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A Window into the Secondary School Day:
Examining 10th Graders' Literacy Experiences Across English, Social Studies and
Science

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Abstract

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Adolescents are not meeting the increasingly sophisticated literacy demands of the 21st century. Research shows that students require instruction in middle and high school to successfully navigate and comprehend the range of discipline specific texts they encounter and yet most teachers are not prepared to meet those needs. The field of adolescent literacy is grappling with how to define disciplinary literacy in the secondary content areas and to identify the ways in which students, as novices rather than subject area experts, ought to engage with texts. The purpose of this study was to examine the literacy experiences of three 10th grade students as they navigated the literacy demands and expectations of their English Language Art, World History and Ecology classes and to analyze how each student responded to those demands. Framed by the RAND heuristic for reading comprehension, the literature on disciplinary literacy, and by sociocultural and ethnographic principles, this case study paid close attention to the relationship between each content area

context, the nature of the literacy instruction, how texts were used and implicated in content learning, the design and enactment of text-based tasks, and the skills and dispositions of the focal students.

Over a period of two months, observations in each content area class and weekly interviews with both students and teachers were conducted with the goal of providing a rich description of each student's experiences. Findings from this study show that in the absence of disciplinary literacy instruction and opportunities to engage deeply with texts, students approach their texts and text-based tasks in much the same ways across their content areas, despite their efforts yielding only surface level comprehension. This research illuminates the gaps between disciplinary literacy and the everyday experiences of secondary students and their teachers and urges educators and researchers to consider how students' literacy experiences in one class may impact those in other classes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Recently, I had the opportunity to teach a content area literacy course to secondary pre-service teacher candidates. Although I was armed with the latest reports about adolescent literacy and emerging research on disciplinary literacy, I nevertheless was struck by the vast range with which the English, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science students approached and grappled with literacy issues. For most teacher candidates, it was their first purposeful exploration of the literacy demands posed by their disciplines. Some readily investigated the challenges readers might experience in history or biology texts, others debated over the relationship between literacy and content learning, while others bemoaned the time that would be lost on content instruction if they spent time modeling reading an article or pre-teaching vocabulary. The majority questioned whether it was their responsibility to support students who could not comprehend grade level texts. As they struggled with the relationship between content learning and literacy and searched for answers to difficult questions, I began to wonder what could be learned from the students they will teach. I imagined these future teachers working in the same building, seeing the same students move from their English to Science to Social Studies classes throughout the day, and yet very likely having little understanding of the complexity and range of those students' literacy experiences in schools or how literacy experiences in one content area might impact those in another.

-Carol Adams, January 2012

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine individual high school students as they navigate the literacy¹ demands across their English, Social Studies, and Science classes.

With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards² by the vast majority of states

¹ In this study, literacy is defined as reading a wide range of texts and written or oral responses to reading.

² The Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects aim to “ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of the high school” (CCSSI_ELA Standards Introduction, p. 3) and are predicated on content area teachers using their subject matter expertise to “help students meet

and a series of recent reports on the state of adolescent literacy, researchers and educators recognize that it is no longer a luxury, but, in fact, an economic necessity to achieve advanced literacy skills (RAND, 2002, p. 4). Not only have standards in high schools increased, including graduation requirements and assessment standards, but we are constantly interacting with, and navigating through, a stream of information in our jobs and our personal lives in more varied and challenging texts, and for a wider range of purposes. Adolescents will need highly developed levels of literacy to participate in such diverse ways and to be active citizens who can compete in the global marketplace (Deshler & Hock, 2007; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw & Rycik, 1999). Yet, data from the 2011 (4th and 8th grade) and 2009 (12th grade) National Association of Education Progress (NAEP³) assessments indicate that students are not prepared to meet those demands. In fact, as students get older, the less proficient they are on general measures of reading comprehension. Since 1992, scores on the NAEP for 8th and 12th grade indicate that approximately two-thirds of students are not reaching the *proficient* level (NAEP, 2011; NAEP, 2009; Hinchman, 2008). 2003).

The Move Toward Disciplinary Literacy

particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields” (Common Core Standards website: <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards>.)

³ NAEP, a congressionally mandated project of the National Center for Education Statistics, has been measuring academic achievement in elementary and secondary schools for over 30 years. Reading comprehension is one of the nine areas measured by the NAEP. Using the same testing materials for all states, the NAEP purports that the results serve as a “common metric.” The assessment scale is comprised of three performance levels: *basic* (partial mastery of knowledge and skills), *proficient* (solid mastery of knowledge and skills), and *advanced* (superior knowledge and skills). Approximately 1/3 of 12th grade students reach the *proficient level*.

If measures such as the NAEP indicate that students do not have the skills they need to meet today's literacy demands and compete in a global economy⁴, the question becomes, why not? Research conducted in adolescent literacy, content-area literacy, and disciplinary literacy over the past 30 years shows that, as students get older, subject area content becomes more complex and literacy demands becomes increasingly specialized and more challenging within the content domains, demanding different skills and thinking from readers. For example, a student in biology class may need to make sense of a series of tables or graphics in a textbook or scientific article to understand a concept whereas a student in social studies may have to read across several primary documents to determine the varying points of view on a particular historical event.

For students struggling to comprehend challenging texts when they reach middle or high school, the assumption has been that early literacy instruction has failed. To be sure, research conducted over the past thirty years has shown that the foundational reading skills taught in early grades, such as decoding, word recognition, and fluency are crucial skills for students to have in order to comprehend texts. If a student struggles to read the words on the page, it is highly unlikely he or she will be able to make meaning from the text. On the other hand, receiving instruction on basic reading skills does not ensure students will develop the specialized skills to read proficiently and deeply in the content areas (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Even if students have received comprehension instruction in the elementary grades, many are still not prepared to meet these demands and, as data from the NAEP indicate, the problem is greater for students

⁴ Time to Act (2010), a report by the Carnegie Corporation of New York's Council on the Advancement of Adolescent literacy, claimed that by the time students in the US reach grade 10, they "score among the lowest in the world" on measures of reading proficiency (Time to Act, 2010).

from historically underserved backgrounds⁵ (NAEP, 2011). Rather than dedicating supports to help students develop the skills needed to successfully engage with the literacy practices in biology, social studies and English language arts, schools often pull students who struggle with learning from text in content areas “off the academic track” (Greenleaf et al., 2001) and relegate them to remedial reading instruction that often focuses on basic skills. (Moje et al., 2000). While some students may continue to benefit from basic skills interventions, many are lacking the knowledge and strategies to read and comprehend the academic materials or perform the discipline-specific literacy tasks they will encounter (Rycik & Irvin, 2001; RAND, 2002). Making matters even more complex, being a proficient reader in one domain does not guarantee that a student will be proficient in another; and yet, explicit instruction in meeting specialized literacy demands decreases dramatically as students get older (Greenleaf et al., 2001; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 2005).

