounted,

My fourth period especially got heated. We started talking about the meaning and use of the N word and what do we do with that. We talked about, ‘Do you hear this? Do you think it's appropriate? Should this word be used by anyone? If so, whom? Should authors be able to use it? Should white authors be able to use it?’ Anyway, that was quite the heated discussion.

This article gave this very diverse class an opportunity to address the racial content of the book. She explained, “I think the classes I had this year were very

comfortable talking about it which was a nice departure from last year when everyone was just silent and just stared. It got heated at points.”

Student Response. Ms. Schultz’s students had 63 instances of participation, which was the third highest of all the participants. Meaning and response were equally represented, but Ms. Schultz’s students had 23 observed instances of meaning, which was the highest number of observed instances of meaning of any participant.

Table 17

Anne Schultz Student Participation

Student Participation	Observed Instances
Meaning	23
Response	23
Procedural	11
No Response	3
Unofficial Meaning	3

The class discussion of the Naylor article, was not observed, but from Ms. Schultz’s account, the supplementary text along with the adjustment to more open-ended questioning, it appeared that at least one student was increasing her ability to make meaning. She explained,

I felt like I had good rationale, and no one really seemed offended—well there was one girl who did seem offended that we were talking about it at first—then when we started talking though it. Actually, she’s one of the students that started paying attention in class that day. She had transferred into my class at some point

in the middle of *Romeo and Juliet* and it was hard to get engaged at that point.

After that discussion until about the last week of school her attendance improved greatly, she started doing work.

Ms. Schultz was able to expand her teaching beyond her original beliefs and showed a variety of approaches in response to the students. Ms. Schultz's beliefs about literature were quite flexible as she responded to student needs. Because she taught out of almost all of Caughlan's models at particular times, perhaps Anne Schultz's beliefs about the fixed nature of literature were changing as she observed more and more students making meaning from texts.

Vicki Mitchell

Vicki Mitchell was the third teacher whom I observed at Smith High School. She was originally from a rural part of the state and had been trained as a teacher at the large research university in the area. She had been teaching in the school for eleven years after student teaching at another high school in the district. "This was when there was starting to be a lot of turnover, but there still were a lot of senior teachers here and I was the new young one," she explained. Ms. Mitchell taught regular tenth grade English and twelfth grade International Baccalaureate Literature. She had done significant work on the tenth grade curriculum and was considered a leader on that team, although the school did not designate curriculum leaders as such.

During the time of this study, I observed the tenth grade class reading the young adult novel, *Make Lemonade*. This novel is written in verse, so Ms. Mitchell focused on figurative language. A typical class session would include a very short discussion of the chapters that students had read for homework as well as perhaps reading aloud another

few pages. Then the teacher projected a chart of figurative language and asked students what they had found in their reading. Students took out the individual charts that they had previously filled out while reading and shared their examples with the whole class as the teacher added them to the chart.

Beliefs about literature. Ms. Mitchell expressed a preference on the Caughlan grid for “Literature provides personal enjoyment, with “Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object,” and “A tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills” listed as second and third. She listed her school’s curriculum and practice both as prioritizing “Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills.”

Table 18

Vicki Mitchell Cultural Models

Cultural Model	Self Report	Observed Instances
Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis		11
Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills	Curriculum Practice Self 3	8
Literature is an expression of place and time		3
Literature provides personal enjoyment	Self 1	3
Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives	Self 2	4

Literature is a tool for
mediating pastoral
relationships—
clarifying values,
attitudes, dispositions,
etc.

The observed instances of teaching to these models, however, did not reflect her goals. Mitchell’s handouts resembled many of the other teachers in the study—requiring students to identify allusions, similes, metaphors, personification and symbols and requiring them to answer plot questions like, “Why does LaVaughn miss school in Chapter 13?” or “What gift does LaVaughn give Jeremy?” Townville’s curriculum and practiced focused on critical reading and an emphasis on literary terms. However, in Ms. Mitchell’s classes, students were very enthusiastic about the text and it was very clear that most if not all of them were doing the reading, which is a departure from the other participants.

Congruence. Ms. Mitchell had thirteen mentions of congruence with only seven mentions of incongruence. She had a lot of control over many of the factors, with the most important one being text choice. She had been influential in the selection of texts for the tenth grade curriculum and felt that the texts were embraced and enjoyed by students who she viewed as being well-motivated but not always well-prepared.

Table 19

Vicki Mitchell Congruence Factors

Congruence Factors	Congruent	Incongruent
Background Experience	1	0

Community Expectation	3	2
Preparing for Future	0	0
Staff Collegiality	0	0
Student Motivation	2	0
Student Preparation	0	2
Teacher Confidence	1	1
Testing	0	0
Time	1	2
Text Curriculum	5	0
	0	0

Of all the participants, Ms. Mitchell spoke most frequently about the importance of texts, with five mentions of making texts congruent with beliefs and also with students’ interests and ability. Since Ms. Mitchell was a part of the text choice, she experienced strong congruence in this area.

Adjustments. Ms. Mitchell had the second most adjustments among all of the participants, adjusting many of the structures of her course to meet student needs, including texts, schedules, and assignments as the most observed adjustments

Table 20

Vicki Mitchell Adjustments

Adjustments	Observed Instances
Schedule	5
Presentation Style	0

Questions	1
Text Selection	6
Reading support	2
Assignment	4

Ms. Mitchell had a strong belief that the right texts make a difference in the ways that students approach literature. She discussed her choice of texts,

When I started here, the tenth grade English class did not require them to read a full-length book. That just seemed wrong to me. They read excerpts of *Moby Dick* and excerpts of I don't even remember what—*The Scarlet Letter*. It was kind of an American Lit Survey, um. . .they knew they couldn't get them to read *The Scarlet Letter*, so they bought a textbook with excerpts and said, 'Well, let's just give them a sampling,' and I totally disagreed with that. I thought, 'They're getting even less out of it than they would if they had read the whole book because an excerpt is even harder to understand when it's out of context.'"