In the latter decades of the 20th century as the field began to see the need for literacy instruction beyond the elementary grades, researchers and policy makers pushed secondary teachers to incorporate generic reading strategy instruction into practice⁶. This “*every teacher a teacher of reading*” mantra was based on a robust research base comprised largely of cognitive processing studies and, according to recent research, has not yielded significant changes to secondary content teachers’ instruction nor to improving students’ reading comprehension (Fisher & Ivey, 2005; O’Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995). According to Moje (2008), this is in part due to the fact that researchers and

⁵ African American and Latino students consistently score lower than White students across the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade NAEP reading assessments.

⁶ Generic reading strategies may include pre-reading, monitoring comprehension, drawing upon prior knowledge, asking questions, making predictions, summarizing, and re-reading.

educators have not yet fully examined what it means to learn in the subject areas and how literacy practices are integral to that learning. Pressed with increasing demands to meet the needs of a wide range of diverse learners, content area teachers, with little or no training in reading comprehension, often resist anything that appears unnecessary to meeting their content objectives or that seems generic rather than subject –specific. Additionally, until very recently with the adoption of Common Core Standards, secondary content area teachers had no subject-specific reading encouragement or standards to guide their practice (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). While these standards support ongoing literacy instruction, how they may be realized is still uncertain.

Researchers and educators are grappling with the relationship among literacy, the disciplines, and secondary content learning and are working to uncover the practices, processes, and conceptual and textual demands of the disciplines and secondary content areas so that all students can engage in rigorous content learning (Greenleaf et al., 2001; Moje, 2007; Moore et al., 1986; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). One of the ways that researchers have embarked upon this work is to examine the ways that disciplinary experts engage with texts. For example, Shanahan & Shanahan (2008) conducted a study on the ways that experts in the fields of history, chemistry and mathematics read texts in their disciplines. Findings from such studies indicate that experts approach reading differently in the different disciplines, drawing on disciplinary knowledge (knowledge of the field, such as history or biology, and tasks with which experts in the discipline engage), knowledge of genre and text structure, as well as substantial domain and topic knowledge to make sense of the texts. It is not clear, however, how we are to make the leap from these findings to how secondary teachers should think about the role of texts

and reading in their content area classes or how high school students – who are in the process of building foundational content knowledge - ought to engage with texts. Additionally, this line of research does not take into account the whole reader, who is moving from content area class to class, faced with a range of literacy demands and instruction. In fact, little empirical research has been conducted about how those different literacy demands and challenges are embodied within individual students as they navigate through literacy experiences in multiple subjects, each with its own teacher and pedagogical practices, textbooks, and content goals (Moje, Dillon, & O'Brien, 2000). We do not know whether students carry literacy instruction or approaches to texts and text-based tasks from one content area to another or in what ways doing so may support or hinder their reading comprehension.

In this study, I aim to contribute to the research by looking at cases of individual students and the ways they respond to the literacy demands they encounter across their school day. To that end, I followed students as they went from English to Social Studies to Science classes and paid close attention to the nature of literacy instruction and to the use of texts and text-based learning in each content area. I conducted interviews with the students to better understand their literacy experiences in each content area, their ability to meet the literacy demands in each course, and their perceptions about the literacy demands they encountered. In conjunction with the students' interviews, I interviewed the content area teachers to ascertain their perceptions about reading activities, texts, and the relationship between reading and their content goals. Using a multi-case study design not only afforded me the opportunity to provide insights into the range of demands students face in the content areas, but also allowed me to address the variability within

each reader as they moved from one context to another, an area lacking in research (RAND, 2002).

Organization of this Dissertation

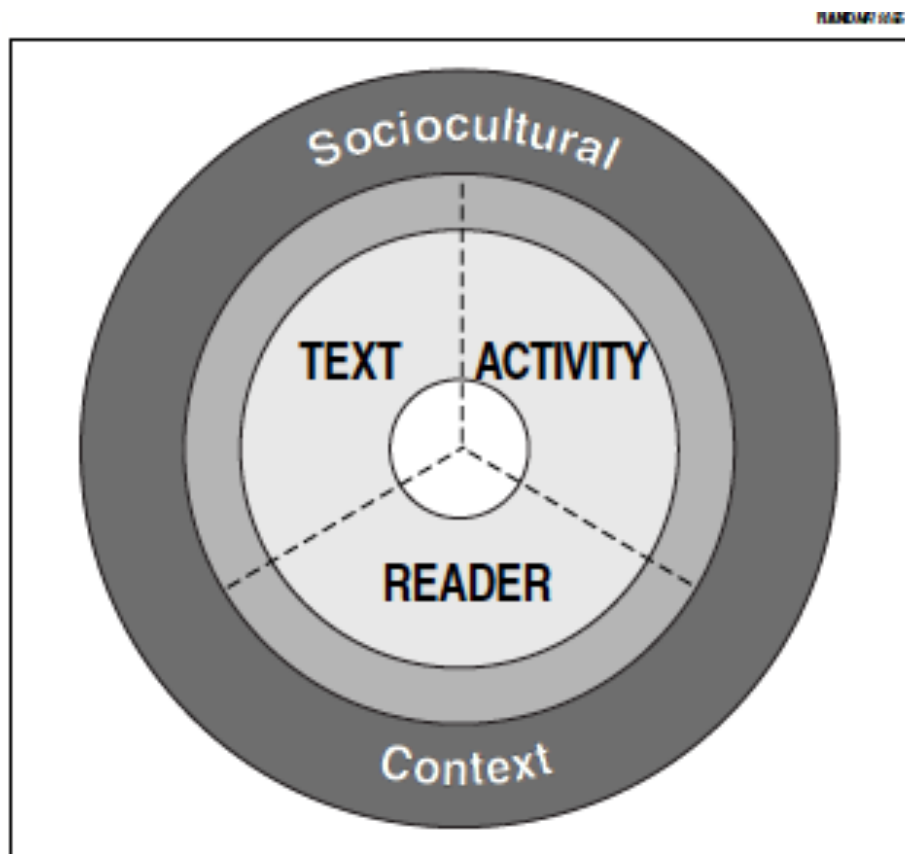
I begin this dissertation with a conceptual framework for my study and a review of the literature that drove my study design and data analysis (Chapter 2). Then, I describe the design of the study and the analytic methods that I employed (Chapter 3). In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I give evidence-based descriptions and analysis of the three content area classes: English Language Arts, Ecology and World History and how each focal student experienced the literacy demands and expectations in each class. In Chapter 7, I conduct a within case analysis, looking at each focal student across the three contexts. Finally, in Chapter 8, I summarize my findings and raise questions and implications for future educational research.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework and Framing Literature

To examine the experiences of adolescent readers across content areas, I used as a foundation the heuristic of reading comprehension presented in the RAND Reading Study Group Report (2002). See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. RAND Heuristic for Reading Comprehension.