Anyway, the first thing I did was try to find books that were accessible and that's what I've been working on.

Since her first year at the school, Ms. Mitchell had been the driving force behind the building of a library of class sets of novels for tenth graders. Due to her influence, the regular tenth grade English classes have access to over fifteen class sets of novels, almost all of which are young adult or contemporary titles, from *Montana 1948* to *Necessary Roughness to Make Lemonade*. Ms. Mitchell continued,

That came about when we had some curriculum money and I was in charge of the 10th grade team and we just went out and said “Let's pick some books that we think kids would like to read, and more is better than less.” We have a lot to choose from. They haven't all been taught, and they're not all successful, either, but we do have a lot of choices.

Ms. Mitchell was able to adjust the structures for her students in ways that she felt met their needs. Most of her adjustments were in the structures of the course, such as texts, schedules, and assignments with fewer incidents of adjustments during the class period itself.

Student response. Ms. Mitchell’s students had the second most instances of meaning making and the highest percentage of student meaning making of all the participants.

Table 21

Vicki Mitchell Student Participation

Engagement	Number of Observed Instances
Meaning	21
Response	9
Procedural	6
No Response	0
Unofficial Meaning	4

The level of engagement in her classroom was very high during discussions. Students were asked to create their own figurative expressions similar to those they found in *Make Lemonade*. Although students were loud, they were thinking hard, not just

taking the first answer that popped into their heads. One student began, “The spider leg was. . . What is something a person does when he chokes?” The student and his group discussed several possibilities.

Ms. Mitchell stopped by to check in, “Which ones of these are the hardest?” she asked.

In chorus, the students replied, “The spider leg one!”

“You have to provide the motivation,” hinted the teacher.

“The spider leg was a killer—it wanted to kill Jilly,” mused one student.

Another blurted out, “The spider leg was a murderer!”

Ms. Mitchell’s strong dependence on the right texts seemed to engage these students. Although many of her methods were similar to those with fixed views of literature, her ability to adjust texts and to encourage students to extend the material to their own experience increased student meaning making.

Participants That View Literature as Primarily Interactive

Linda Stewart

Linda Stewart, the newest teacher in the Townville English department, had been teaching at Townville just two years but had taught English for the past seventeen years in another region. After earning her teaching license at a public university in that region, she continued her education as she taught, earning a Masters’ Degree in school counseling. Her assigned courses included ninth grade English, a writing class called College English, and a journalism course which guided students in producing the school newspaper.

Beliefs about Literature

She was most interested in getting students interested in the literature through their own thinking, defining a “good reading” as when students feel as though they are having a conversation with that writer or if not the writer, the speaker and when they can take that and make meaning of it, not only the meaning that's there but also to make it relevant and say, ‘Oh, this is life.’ Whenever they can attach it to their other learning, then to me, that's the whole goal—that's the purpose—that's the joy and beauty of it all.

This is reflected in Ms. Stewart’s response to the Caughlan grid. She valued “Literature as a tool for mediating pastoral relationships,” most, followed by “Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object.” These both showed a high rate of observed instances, but not as frequently as a more fixed model, “Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills.” However, this was the model that most reflected the school’s curriculum and its practice, so Ms. Stewart dealt with some conflicting beliefs. Ms. Stewart showed the least congruence between the curriculum’s emphasis on skills and literary analysis and her own beliefs about the nature of literature. Stewart indicated that her school's curriculum and practice considered literature to be “a tool for teaching skills” as its most important goal and was aware of this incongruence. As she participated in this part of the study, she murmured, “You’d kind of wish they would line up, wouldn’t you?”

Table 22

Linda Stewart’s Cultural Models

Cultural Model	Self-Report	Observed Instances
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Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis		12
Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills	Curriculum Practice Self 3	22
Literature is an expression of place and time		2
Literature provides personal enjoyment	Self 3	10
Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives	Self 2	13
Literature is a tool for mediating pastoral relationships—clarifying values, attitudes, dispositions, etc.	Self 1	8

The number of observed instances between the fixed models and the interactive models was about equal, but Ms. Stewart often used the fixed models to move students to more interactive ones. In observations of her classroom teaching, she often spent the complete class period on five or six questions or the class would consist of nothing more than the reading of a short story and a general question, “So, what do you think?” For example, in a discussion on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, she asked, “How does Lee introduce the significance of the book's title? This is a really important question because the title means so much. Right now, as far as you know, what does this title symbolize?” She asks for speculation, not a definitive answer. When a student volunteers that the mockingbird is innocent, she nods,

Very good—a mockingbird is a symbol of innocence. You need to think about this. I really want you to consider this idea for a moment. Think about the people that you know that are smaller than you or weaker than you. Some people who are less than you—not that they aren't important but they may not have these abilities. Think about people who might pick on them—those people might never get it. Sometimes it helps to ask yourself when you see someone at the mall, “Who is this person ever going to hurt?” Usually the answer is nobody. We all do it—it's a natural thing to do.

A student responded, “When you treat someone mean you teach them that mean is normal and then that's how they treat other people.”

Ms. Stewart replied, “Very true. That's a very good point.” She paused for several seconds. “A very good point.”

This kind of conversation was typical in Ms. Stewart's classes. Almost no topic was off-limits if it was even tangentially related to the topic. For example, in one observation, the topic of sibling rivalry was mentioned. The class took about 15 minutes to tell stories about when they had fights with their brothers or sisters and debated whether parents should intervene or whether children should work it out for themselves. At times, the students only discussed one or two questions from the teacher in a whole class period as the discussion ranged from topic to topic.

Congruence. Linda generally didn't discuss or cite outside factors as contributing to her ability to teach to her beliefs. She had the fewest mention of factors of any participant in the study. She did, however, feel that she did not have a strong agreement

with what she perceived to be a largely conservative community, particularly the conservative parents of her students, mentioning this incongruency five times.

Table 23

Linda Stewart Congruence Factors

Congruence Factors	Congruent	Incongruent
Background	0	0
Experience		
Community Expectation	2	5
Preparing for Future	0	0
Staff Collegiality	0	0
Student Motivation	3	0
Student Preparation	2	1
Teacher Confidence	1	0
Testing	0	0
Time	0	1
Text	0	0
Curriculum	0	1

She had strong convictions about how students should be involved with literature and she indicated that she was in control of those decisions, sometimes to the concern of parents or other community members. Those concerns, although respected by Ms. Stewart, weren't necessarily enough to move her towards a fixed view.

Ms. Stewart appeared respectful in the face of differing beliefs. She recounts a time when she had asked students to write about their own moral code after discussing the moral code of Atticus in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

I had one young lady that just shocked the heck out of me—she felt like she was addicted to masturbation. And so as I read it all I could say was wow in the margins. I read a little more and she had verses from the Bible to back up why this was something that she felt was wrong. It made me feel really sad because from a human development standpoint, it's okay. She never mentioned inappropriate times or places, so I really didn't think she had an addiction.

Because the student felt she had resolved this through her religious community, Ms. Stewart crafted a neutral response and thanked the student for having enough trust in her to write about something so personal. However, she stated that it was difficult for her not to interject her own ideas about the subject into her response. This is a risk when a teacher asks for students to make their own meaning out of literature.

Adjustments. Ms. Stewart did not articulate or discuss many adjustments during a lesson because her entire approach was to respond to the students and adjust to them. Her lesson planning consisted of two or three starter questions and a strong knowledge of the text to be discussed. Many teachers adjusted to try to alleviate some incongruence, but in this case, there was not much incongruence, so no official adjustment was necessary. Ms. Stewart most frequently adjusted assignments in response to students who were able to make a case for moving a deadline because of the many other things that were going on, so at times she adjusted assignments or due dates in response to student needs.

Linda Stewart Adjustments

Adjustments	Observed Instances
Schedule	2
Presentation Style	2
Questions	0
Text Selection	1
Reading support	1
Assignment	3

Although Ms. Stewart's classes read the texts required by the curriculum, generally canonical texts from a textbook as well as the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Ms. Stewart was the most outspoken participant at Townville about her wish for using young adult texts in the classroom, but expressed frustration that her students were required to read within their lexile score—a numeric indication of which books were appropriate for which students.

She explained,

It's hard to find good accessible fiction for a fourteen-year-old child who reads at the college level. That's really asking an awful lot from a writer and it's really asking an awful lot from a reader—just because they have a college level vocabulary doesn't mean that they are ready to handle the symbolism—that takes some maturity. And until that time, why not read every Gary Paulsen book you can get your hands on and Chris Crutcher? It's more than decoding. It's maturity; it's background.

As students discussed the study guide (the same study guide as was used by Ms. Jordan), she stated, “You should already have your discussion questions filled out so you have something to help you discuss. If you try to fill it in as we go, you aren't getting to think on your own and get your own ideas. That is the biggest tragedy of all. It's better to have your own brain power at work, even if you are wrong.”

Student response. Linda Stewart’s students participated extensively. As mentioned earlier, class sessions often appeared quite informal, starting with a simple question, like, “What did you think?” and then including wide-ranging discussions that sometimes appeared only tangentially to the original literature. Students made meaning extensively in her classes, with the most observed instances of any other participant. Ms. Stewart often encouraged students to defend minority points of view by playing the devil’s advocate or asking students to give examples from the text. Although she used the same study guides and written materials as the other teachers at Townville, those materials were not the focus of classroom activities. The group discussion remained the focus, even if the class only addressed two or three questions in an entire class period.

Table 25

Linda Stewart Student Participation

Student Participation	Number of Instances
Meaning	19
Response	14
Procedural	5
No Response	0

Ms. Stewart began a discussion of the Kate Chopin story “Desiree’s Baby” with a simple, “What did you guys think?” Students seemed to understand the way that the story slowly revealed to the reader that the baby was Black. They began to discuss why the mother, Desiree didn’t notice. One student suggested, “Her subconscious could have kept it hidden.”

Ms. Stewart offered,

It could be that lovely quality that mommies have—there is a certain degree of denial. Everyone in my family knew that my nephew had cerebral palsy long before they noticed it. A lady at church asked, ‘Does Dylan have cerebal palsy?’ It was a slap-down in the church! And too when you see someone every day you know what you see and there's also an idea of what it is that you see. Our eyes tell us what we expect or understand or be there.

“When she got there she said, “This isn't the baby,” a student noted.

Ms. Stewart continued, “And they change a lot at that age. Foreshadowing would be a great topic to for the literary analysis paper and this story. There are so many clues—you can go back and see it coming once you have experienced that twist ending.”

Another student offered, “One thing at the beginning is that they were always describing the town speculating where she actually came from. The author describes Desiree a lot and doesn't describe him very much at all. The baby is just kind of a side note too.”

Ms. Stewart asked, “Why do you think Chopin does that?”

“So we don't figure it out too soon. It makes you question if she is the one that has those genes,” yet another student suggested.