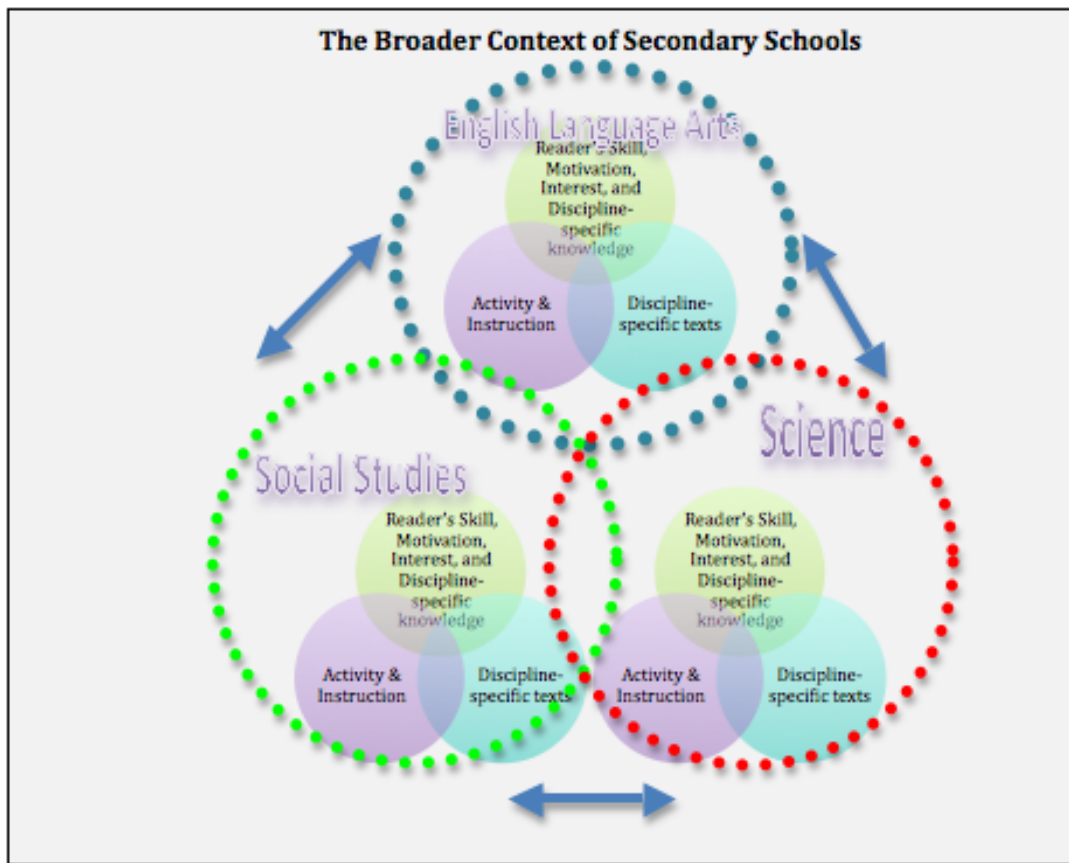


In this heuristic, reading comprehension is defined as a complex process of simultaneously *extracting* and *constructing* meaning through interactions with text. The model, based in a sociocultural perspective and informed by research in cognition and instruction, proposes that to study reading, one must consider the dynamic relationship

among the reader, text, literacy activity, (shown in the inner circle) and the sociocultural contexts in which those readers, texts, and activities are situated (shown in the outer circle). Rather than solely considering cognitive factors such as strategy usage, prior knowledge, and vocabulary, a sociocultural framework posits that readers learn and develop literacy skills through interactions with texts and others, thereby requiring attention to the process and content of instruction and to the interactions that “contextualize the learning experience” (RAND, 2002, p. 16).

The RAND heuristic captures the complexity of reading comprehension and the relationship between the reader, text, activity, and context, but does not explicitly take on the issue of disciplinary literacy and the ways in which literacy practices manifest in secondary content areas. Nor does the heuristic consider how readers navigate the literacy demands across *different* contexts. I propose the following model (see Figure 2 below) to capture a more holistic picture of secondary students’ literacy experiences and thus better understand the factors that influence the ways they respond to texts and text-based tasks in different content area contexts:

Figure 2: Framework to Examine Students' Literacy Experiences Across Secondary Content Areas



I now explore each facet of the heuristic by examining both what the literature helps us understand as well as highlighting particular gaps in the research with regards to the literacy experiences of secondary students.

The Context of Secondary Schools and the Content Areas

The RAND heuristic defines the *context* as the classroom, the general education community, and the broader community of the individual. In this study, I focused on the context of secondary schools and, within that context, the discipline-specific context of each content area classroom.

The context of secondary schools and content area classrooms shape how readers interact with texts and literacy activities. Those contexts, which have a history of being slow to change over time, present particular challenges for students as they transition from elementary to middle to high school (Tyak & Cuban, 1995). Secondary schools are typically much larger than elementary schools and organized departmentally and they have been criticized for their impersonal structures and fragmented curricula (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Teachers at the secondary level have traditionally worked alone in compartmentalized schools, what Lortie (1975) termed the “egg crate” model. Rather than working with the same group of students all day as is typical for elementary teachers, secondary teachers often teach five or six different classes, seeing between 125-200 students each day, leaving students with less time and attention from individual teachers (Wigfield, 2004). Furthermore, those teachers may have little opportunity to engage with one another across content areas, and thus the work of educating students becomes content area-specific and isolated from other learning. Both students and teachers develop specific expectations about what it means to learn in each content areas (Moje, 2008).

Lee and Spratley (2010), in a report on reading in the disciplines to the Carnegie Foundation, posit that each content area poses different disciplinary demands and challenges for readers and argue that reading in high schools needs to become “intertwined” with content learning. For example, in science, they state that students must learn to analyze data, to draw relationships between data, findings, previous findings and theory, and to identify sources of bias; in a history class, as students read to learn about historical events, they need to ask themselves about the author of the text, the intended

audience, and draw upon knowledge of text type and structure; in English language arts, students need to understand how authors use rhetorical tools so they can interpret complex narratives (Lee & Spratley, 2010). Reading tasks in these content areas, however, may actually look similar depending on the degree to which teachers incorporate and instruct on disciplinary specific practices and ways of knowing. As I examine the nature of content area contexts in this study, I consider how each context frames the relationship between content learning and texts and the ways in which teachers incorporate disciplinary ways of thinking into their practice. As students move among contexts, I ask several questions: What do students take with them from one content area to the next, which regards to literacy practices and content knowledge and what do their teacher encourage them to bring? How do those practices help or hinder their ability to successful navigate text-based tasks and learn from texts? To what degree do students differentiate between the literacy demands in their content area classes? What are the teachers' expectation and demands with regards to learning from texts and how do they impact students' responses and engagement with text-based tasks? By looking both across and within students, I hoped to better understand how these contexts together shape the readers' experiences.