Ms. Stewart replies, “If you were going to write the paper arguing that he knew all along, you could. That's the beautiful thing about reading literature. It doesn't tell you yes or no. If you can find enough evidence from the text you can make that argument.” This conversation demonstrates Ms. Stewart's typical style of adding to the discussion, but leaving questions open for students,

At the end of the *To Kill a Mockingbird* unit, Ms. Stewart's ninth graders researched and created a project that was somehow related to the book or its context. Students created character diaries, dioramas, poetry collections, original art and many other forms of expression. Ms. Stewart recounted,

We had a girl today that played her violin—she did this bluegrass—she knows all about bluegrass and gave us lessons. It was just incredible! I've had kids who had looked up the recipes and one girl did one of the Lane cakes—a big honking thing—three layers—it was huge and she's a little tiny girl. She brings it in and you could see her little muscles and she said “I've carried this all the way from the front—can you take it?” I took it and I was like, “Woah!” It had to have been at least ten pounds.

Another teacher at Townville who viewed literature as largely fixed had mentioned this activity as something she considered to be less valuable for students. Linda was asked, “What would you say to those people who say that's not really literature?”

Ms Stewart quickly replied,

Are you kidding? That's immediate—it's a celebration of their skill. They tie it to the book so it's a celebration of the book and if that doesn't create at least an appreciation for literature, I don't know what will. If we have an appreciation for literature, then pretty soon we've got some lifelong learning skills here and isn't that really what we're here for?

Mark Roberts

Mark Roberts currently is the leader of the English Department at Townville High School. A portion of his teaching assignment is dedicated to developing the English curriculum districtwide. Mr. Roberts teaches a wide spectrum of students in eleventh and twelfth grade, instructing in English electives including poetry and honors British literature. Mr. Roberts has been teaching at Townville for approximately 15 years while completing his masters' degree in literature at a midsized public state university. Mr. Roberts completed his masters' thesis on reader response theory and Shakespeare. He continues to work with one of his university professors on articles and presentations regarding teaching Shakespeare. Mr. Roberts also teaches literature courses part-time at a local community college.

Beliefs about Literature. Mark indicated that his number one goal for students was that, "Literature provides personal enjoyment." Personal involvement and engagement was where Mr. Roberts starts with all of his students, regardless of ability, describing himself as a guide as students navigate through and around texts. However, Mr. Roberts believed that these skills are best taught through interaction. For example, when reading *Macbeth*, he asked his honors British literature students to recreate a scene for the class with only the narrator speaking. Students had to plan what the narrator

would say and how they would portray not only the characters but the other elements of the scene. In one presentation, the king’s party arrived at Macbeth’s castle and students acted as the castle door. The narrator supplied the “squeak” as the door opened and closed. Mr. Roberts expresses the belief

That people should talk about literature—that literature should be discussed.

Reading it is one experience but talking about it, discussing it within some kind of a framework, like a classroom, gives a person a chance to experience the literature much more deeply than just reading it on your own for fifteen minutes before you go to sleep at night. That has sort of held true forever.

Table 26

Mark Roberts Cultural Models

Cultural Model	Self Report	Observed Instances
Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis	Self 3	18
Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills	Curriculum Practice	8
Literature is an expression of place and time		6
Literature provides personal enjoyment	Self 1	4
Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives	Self 2	18
Literature is a tool for mediating pastoral relationships—clarifying values, attitudes, dispositions, etc.		4

Mr. Roberts' practice was consistent with his second and third most important cultural models, with eighteen instances of each, showing a balance of fixed and interactive models. He explained how these models work together.

Like we might talk about the codes of the knight, the code of chivalry L'Morte d'Arthur or Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and then after we're kind of well-versed in it I might say, "Well, you know that's structuralism. Now let's talk about some of the other pieces of structuralism." I gave them kind of a Cornell notes kind of a format for it. My big thing is always to write down definitions of terms and then to give examples, so we're kind of doing that as we're taking notes. We discuss what those terms mean and what they look like in the literature that we've read already.

This balance was also evident in the work he assigned. On his handout, "Tips for Literary Analysis Papers," he stated, "Write down your own ideas before looking at secondary sources. Be sure you know what YOU want to say first. I want to read what YOU think about the text and how YOU interpret it." However, the next part of the instructions required students to, "refer to specific literary techniques such as plot, setting, character, conflict, theme, imagery, symbolism, metaphor or simile, and to specific critical contexts such as psychoanalytical, deconstruction, structuralism, or Marxism." He asked students to use fixed literary terminology or specific critical approaches, but he wanted them to reach the goal of meaning using these techniques.

Mr. Roberts' most important model, "Literature provides personal enjoyment," only corresponded with four observed instances. This goal may have been crowded out by other curricular priorities. Mr. Roberts agreed with his Townville colleagues that their

school curriculum prioritizes literature as “a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills.” He explained, “Well, everything revolves around the [state tests] now—that's just life in the high schools. Ninth and tenth grade are nearly devoted to giving them the skills they need to pass those tests, plus the skills we think they're going to need in eleventh and twelfth grade—whatever that might look like.”

Congruence. Mr. Roberts felt that there were some barriers to his way of teaching, but also some factors that encouraged this approach as well. The most frequently cited factor that contributed to Mark’s teaching as he believed was student preparation, followed by student motivation and texts. Mark was very committed to teaching Shakespeare, expressing several times that any student could learn to appreciate Shakespeare and that all high school students should have some experience with Shakespeare’s works. “Shakespeare is often taught as, 'Here's the study guide,' and then they go through it word-by word. People misunderstand—they don't know what to do with it and what can be done.”

Table 27

Mark Roberts Congruence Factors

Congruence Factors	Congruent	Incongruent
Background Experience	2	0
Community Expectation	3	3
Preparing for Future	3	1
Staff Collegiality	1	0
Student Motivation	4	5

Student Preparation	6	3
Teacher Confidence	0	1
Testing	1	2
Time	0	5
Text	4	0
Curriculum	0	0

Mr. Roberts' two most significant barriers to teaching according to his beliefs were student motivation and time. Although he felt that students were somewhat well-prepared, they were sometimes not motivated. "Everyone in the class has different agendas. Some will definitely go on to AP classes. Some are seniors and they have checked out already—they just have to pass the class." Although he felt students were well-prepared in that they could do the work, they didn't always choose to. Time was another frequently-mentioned variable. Like most other high schools, Townville was organized around a six class-period day guided by a series of bells. Because he taught juniors and seniors, students were regularly gone for all or part of class periods to see college counselors or to participate in off-campus activities or field trips. This was particularly difficult for Mr. Roberts' students because his courses relied so heavily on discussion and participation. Students didn't always have a good way to make up things that they missed. The bells, lockstep schedules and interruptions made it difficult to sustain deep exploration of texts and ideas, which was the most often cited factor in creating incongruence.

Texts were significant factors that Mr. Roberts mentioned as congruent. Mr. Roberts believed so strongly in reader response, that he felt that with good teaching, students could access almost any text. This attitude, combined with a belief that it was important to prepare students for the kinds of texts they would encounter in college resulted in Mark Roberts defining literature the most narrowly of any of the participants from his school. When asked if *The Watchmen* (1986) was literature, he replied, “I think in my mind it certainly is, but in terms of me thinking about preparing them for college, it's probably not, you know, on the list of literature that I think they should have read before they leave high school. Literature that maybe professors are going to talk about in that first year lit course.” Mr. Roberts was highly committed to classic texts in his teaching. He repeated that he felt strongly that classic literature, particularly Shakespeare should be taught to all high school students. However, his teaching methods were the most progressive, displaying a number of interesting and ideologically laden activities like a quiz on consumerism before exploring the themes of consumption in *Macbeth*.

Adjustment. Mr. Roberts showed instances where he adjusted almost every part of his teaching, with his presentation style and his assignments showing the most evidence of adjustment. He showed more instances of adjustment than anyone else at his school. He was very responsive to students and when one of them suggested a change, he honestly considered it before responding. However, he was not willing to adjust the texts themselves. He was strongly committed to canonical texts as the main texts of the course.

Mark Roberts Adjustments

Adjustments	Observed Instances
Schedule	2
Presentation Style	4
Questions	3
Text Selection	0
Reading support	2
Assignment	6

If meaning is being created during discussion and class activities, it makes sense that the teacher must adjust to students as they create that meaning. Mr. Roberts stated, I've argued in my thesis and other places that sometimes it's important to show up without a plan and just ask the students, "What do you think of this? What do you think of that?" In fact last hour, I kind of had a plan, but I had no idea where I thought it would go because I just asked students simply to tell me the line that caught their eye in this short story and they read the line out loud and they talked a little bit about the line—sometimes it had to do with our notes and sometimes they said, "I just like it." And so, it could be any response and me as a teacher, I'm just kind of like the guide then.

The teacher in this situation must be ready to adjust as the class leads the discussion.

Student response. Students responded to this approach with 16 observed instances in which they made meaning of the text. This was in the middle range of all the participants. However, the observations of Mr. Roberts's classes also had the highest

amount of “no responses,” where students did not respond at all to a question, sometimes even when an opinion or open-ended question was asked. Mr. Roberts did not seem particularly concerned about that as he taught, either answering the question himself or moving on to a new question that students to which normally students did respond. When a student did respond, though, s/he was twice as likely to make meaning rather than giving a fixed response.

Table 29

Mark Roberts Student Participation

Student Participation	Observed Instances
Meaning	16
Response	8
Procedural	6
No Response	7
Unofficial Meaning	2

As students worked in groups to create scenes from *Macbeth*, some students were clearly engaged and others were disengaged, reading other materials, texting, chatting, and throwing together a presentation at the last minute that didn't require them to interact with the literature. Mr. Roberts gave a significant amount of power to his students, including the power to not participate or to participate at a minimal level. “He asked, “What would an actor do to bring those lines to life? You tell me what to do and I'll do it—I'm the actor.”

A student said, “Do a jumping jack.” The class laughed. The teacher did a jumping jack. The class laughed again.

One suggested, “Pretend you are washing a shirt—running it under the water.” The teacher did it and the class breaks into several side conversations. “Stay here now,” he said. “I don't want to lose anyone.”

Another student spoke up, “Make jerky motions, like you're angry.” The teacher followed the directions.

Mr. Roberts asked, “How would we do 'Hell is murky?' We need another person. What if another actor was doing arm motions around Lady Macbeth? But it's up to you.” Mr. Roberts approached literature as interactive and set up his classes in structures that encouraged interaction. However, some students opted out of these structures and opportunities, resulting in a high rate of “no response” observations. This did not seem to concern Mr. Roberts. He viewed that as a necessary risk to teaching in this way and knew that students eventually would be accountable for learning on a paper project or test.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

The relationships among teacher cultural models, their teaching practice, and student response create a complex interplay with a number of factors including schools and curricula, teacher practices, and students. In each of the teacher cases, these factors manifested themselves in varying degrees.

Summary of Results

The teachers in this study were generally aware of the cultural models which were most important to them. Their practice reflected their most valued cultural models, although literature as a text for analysis was the most commonly observed model among all teachers. Teachers with more fixed views of literature were generally more apt to talk about how their students were not ready or able to use more interactive kinds of approaches, while those with more interactive views were more likely to state that they were able to adjust to students. Students responded to teachers with more interactive views about literature in more authentic ways and had a higher percentage of meaning-making than students in classes where literature was treated primarily as fixed.

Cultural Models

In total, the participants displayed more instances of fixed beliefs than interactive ones, with “literature as a tool for teaching skills,” and “Literature as the autonomous and opaque text for analysis” showing more occurrences than all of the other models combined. This is consistent with Applebee’s (1997) findings. White’s (1995) work with preservice teachers indicated that in a sample of students assessed before their English methods classes, about 40% indicated a primary dependence on text-centered conceptions

of literature. About 53% of the students indicated a primary dependence on student-centered methods, with the remainder not showing a clear preference. As indicated in the tables below, about 58% of the total instances observed were in the fixed model category and the remaining 42% were in the interactive model category. However, all of the participants' classrooms had occurrences that reflect a variety of models.