The Reader

According to the RAND heuristic, the reader brings cognitive capabilities, motivation (a purpose for reading, interest in the content, self-efficacy as a reader), knowledge (vocabulary and topic knowledge or schemata), and experiences to bear in the reading activity or task. Adapting this heuristic to the secondary content areas, I also consider the individual reader's knowledge of each discipline. RAND draws from a large

body of research, the bulk of which was conducted with elementary age students. Good readers, according to this research, use a range of cognitive strategies to comprehend text, including summarizing, activating prior knowledge, predicting, questioning, clarifying, visualizing, and self-monitoring, and that they not only have an understanding of the nature of those reading strategies, but also know how, when, and why to enact them (Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson, 1991; Paris, Lipson & Wixson, 1994).

However, it is clear that the field is lacking strong examples of how the use of strategies interacts with secondary students and content learning (Conley, 2007). Lee & Spratley (2010) argue that general reading strategies are not sufficient in secondary content areas. Rather, they posit that students need domain or topic knowledge and must use a range of discipline specific strategies including building specialized vocabulary, learning to deconstruct complex sentences, using knowledge of text structures and genres to predict main and subordinate ideas, mapping graphic representations against explanations in the text, posing discipline-relevant questions, comparing claims and propositions across texts, and using norms for reasoning within the discipline to evaluate claims (Lee & Sprately 2010, p. 16). While these assertions seem ideal to help promote the kind of literacy practices demands of the disciplines, I argue that before we subscribe them, the field needs to know more about the strategies readers enact to engage with texts and text-based tasks in their secondary content area classes.

In addition to cognitive skills, the RAND heuristic argues that to be able to comprehend a reader must have motivation, which includes a purpose for reading, an interest in the topic, and a sense of self-efficacy. Research shows that engagement and motivation are closely tied to reading proficiency and become increasingly predictive of

reading achievement for older students (Paris & Oka, 1986). The relationship between reading proficiency and engagement is reciprocal in that the more competence students experience, the more motivated they are and increased motivation leads to more reading (Guthrie, Wigfield & Perencevich, 2004). Poor readers, on the other hand, can get caught in a downward spiral as they avoid reading and have fewer experiences of competence (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 2005). By the time students get to high school, many have low self-efficacy, defined as belief in one's own abilities, and perceive themselves as incompetent learners and readers; a stance frequently formed in response to negative school experiences (Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 1996; Schoenbach & Greenleaf, 2009; O'Brien, Stewart & Beach, 2009). While this literature is important to our understanding of the factors contributing to general reading comprehension, it is not tied to students' literacy experiences in specific disciplines and does not speak to how engagement or motivation is impacted by the range of students' literacy experiences. For instance, if a student has negative experiences with literacy tasks in one content area class, how do they impact the student's literacy experiences in other classes or vice versa?

To examine the knowledge that readers bring to tasks, I draw on the work of Alexander et al. (1994), who investigated the relationship between students' interest, subject-matter knowledge, and reading proficiency. Their work is particularly relevant to this study and to looking at secondary students in content area classes because they view subject-matter knowledge as multifaceted, concurrently examining both domain knowledge and topic knowledge, defining domain knowledge as general knowledge in a particular field such as biology⁷, and topic knowledge as "more situationally specific to a

⁷ Alexander et al.'s (1994) use of the term "domain knowledge" is similar to the ways other researchers think about "disciplinary knowledge" in that both terms refer to the broader structures

text or instructional selection” (1994, p. 314). When learners are just beginning to learn about a domain, Alexander et al (1994) contend that they have limited or fragmented subject-matter knowledge; even if they know about a specific topic, they likely cannot fit it within a well understood domain structure and therefore are more likely to demonstrate only situational interest. However, when learners either possessed substantial subject-matter knowledge or were provided access to high-level subject-matter knowledge, their interest subsequently increased. Like the reciprocal relationship between motivation and reading proficiency, Alexander et al. (1994) argue that when readers had individual or long-term interest in a domain topic, rather than situational or transient interest in the text or context, their subject-matter learning was enhanced and they were better positioned to navigate through challenging texts, to sustain learning, and deepen knowledge over time. Such sustained learning, they state, “is requisite for competency or proficiency in any complex domain” (1994, p. 334). Without either the requisite background knowledge or interest in a topic, learners were not able to process information gained from text effectively (Alexander, et al., 1994).

This research helps to illuminate the important role of subject matter knowledge (domain and topic knowledge) and interest, but it leaves unanswered questions about how factors such as strategy instruction, understanding of the purpose for reading, students’ overall sense of self-efficacy, and teachers’ ability to afford students with opportunities to build subject matter knowledge interact to support reading proficiency. It is also not clear how students’ literacy experiences in other content area classes (prior or current) contribute to their subject-matter knowledge, interest, or their reading proficiency.

and ideas in a particular field, “Domain knowledge’ however, as used by the authors, does not necessarily encompass the ways of “knowing” or “doing” in a discipline, which is central to way researchers have conceptualized disciplinary knowledge.

Alexander et al. (1994) acknowledge that there is much more the field needs to learn about adolescents and content area reading, stating, “we have only begun to unravel the complexity of domain learning as it occurs in real classrooms with real students” (1994, p. 222).

Texts

According to RAND and the CCSS, all students must be able to read high-level texts and comprehend them in order to meet the standards on high-stakes assessments and to participate as active and engaged citizens in a global world. The types of texts students encounter, the ways that teachers use texts and ask students to engage with texts, and what students are expected to “learn” from texts are important factors to consider when examining students’ content area reading experiences. As students get older, they encounter a broad range of texts in their content area classes and are asked to interact with those texts in many different ways. Structurally, subject area texts are longer, typically linear⁸, expository, and more structurally and conceptually challenging than texts in elementary school (Alexander et al., 1994; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 2005; Time to Act, 2010). They often contain technical vocabulary and discipline specific concepts and semantics, such as historical documents written in archaic language as well as challenging graphics and important information that is embedded with less important information. For example, scientific texts often contain diagrams, tables and figures, and prose that is replete with technical vocabulary and syntax. Additionally, texts may be

⁸ Alexander et al. (1994), in their review of studies looking at how subject matter knowledge and interest impact reading, differentiate between linear and nonlinear texts. Linear text, according to the authors, is “connected discourse presented in written form where decisions relative to processing are left solely to the reader.” This includes traditional textbooks, novels, or articles. Nonlinear text is also connected discourse but, “it is discourse accompanied by some type of database management system,” such as web-based reading (1994, p. 202-203).

challenging because students have minimal or no relevant background knowledge (Lee, 2010).

Content-specific texts can serve a wide variety of purposes and functions, such as advancing knowledge, presenting a particular worldview, and maintaining a discipline's hegemony (Coffin, 2006; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Wineburg (1991) argued that, rather than furthering each discipline's hegemony, texts actually become homogenized as they make their way from the discipline to the classroom, which results in students having few opportunities to construct meaning through interactions with texts in ways that are authentic to the discipline. Lee (2010) also made the point that, in an effort to simplify content in textbooks, they end up being more challenging for students to comprehend because necessary information is left out or links between concepts are not clear. Secondary content area teachers are not typically prepared to readily evaluate or modify their texts and it is not clear from the research how teachers who do use textbooks might do so to promote disciplinary learning. In the near future, teachers will likely need to incorporate more challenging texts in their curriculum since one of the threads throughout the CCSS is in-depth reading in sophisticated texts. Additionally, the CCSS have students reading and synthesizing across multiple texts, a practice that is not currently common to most secondary content areas.

Typically, students are expected to "learn" from textbooks by reading assigned sections and extracting information to answer questions. Even so, many teachers actually substitute text reading with their own explanations of texts or use movies or other media because they believe they can cover more content material with lectures and other activities, because the textbooks are too difficult, or because students lack the necessary

background knowledge to successfully comprehend the material individually (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995; Wade & Moje, 2000). Teachers may also circumvent having students actually read the text because they do not know how to support good reading practices in their content areas or send students to read on the web without necessary guidance; thereby ending up in a cycle in which students are not equipped to learn from text in the future (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007).

In this study, I attend to the types of texts students encounter across their content areas, including but not limited to textbooks, articles, media of web-based reading materials, newspapers, handouts, procedures, and primary documents and to the challenges and demands placed on them by those texts. I examine the ways texts are used by teachers and students and how they are implicated in content learning and in the development of disciplinary knowledge.

Activity

The RAND heuristic frames the activity as the “purpose” for reading, which the teacher may dictate or may be set by the reader. Reading activities or tasks across content areas invariably have different purposes and intended outcomes. For instance, reading activities may be designed to increase subject matter knowledge, to give students foundational facts, to help students understand the epistemology of the discipline, to teach the reader how to do something, or simply to hold students accountable. Regardless of the purpose, research shows that if students do not see the utility, or the degree to which particular reading activities will help them accomplish their goals, they may have little motivation to engage with those activities, thereby investing little effort into comprehension (Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 1996). Even skilled readers avoid engaging

reading activities they do not value as useful or interesting (Conley, 2001; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 2005). It may be that students do not understand the intended outcome of the reading activity, that they may not know how to interact differently with different types of texts and activities across disciplines, or that reading tasks are not connected to what counts as important in content area classes.

In this study, I examine each teacher's instruction as part of the reading activity and look to see how the teacher set up the text-based tasks, articulate the purpose and intended outcomes, use texts and reading activities to accomplish content learning, and how teachers think about the relationship between literacy and disciplinary learning. At the same time, I also look to see how students responded to the teachers' instruction, how they engage with text-based tasks, and the degree to which they believed texts were related to content learning.

Research Efforts to Examine and Enact Disciplinary Literacy

A number of notable researchers and research groups have worked to better understand disciplinary literacy and how it might manifest in secondary content areas. While I am not able to describe all of these efforts, I will highlight several that help illuminate key questions. Much of the earlier research on reading comprehension examined the strategies that proficient readers used to comprehend text in order to figure out how to support struggling readers. In a similar way, researchers have examined how experts in the disciplines read in order to identify the practices secondary content area teachers might teach to their students. As mentioned earlier, Shanahan & Shanahan (2008) conducted a study on how experts in the disciplines of history, chemistry and mathematics engaged with texts. They created teams for each discipline that were

comprised of disciplinary experts, teacher educators who prepared pre-service content area teachers, two high school teachers who taught the disciplinary content, and two literacy experts. The teams analyzed texts and reading tasks and found that different disciplinary experts approached text in different ways and for different purposes. For example, the chemists in their study moved back and forth between different representations of concepts (i.e. text and figures) to gain full understanding whereas historians focused on document analysis and paid close attention to the source when reading. They also found that when historians, scientists or mathematicians read outside their particular area of expertise, they read more like novices, indicating that background knowledge plays a crucial role for readers. The authors claimed they took these findings and revised their pre-service curricula with the aim that high school teachers should incorporate discipline specific literacy instruction into their practice, but they did not discuss how they would adjust the experts' practices to be appropriate for secondary school contexts or students.

Researchers, such as Shanahan & Shanahan (2008) and Wineburg (1991), have also compared the reading practices of experts in the disciplines with high school students and found that they read texts differently. For instance, Wineburg (1991) found that historians applied ways of knowing to the task that high school history students did not, thinking analytically and critically about the specific time period in which the texts were produced. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2011) investigated what it means to be literate in particular disciplines and set out to identify the “tools” used by disciplinary experts in geography and mathematics for acquiring knowledge. Disciplinary experts argued that some of the tools and strategies suggested by literacy educators would be unnecessary for

disciplinary learning in content area classrooms. They also posited, like Wineburg, that what actually happens in content area classrooms is largely transmission of knowledge rather than the “actual doing of the disciplines of math and geography” and argued that the focus of research on content area literacy should be on how texts and strategies can serve the “actual doing” of the disciplines rather than simply continuing to further knowledge transmission (Johnson, 2011).

As a result of this research, the field is developing a better understanding of the ways in which historians, scientists, and the like, engage with texts, of the differences between the literacy practices of disciplinary experts and novices. The current research, however, raises several important questions: Should secondary students be taught to read like disciplinary experts? In what ways can students, who lack the substantial knowledge of the discipline and subject-matter, engage in disciplinary literacy practices? These questions are taken up by Moje in a 2008 article in which she argued that researchers and educators should use the term *disciplinary literacy instruction* rather than content or subject area reading. Disciplinary literacy, she states, is about more than reading in the content areas, it is about preparing students to gain disciplinary knowledge and habits of mind and to learn how to engage with disciplinary discourse and texts. Heller (2010), in a commentary responding to Moje’s (2008) article, stated that secondary students cannot be expected to become disciplinary experts and argued instead for a midway between generic literacy instruction and “disciplinary” literacy instruction, teaching students to become “well-informed amateurs” (2010, p. 271). Secondary content area teachers, according to Heller, are less tied to their disciplines than to the charge to teach all students and thus should focus on teaching students to read and write more generally

across a range of genres. He wondered why the field, instead of upending secondary content areas in order to realize disciplinary literacy practices, does not work instead to “define secondary literacy as a category unto itself” (Heller, 2010, p. 270).

Moje (2010) countered Heller’s critique; explaining that disciplinary literacy instruction is not about trying to produce experts or to push the college curriculum down to high school, but rather to prepare students to “read, write, and discuss everyday decisions that are framed by work in the disciplines” (p. 276). From her perspective, providing all students with access to the ways of thinking in the disciplines is an act of social justice. She also countered Heller’s caution that secondary teachers are not steeped in or committed enough to the disciplines. Her experiences working with secondary teachers tell her that is not the case, finding that they are quite connected to their disciplines. This dialogue raises important questions about the disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical stance of secondary teachers and more work needs to be done to examine teachers’ perceptions of literacy and the disciplines. Additionally, Heller’s caution to not abandon more general literacy instruction should be heeded as the field continues to explore the ways that literacy strategies and approaches to texts interact with secondary content learning.