Table 30
Observed Occurrences of Caughlan Models

	Carolyn Jordan	Tracy Johnson	Rachel Beecher	Anne Schultz	Vicki Mitchell	Linda Stewart	Mark Roberts	Total Observed Instances
<hr/>								
Fixed Models								
Aesthetic	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	6
Text for Analysis	21	14	14	15	11	18	18	142
Expression of Place/Time	7	3	4	0	3	2	6	27
Teaches Skills	22	30	9	20	8	14	8	129
Ideologies	4	6	6	2	0	1	2	24
Total Fixed Observed Occurrences	54	53	36	37	25	36	34	328
<hr/>								
	Carolyn Jordan	Tracy Johnson	Rachel Beecher	Anne Schultz	Vicki Mitchell	Linda Stewart	Mark Roberts	Total Occurrences
<hr/>								
Interactive Models								
Multifaceted	4	8	8	2	4	13	18	57

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Personal Enjoyment	4	11	7	8	3	10	4	47
Social Worlds	3	12	8	8	5	7	15	58
Values and Dispositions	4	10	3	4	2	13	4	40
Connect with Others	4	2	4	1	8	8	6	33
Total Interactive Observed Occurrences	19	43	30	23	22	51	47	235

Teachers' verbal indications of valued models were quite consistent with the instances observed in their classrooms. Their practices were aligned with either their valued models or their school's curriculum, or both. However, within the fixed models, most participants used "Literature is an opaque text for analysis" frequently even if they did not indicate it as a valued belief. Those with more fixed cultural models verbally indicated that in order for students to interact with the text, they needed to understand the elements (building blocks, as Caroline Jordan called them) first. Teachers with the most fixed models expressed concern that students have the basic information first, providing what Marshall et al (1995) called "security information," (p. 57). Participant Tracy Johnson showed this most strongly, insisting that the students read along with an audio version of the book during class as well as providing extensive plot review, insisting that students understand the plot points before doing any kind of analysis. Those who based their teaching on more interactive cultural models, like Mark Roberts asked for interaction right away and then included elements of New Criticism as they came up as "teachable moments" in the classroom.

The data did not present a clear reason why particular teachers had primarily fixed or interactive cultural models about literature. The participants had different teacher preparation programs, additional education, years of experience, but the fixed and interactive models did not seem to align with any of these descriptors. For example, Tracy Johnson, Vicki Mitchell and Rachel Beecher all completed their teacher preparation programs at the same university but they were very different in the cultural models they embraced. Tracy Johnson, Rachel Beecher, Linda Stewart, and Mark Roberts all had Masters' Degrees, but they represented both the fixed and the interactive cultural models. The teachers with the most experience, Mark Roberts and Linda Stewart both were committed to interactive cultural models, but even the participants with the most fixed views cited the interactive nature of literature as being an important reason that they chose to teach literature in the first place.

All of the participants cited positive interactions with literature as children and young adults, even those who had fixed views. All of the participants were able to cite particular instances in their own schooling which positively influenced them to pursue the teaching of literature. Tracy Johnson and Caroline Jordan both discussed a specific moment of discovery when a high school teacher expected them to do close reading and they were able to get a glimpse of what the literature means and how it was put together.

Congruence.

Fairclough (1998) and others have argued that language learning and use is socially situated. Teachers and students do not operate in classroom vacuums, but rather they are situated in classrooms in which curricula, school culture, standards, community expectations, and countless other factors influence practice. In general, participants were

quite articulate about the extent to which outside influences encouraged or hindered them in their efforts to teach according to their cultural models.

It is also important to consider the extent to which participants' practices were influenced by these factors. Coladarci (2004) found that teachers with high self-efficacy stayed longer in the profession, so it must be considered whether Stewart and Roberts represent those teachers who have stayed in the profession because they have higher self-efficacy.

Table 31

Factors Contributing to Congruence

	Carolyn Jordan	Tracy Johnson	Rachel Beecher	Anne Schultz	Vicki Mitchell	Linda Stewart	Mark Roberts	Total
Background Experience	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Community Expectation	3	0	1	4	3	2	3	16
Preparing for Future	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	5
Staff Collegiality	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	6
Student Motivation	4	5	3	6	2	3	4	26
Student Preparation	2	2	4	7	0	2	6	25
Teacher Confidence	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	5
Testing	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Time	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2

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Text	2	5	1	1	5	0	4	18
Curriculum	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	20	16	11	20	13	8	24	112

Table 32

*Factors
Contributing to
Incongruence*

	Carolyn Jordan	Tracy Johnson	Rachel Beecher	Anne Schultz	Vicki Mitchell	Linda Stewart	Mark Roberts	Total
Background	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Community Expectation	5	2	2	1	2	5	3	20
Preparing for Future	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	4
Staff Collegiality	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student Motivation	11	15	1	2	0	0	5	34
Student Prep	6	6	3	0	2	1	3	21
Teacher Confidence	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	5
Testing	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	5
Text	7	2	2	2	2	1	5	21
Time	8	2	0	1	0	0	0	11
Curriculum	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	3
Total	41	28	15	7	7	8	20	126

Participants with fixed beliefs were much more likely to view outside factors as incongruent with their teaching than those with interactive or changing beliefs. Even

though there were four participants in the changing and interactive category, the fixed belief participants had eighty-four mentions of incongruence where the other participants had only forty-two. The opposite was also true, but the results were not as dramatic. The interactive and changing belief participants tended to have more mentions of congruence with sixty-five occurrences, whereas the fixed belief participants had forty-seven occurrences.