I now turn from researchers conceptual arguments and investigations of expert practices to look at two research groups who have designed interventions aimed at instantiating disciplinary literacy practices into secondary content area classrooms. McConachie and a team of researchers out of the University of Pittsburgh have developed a disciplinary literacy framework for use by secondary teachers. The group takes on Moje’s (2010) stance in claiming that students can only develop deep conceptual

knowledge in a discipline “by using the habits of reading, writing, talking, and thinking which that discipline values and uses” (McConachie, 2010, p. 8). According to this framework, secondary teachers need to apprentice their students into the habits of thinking that members of the discipline use to construct knowledge. Though anecdotal accounts illustrate the ways teachers utilizing the framework support students’ engagement with disciplinary literacy practices, empirical research has not yet been reported.

Greenleaf and colleagues from the Strategic Literacy Initiative at WestEd have also utilized an apprenticeship model (the “Reading Apprenticeship”) to integrate literacy across subject-matter domains through an “Academic Literacy⁹” course aimed at engaging struggling readers who are often placed in less challenging, remedial courses in high-level thought (Greenleaf et al, 2001). Based on a conception of literacy that draws upon both cognitive and social theories of learning, Reading Apprenticeship emphasizes reading as problem-solving act while stressing the importance of teaching students when, how and why to enact reading comprehension strategies in discipline-specific material (Greenleaf et al., 2001). They identify different reading strategies for different types of texts and discipline specific tasks, but those practices are situated under a broader framework for reading that cuts across content areas. Students who take the Academic Literacy course are then encouraged by their content area teachers to continue to utilize the strategies they learned, which results in a cohesive focus on literacy across all content areas. This group, then, is attempting to find the middle ground between content area literacy and the literacy practices used by experts in the disciplines.

⁹ The Academic Literacy course is based on the Reading Apprenticeship Framework and was taught as a supplemental course in addition to students’ regular course of study.

Researchers from the Strategic Literacy Initiative have conducted several studies of the effectiveness of Reading Apprenticeship in urban high schools. Results from these studies show promising results regarding teachers' ability to effectively incorporate disciplinary literacy instruction into their practice and for students' literacy and content learning. Greenleaf et al. (2001) reported that students who had the Academic Literacy course gained an average of two years growth on reading comprehension assessments over the course of one school year. While this is a positive finding, benefits from the Academic Literacy course do not necessarily generalize to typical content area classes or contexts for several reasons. To begin, the teachers who taught the course had significantly more professional development and support learning how to incorporate literacy into their practice than typically secondary teachers do - most have little to no support. Secondly, the Academic Literacy course was designed as a special course; though the regular content area teachers received training on the Reading Apprenticeship framework, the students received the bulk of their literacy instruction outside their content area classes. It may not be reasonable for schools to have all students take a separate course, which limits the degree to which this model can transfer to other settings.

More recently, Greenleaf et al. (2011) published a study that investigated the features of professional development that contributed to the integration of academic literacy with science instruction. This study, in focusing on what it takes for secondary teachers to shift their practice and incorporate disciplinary literacy practices, spoke to some of the key questions and concerns of Moje, Heller and others in the field. A key component of their professional development framework was to acknowledge the profound impact that teachers' existing beliefs about literacy and content learning have

on their development of new concepts and instructional practices. Rather than discounting teachers' preconceptions, their approach "provides support for resolving the resulting cognitive dissonance and at the same time responds to teachers' needs for pragmatic solutions to problems of practice by offering teachers a repertoire of tools and strategies consistent with these new understandings" (2011, p. 666). They found that students in the intervention group performed better on standardized assessments in both literacy and science than control students. These findings suggest that, with intensive professional development that not only provides teachers with instructional tools but also with support re-conceptualizing content learning, teachers can take on discipline-specific literacy instruction that positively impacts content learning. Left unanswered, however are questions about how, as a result of disciplinary literacy instruction, the students in these classes engage in literacy tasks in other content area classes.

Summary

Despite all the recent attention aimed toward adolescent literacy, it is clear that the research and work done in the past 30 years on secondary content literacy has failed to make a real difference to better support student learning or shift instructional practice. This is due in part to the fact that content area teachers typically do not have sufficient, if any, preparation in incorporating literacy instruction into their practice. Many make the assumption that adequate decoding skills automatically equate adequate reading ability (Greenleaf et al., 2001). Currently, in many school districts, English teachers are charged with improving middle and high school students' reading achievement overall, but are neither prepared to do so in their own subject area, let alone all the others. The failure to improve content area literacy instruction is also due, according to Moje (2010), to a lack

of knowledge about what adolescents are asked to do in real schools and content area classes on a daily basis, and what they are able to do.

Moreover, the field has little understanding about how students and content teachers conceive of literacy processes and practices, what kinds of text are selected or produced, how those texts are used by content area teachers and students in secondary classrooms, how language and text practices are engaged for a range of purposes across a range of contexts, or how students' ability to learn text differs across contexts and disciplinary tasks. In short, if we are to positively change literacy practices in secondary schools such that students can learn meaningful content from texts, we need a much better understanding of the skills, needs, and practices of both secondary students and their teachers.

This dissertation study used qualitative methods and case study design to provide a detailed exploration of the multi-dimensional reading experiences of students as they moved among several content area classes. Thus, when studying adolescents' content literacy experiences, I considered the relationship among readers' skills and interest, subject matter knowledge, text and activity features, instruction, and the disciplinary contexts in which readers, texts, and practices were situated. Ultimately, through careful description, this study intended to describe how knowing more about the secondary reader's range of literacy experiences and teachers' practices can add to current theory about disciplinary literacy and help researchers and educators better design and implement effective content area literacy instruction.

My research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What literacy demands, expectations, and experiences do high school students encounter across their English, Social Studies, and Science classes? In what ways are those contexts the same or different?
2. What are students' perceptions of the literacy demands, expectations, and experiences they encounter in different content area classes?
3. How do students engage with the literacy demands and respond to literacy-related learning tasks? What are the similarities and differences for individual students across these different contexts?

Chapter 3

Design, Methods & Analysis

In this chapter, I describe the study's design and data collection methods, in addition to providing a brief introduction of the school and each participant. Finally, I explain the methods I utilized to analyze my data.

Research Methods

This study employed qualitative, ethnographic principles to examine the literacy experiences of three 10th grade students across their English, Social Studies and Science classes. My basic epistemological assumption comes from the RAND heuristic and the stance that learning is socially situated and culturally constructed in particular contexts (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In short, we cannot separate individuals from their contexts. Therefore, as I investigated students' literacy experiences in their content areas, I conducted observations and then talked with students and their teachers about the specific texts and reading activities with which they engaged on a daily basis. Qualitative inquiry is appropriate for this study as it seeks to examine reading experiences of students in specific contexts, to describe unique cases, and then to draw comparisons across those cases as patterns and themes arise (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative methods are most appropriate when in-depth information is required about how various components impact a particular role or how that role is supported or undermined in a school (Stake, 2005; RAND, 2002).

Case study method is an especially appropriate design for this study because, as Merriam (1998) states, it “offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon” (1998, p. 41). I focused on the student as the unit of analysis in order to gain a deeper understanding of the full range of their literacy experiences across a school day. Case study, both as a process of inquiry and a product, investigates a phenomenon in real-life contexts and attempts to explore the meaning for those involved (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2006; Merriam, 1995). When conducting a case study, the researcher works to illustrate the complexities of a particular instance and to obtain information from a variety of sources in order to develop “new propositions and generalizations about how and why a phenomenon unfolds” (Wells et al., 1995). Using multiple cases can “strengthen the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29); therefore, I examined the experiences of 3 case study students.

I begin this next section with a description of the setting and participants, followed by the study design and data collection. Finally, I describe how I analyzed my data.

Sampling – School Site . I employed purposive sampling to select a school site in which to conduct the study. To begin, I identified a local urban school district serving approximately 48,000 students, 44% of whom are White and 56% of whom are non-White (1.8% Native American, 20.0% African American, 11.5% Latino, 21.8% Asian). Approximately 40% of the students in this district qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. The district has thirteen high schools and I selected Whitman High School because of its central location in the district and because it has a population reflecting that of the

district. Data from the 2011-2012 annual reports shows that Whitman High School has approximately 1,700 students and thus is representative of the diversity of the district and neighborhood (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Whitman High School Race/Ethnicity breakdown

Race/Ethnicity	%
American Indian	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	22%
Black	30%
Hispanic	8%
White	38%
Multiracial	2%

41.3% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, 6% are designated as Special Education, and 5.6% are Transitional Bilingual. The high school is one of nine in the district offering Advanced Placement classes and has a 91% graduation rate. English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics offer honors classes that are open to all freshmen and sophomores and Advanced Placement classes to juniors and seniors with approval from instructors. According to the teachers participating in this study, approximately 60% of sophomores opt into honors classes and 25% of juniors and seniors are enrolled in AP courses. Students at Whitman score slightly higher than the district average on the state 10th grade reading assessment (83% Whitman, 79% district average). At the time of the study, the school was not implementing CCSS, although teachers were aware they were moving towards them in the next two years.

Whitman houses a program called College Bound, which is specifically designed to support African American youth in reaching college. Staff members for the College Bound Program recruit thirty incoming African American freshmen each year who,

according to the school website, “have the desire to accelerate their learning potential and prepare for post-secondary education.” Students in the program are automatically placed in Honors level courses during their freshman and sophomore years in preparation for AP classes their junior and senior years, though they do not all end up taking those AP classes. College Bound students receive academic support in the form of after school tutoring and peer study groups, social support, and individualized college readiness support. The program has a 100% graduation rate and 100% acceptance rate to 2-year and 4-year colleges.

My first contact at Whitman High School was the principal, whom I knew from previous work with a university-based program that served to connect local schools with the university. I communicated with the principal via email and then met with him in person to further explain the purpose of the study and to seek permission to conduct the study. Once he agreed to allow me to conduct the study, I began recruiting teacher participants.

Sampling – Teacher Participants. My ultimate goal was to identify three or four students who had the same English, Social Studies, and Science classes so that I could look at each students’ unique experience with the same literacy demands, texts, and instruction and thus better understand how particular reader factors impacted the ways that students experienced literacy in each context. I began this process by working with the principal to identify an 10th or 11th grade general education English, Science, and Social Studies teacher. The goal of focusing on general education rather than advanced placement classes was to capture the literacy experience for the average urban high school student rather than one in specialized or selected admittance classes, such as those

placed in special literacy intervention classes (e.g. Read 180). For each of the three teachers I recruited, Ms. Meyer, Mr. Berkman, and Mr. Harris, I began with an email explaining my study and asking if he or she was willing to meet with me to learn more. I then arranged to meet in person with the individual teachers to discuss the study in more detail and after meeting with each teacher, sought their informed consent to participate in the study.

Ms. Meyer -- Ecology Teacher. Ms. Meyer was the first teacher I recruited for the study, having been referred to her by the school principal since she was head of the Science Department as well as by a colleague at the university who had placed student teachers in her classroom for several years. I contacted Ms. Meyer first via email, giving her a general overview of the study and specifically my plans for observing classes and interviewing teachers. She suggested I come to the school so that we could talk face to face about the study. I met with her during her lunch period and we talked in more detail about the study and she consented to participate. She was welcoming and invited me to sit in on the afternoon classes, saying that her students were used to visitors as she had a university student teacher and several undergraduate volunteers in her classroom on a regular basis.

Ms. Meyer began teaching science eight years ago on an emergency credential. After four years, she took a break to pursue a Masters in Teaching and had been teaching Science at Whitman for four years. Ms. Meyer said she was attracted to Whitman for its diverse student population and that was hired specifically to turn around the school's Ecology program. She said, "He [the principal] was really straight with me – this program is in a state of disrepair and you should repair it." At the time, Ecology was a

program with very little academic rigor – students expected to do nothing and still get a good grade. In the four years Ms. Meyer has been teaching Ecology, she felt the course had gotten more rigorous and the number of students enrolled in Ecology has almost tripled. Despite the jump in enrollment, she said that she continued to work primarily with students of color. White students, she said, typically signed up for Marine Science, which was perceived as more challenging and better preparation for AP science. In the two periods I observed, 2nd and 5th period, approximately 85% of students were African American, Asian, or Latino with the greatest percentage being African American.

I identified and recruited the History and English Language Arts teachers by first recruiting four students who had the same teachers for Ecology, ELA, and History. One notable difference is that three of the students were enrolled in World History teacher's AP class and one in Regular class. I was initially reticent about including the student in the Regular World History class, but decided that examining how the teacher's literacy expectations and demands differed between the two classes would be worthwhile.

I will discuss the students after I introduce the two remaining teachers.

Mr. Berkman -- World History Teacher. Mr. Berkman taught 10th grade AP World History and Regular World History at Whitman. He had been at the school for eleven years and was two years away from retirement at the time of the study. Mr. Berkman explained that he came to teaching mid-career after spending about sixteen years in the computer industry and discovered that he enjoyed working with youth, especially “tough kids.” He gravitated towards history because he “always had a passion for history and in particular historical narratives,” telling me that he was born in Eastern Europe and liked to incorporate stories about his family history into his lectures. During

our three interviews and informal conversations, Mr. Berkman relayed numerous stories from his teaching career in which he felt, by taking a “tough” stance, that he had succeeded in helping students take responsibility for their own learning.

Three of the participating students had Mr. Berkman for AP World History and one had him for Regular World History. At Whitman, all students were invited to enroll in AP World History their sophomore year. I conducted seven observations in Mr. Berkman’s 2nd period Regular World History class and ten observations split between his 3rd and 6th period AP World History classes. All but one student in the Regular 2nd period class was a student of color (African American, Asian, Latino). 3rd and 6th periods each were approximately 60-70% White and about 30-40% students of color (African American or Asian).