All participants discussed the students most frequently as factors which influenced congruence both positively and negatively. Student preparation and motivation was the most cited reason that teachers were not able to enact their preferred cultural models, followed by community expectations. It is interesting that all of these factors are those which teachers generally felt they had no control over, whereas other factors like background experience or teacher confidence were things that teachers could control. These controllable factors were not mentioned as frequently as those which teachers had no control over. Teachers seemed most ambivalent about texts, with 18 mentions of texts contributing to congruence and 21 mentions of texts contributing to incongruence. Many of the conversations about texts reflected this ambivalence, with a “yes, but” kind of approach. Most teachers felt that students should read classic texts but had real doubt about whether the students were prepared or motivated enough to read and understand them. Ms. Mitchell was the exception as shown in her adjustments of texts below.

Adjustments. There did not appear to be a pattern in the data regarding the adjustments teachers made in the classroom. Overall, the observations of Townville

teachers showed fewer adjustments than those at Smith High School, possibly as a result of Townville's more structured and centralized curriculum.

Table 33

Adjustments

Adjustment	Caroline Jordan	Tracy Johnson	Rachel Beecher	Anne Schultz	Vicki Mitchell	Linda Stewart	Mark Roberts	Total
Schedule	0	5	1	0	5	2	2	15
Presentation Style	0	5	3	1	0	2	4	15
Questions	2	4	2	3	1	0	3	15
Text Selection	1	4	4	3	6	1	0	19
Reading support	0	9	2	1	2	1	2	17
Assignment	3	6	0	3	4	3	6	25
Total	6	33	12	11	18	9	17	106

The Townville teachers only mentioned adjusting texts six times as compared to the Smith teachers who mentioned it ten times. All of the participants except Vicki Mitchell and Rachel Beecher showed a strong loyalty to classic texts. Ms. Beecher had a very wide choice of texts for her Advanced Placement texts, and the curriculum did not dictate which texts she used. Ms. Mitchell, the Smith teacher who had significantly increased her use of contemporary and young adult texts, discontinuing her sophomores' reading of the American literary canon, spoke frequently of how these texts had increased her students' interaction with literature and their ability to perform even sophisticated kinds of literary analysis. However, the rest of the participants did not show interest in adjusting texts.

Even those with a highly interactive view of literature expressed strong commitment to Shakespeare and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. However, two teachers with the highest number of student meaning-making occurrences used alternate texts either in place of or in addition to the classic texts. Ms. Schultz had a significant shift in student engagement when she added Naylor's essay, "Mommy, What Does 'Nigger' Mean?" Vicki Mitchell indicated repeatedly that giving her students accessible young adult texts had increased engagement and students made meaning repeatedly in her classroom, even with very traditional teaching methods.

Student Response. Students responded to literary activities in a variety of ways. As mentioned above, "Meaning" was coded when a student articulated an observation or insight that was not directly stated in the text. Nystrom et al (2003) found that dialogic spells, similar to what has been coded as "Meaning," were more likely to take place in classrooms with students with higher socioeconomic status as well as in those classes designated as higher track, but in this study, the highest track students at the higher SES school exhibited only the third-highest total of meaning-making. Also in this study, the students who exhibited the least meaning-making were those from the higher SES school in the regular track.

Marshall, et al (1995) also found that those teachers who taught the middle track students had many mentions of motivation and preparation, where teachers frequently discussed students who "get by, causing few problems, raising few questions, listening for the information they might need on the next quiz" (p. 34). This kind of language was often used by teachers at Townville high school, with participants stating that the students, "didn't want to learn," or were "not motivated." The teachers at the highly

diverse Smith High School, however, didn't exhibit that type of language when talking about students. They were more likely to describe their students, also in the middle tracks as being less "well-prepared," or "not ready" to handle difficult texts with more mentions of preparation causing incongruence than motivation. Townville teachers were more likely to indicate that their students were well-prepared but not motivated, with a higher mention of student motivation than student preparation. It is possible that racial and cultural composition of these classes may have influenced the ways in which teachers thought about why students did not respond as they had hoped.

All of the participants asked their students to identify literary elements, but those that insisted upon them as an end in themselves had a much lower level of meaning-making than those extended this identification toward more interactive goals. All of the teachers used similar methods, many of which would be considered traditional, such as study guides, large group discussion and quizzes. At times, teachers even used the same written materials, such as in the case of Linda Stewart, Rachel Beecher, and Caroline Jordan. However, despite these similarities, these teachers had different results, with Linda Stewart eliciting much more meaning-making activity from her students than her other two colleagues.

Table 34

Student Participation

	Caroline Jordan	Tracy Johnson	Rachel Beecher	Anne Schultz	Vicki Mitchell	Linda Stewart	Mark Roberts	Total
Meaning	14 (12%)	18 (20%)	10 (45%)	23 (37%)	21 (53%)	19 (43%)	16 (41%)	121
Response	71 (61%)	28 (32%)	9 (41%)	23 (37%)	9 (23%)	14 (32%)	8 (21%)	162

Procedural	11 (9%)	27 (31%)	3 (14%)	11 (17%)	6 (15%)	5 (11%)	6 (15%)	69
No Response	13 (11%)	4 (5%)	0	3 (5%)	0	0	7 (18%)	27
Unofficial Meaning	6 (5%)	11 (13%)	0	3 (5%)	4 (10%)	6 (14%)	2 (5%)	32
Total	115	88	22	63	40	44	39	411

Overall, students made meaning at a higher rate in the classes of participants who believed that literature was interactive and even those that were changing. Ms. Mitchell had the highest percentage of meaning making, perhaps as a result of the contemporary texts she used and her changing beliefs about literature. Students were engaged not only with texts more frequently, but made connections between texts and their own lives as well in the classes where meaning was made most frequently. It also is interesting to note that even in classrooms where students were given very little encouragement or latitude for making meaning, like Ms. Jordan, Ms. Johnson, and Ms. Beecher's classrooms, students found ways to make meaning without the teacher's encouragement. Frequently throughout the study, students were observed making meaning on their own when working in small groups, even when the teacher expected specific fixed responses.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Implications for Teacher Education

The participants with the most rigid lesson plans and the most fixed views of literature probably would get the best grades in many methods courses as they are currently taught. These teachers have defined, measurable goals for students and have ways to assess whether all students have met those goals. These goals are monolithic, often tied to statewide standards and mostly based on fixed views of literature. The field of teacher education is mandated by state licensing boards to produce teachers that are able to teach in this way. However, educational experts are also concerned about student engagement. Many of the best practices for increasing student engagement such as those outlined in Daniels's *Rethinking High School* are in opposition to the kind of teaching that universities are required to produce. This tension should be acknowledged and addressed in teacher education, finding ways to help preservice teachers value student interaction as well as a focused lesson plan.

Courses to prepare students for the profession of teaching are called methods courses, which indicates that the field of teacher education is most concerned about what preservice teachers do, rather what they believe. However, the results of this study suggest that teacher beliefs make a difference for students. Even when literary theory is taught in the secondary classrooms, it often translates as a method rather than a set of beliefs. If university students choose teaching because they have been successful in secondary classrooms, they will continue to teach as they have been taught, which has largely been based on methods and activities.

The field of teacher education may need to help its students redefine the role of the teacher as a guide or facilitator during interactions with literature. Preservice teachers need practice in giving their students the tools they need at the time they need them during these interactions, but they need to base this practice in the belief that the study of literature needs to be interactive. Many current techniques such as literature circles and writers workshop are built on interaction, but are these methods effective if teachers don't truly believe that the interaction with literature is more important than being able to label elements or excavate meaning?

The idea of text choice may also be important in teacher education. This study indicated that expanding or replacing classic texts may help students engage more effectively with literature. Vicki Mitchell in particular provides a model of what can happen when teachers dare to abandon classic texts in favor of more contemporary and accessible ones. She did not encounter some of the resistance that many teachers fear. Preservice teachers may also need to understand more about how curricular texts are chosen and how those processes can be influenced. In addition, it may be helpful for preservice teachers to become familiar with specific ways to pair or supplement classic texts with pop culture or contemporary texts.

Preservice teachers may also need to know more about the ways that standards and tests influence classroom practices. In this Midwestern state, standards, state tests, and teacher preparation programs give significant attention to traditional texts with less attention paid to contemporary and young adult literature. Anagnostopoulos (2003) found that the required Chicago Public Schools required tests on *To Kill a Mockingbird* influenced student engagement with the text as well as teachers' stances toward the text.

Suggestions for Further Research

It was not apparent in this study what influenced participants' views about the nature of literature. If it is important for teachers to have a belief in the interactive qualities of literature, further study could reveal how these beliefs are developed. It would be particularly beneficial to learn more about whether teachers developed these beliefs on their own or whether they had specific educational experiences which influenced them.

Although it seems apparent that making meaning benefits students, it would be helpful to know more about whether students who engage in ways that were observed in this study also would be more successful on fixed-belief tasks. Students and schools are held accountable primarily on fixed-belief tasks. Do students who primarily get interactive experiences with literature do as well on fixed-belief tasks like standardized tests? Further study could explain more about how students can benefit academically as well as personally from making meaning with literature.

Limitations

Although every effort was made to ensure that the results of this study would credibly contribute to the field of literacy education, like every study, it had limitations. The participants in this study were volunteers who generally were interested in research and reflection on their practice. If the study also included participants who were not likely to volunteer, other cultural models may have been present as well as a wider variety of beliefs. Although the group had good variety in education, years of experience, and background, the group only included one male teacher. More male participants may have also influenced results differently.

This research took place in real schools—schools with real interruptions, real scheduling constraints and real students. This research took place over a ten week period during the spring term, when there were many other things taking place in the schools. Although each participant was observed an equal number of times, some lessons were more typical of that participant's teaching and some observations yielded results that were perhaps not typical. Schools are complicated places full of many factors which may have influenced these results, but this study focused on specific teacher/literature/student interactions.

Closing Remarks

Classrooms are complex places, full of teachers and students who have differing agendas and goals. Layer onto the classroom an institutional and governmental structure as well as the complex act of reading and interpreting literature and many questions go unanswered. However, this study indicates that teacher beliefs do make a difference in the way students respond and that teacher beliefs interact with text choice in important ways. As education moves toward observable standards for students and teachers, cultural models should not be overlooked.

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APPENDIX A—QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

How do you define literature?

What do you perceive to be the purpose(s) for teaching literature?

Why are these purpose(s) important for you?

How do you try to achieve these purpose(s)?

What does it look like when your students have had a successful experience with literature?

How do you see your role in your students' study of literature?

What things can and can't you do for them?

Describe a classroom lesson or activity that you think especially reflects your philosophy of teaching literature.

APPENDIX B—FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Possible questions include the following:

What did you hope students gained from this particular lesson or unit?

Did the students fulfill your expectations for what you wanted them to accomplish?

What are some reasons that that you chose method/strategy X?

Were there times when you felt you had to compromise what you really wanted to do because of particular circumstances? Talk about those times.

APPENDIX C—Caughlan Grid

My School's Curriculum	My School's Practice	Me	Caughlan's Cultural Model
			Literature is the autonomous and opaque text for analysis (usually through New Criticism)
			Literature is a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills
			Literature is an expression of place and time
			Literature provides personal enjoyment
			Literature is a multifaceted, reflective object capable of being seen from different critical perspectives
			Literature is a tool for mediating pastoral relationships—clarifying values, attitudes, dispositions, etc.