Mr. Harris – English Language Arts (ELA) Teacher. Mr. Harris was designated as the College Bound 10th grade ELA teacher and so three of his classes were comprised of about 50% students from the program, which meant he had more African American students than was reflected in the school’s general student population. He had been teaching English in the city for eighteen years, beginning at a more affluent school before coming to Whitman three years prior. While teaching, he pursued a master’s degree focused on facilitating achievement among African American students enrolled in college prep programs such as AP and International Baccalaureate. In his experience, he had found that African American students in these programs struggled with isolation and were often not successful and said he found the degree useful to his teaching.

I conducted twelve observations split between Mr. Harris’s 2nd and 6th period 10th grade Honors ELA, which had a world literature focus. At Whitman, approximately 60%

of sophomores enrolled in Honors ELA and a smaller percentage typically went on from there to AP English in their junior and senior years. All College Bound students were automatically enrolled in Honors English class their sophomore year. Three of the four participating students in this study had his 2nd period ELA Honors class and one had his 6th period ELA Honors class. Mr. Berkman's 2nd period had a larger proportion of College Bound students, with sixteen out of the thirty students being African American. In his 6th period, the majority of the class was White and there were only six African American students. The reason for this, according to Mr. Harris, was that the College Bound students tended to travel as a cohort.

Sampling -- Focal Student Participants. As with the teachers, I employed purposive sampling to select and recruit the focal students. Ms. Meyer served as my window to the students, having offered to help me recruit. To begin, I spent several days in her classroom, introducing myself to students and explaining my study and my presence in their classes in upcoming months. She then worked with me to identify potential students in her classes who also had the same ELA and World History teachers. In addition to looking for students who shared the same teachers, she also selected potential students based on my criteria – those who she considered “average” in her classes, meaning they were not at the top of their class nor did they exhibit significant learning challenges. In selecting students who were perceived as “average” by their teacher, I hoped to identify students who had basic reading skills, but who may have been challenged to learn from content area texts. This factor was important because research on adolescent readers indicates that the vast majority can read fluently, but do not necessarily understand what they read. Additionally, many of the intervention programs

currently underway target struggling readers and I was interested in the students who are not necessarily labeled as “struggling readers,” but who may still have difficulty learning from content area texts. Ms. Meyer also considered whether she felt students were willing to participate in my study, taking into account what she knew about external factors such as health issues or particularly disruptive home life issues.

It was challenging to identify students who had exactly the same schedule and so I ended up with four students who had the same teachers but who were in different periods. We agreed on four potential students who all had Ms. Meyer for Ecology and the same teachers for ELA and World History – Mariah Woods, Justin King, Jasmine Robinson, and Haley Saunders. Mariah, Justin and Jasmine were all African American students who also happened to participate in the College Bound Program. Haley was an Asian American student and thus not in the program. Ms. Meyer initially approached each of them about participating in the study, making sure to communicate that their participation had no bearing on their grade for her class. After each student said they were interested in the study, I then arranged to meet with each one face-to-face to explain the study and handed out parent consent and student assent forms. I was careful to communicate to the students and their parents/guardians that participation was voluntary and individuals could withdraw from participation at any point in the study and that participation will in no affect their grade in the class.

All four students agreed to participate in the study and I collected data from observations, interviews and artifacts for each one. However, after collecting and analyzing data on each one, I decided to include only three of the four students in this

study, choosing not to include Haley because she had a series of absences and health issues that made it difficult for me to get a good sense of her academic experiences.

Before I discuss data sources and collection, I provide a brief introduction to Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine.

Mariah - An “engaged” student. Mariah’s Language Arts, Ecology, and World History teachers collectively described her as an “engaged” student. After spending two months observing in her classes and interviewing her nine times, evidence pointed to the fact that she was engaged in her academics both in and out of school. Mariah was a busy African American sophomore who laughed easily and seemed at ease talking about herself and her experiences in school. She spoke positively about her school and its academic rigor and about her voluntary participation with the College Bound Program, which she said helped boost her math grades. In nearly all of the twenty classes in which I observed Mariah, she participated more frequently than her peers in whole-class discussions. She asked clarifying questions, shared personal connections to a topic, and often responded to a teacher’s question about the content even when she wasn’t sure of the correct answer. Throughout our interviews, Mariah lit up when talking about history, which she declared her favorite subject. She said she her goal was to become an anthropologist, an idea she got after her 9th grade history teacher had students reading history magazines about the work of archaeologists and anthropologists. Mariah said that she read frequently outside of school and shared books with friends. She talked specifically about a trilogy by Sharon Draper and about *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, which she said was worthwhile even though it was challenging and took longer to read. On a recent plane flight to visit family, Mariah said she grabbed a bunch of books from

her bookshelf and ended up happily rereading *Night* by Elie Wiesel. She said that, unfortunately, homework takes up most of her time for free reading.

Justin -- “Justin is jumping through all the hoops.” Justin was an amiable, easy going 16-year old African American male. All three of the teachers participating in the study described him as a popular student who liked to socialize and worked at ‘being cool.’ Justin’s primary interest lay in playing basketball, which he did for Whitman’s JV team during basketball season and for an outside league the rest of the year. He said that his practices and weekend games occupied most of his time outside of school. When I asked Justin what he thought of Whitman, he said that he like the school environment but did not like the classes, saying, “I feel like our classes don’t pertain to what some people want to do later in life.’ While Justin did not know what he wanted to do in the future, he was sure that his Algebra II class was not going to be relevant.

Each of Justin’s teachers described as an “interesting” student – as one whose academic performance did not match his abilities. For instance, his English Language Arts teacher, Mr. Harris, described him as a student who would spent the term doing nothing and then quickly hustle to turn in work and get his grades up so that he could maintain eligibility to play basketball. In each of his classes, Justin had developed strategies to avoid doing as much work as possible and still make a decent grade. Like Mariah and Jasmine, Justin was involved in the College Bound Program. He said that his mother found the program and basically made him go to the interview, but that he did not regret participating in the program and feels that the tutoring helps him with his school work.

Jasmine -- “The day-to-day work of school bores her. She is a singer – that is her forte.” The first thing Ms. Meyer, Mr. Berkman, and Mr. Harris said about Jasmine was that she loved to sing. In every class period I observed, unless she was very tired and had her head down, she erupted into song every time there was a break or transition between activities. The second thing that her teachers said about her was that she had a propensity to be distracted from activities, often by her own singing. For example, Ms. Meyer said, “Jasmine will move slower [than other students] through an activity. A lot of it is that she gets really distracted along the way. She’s got to crank out a song or two and then come back to it.”

A friendly and popular African American Sophomore, Jasmine said that the best thing about Whitman High School was her friends. When asked for her thoughts about the school academically, she said, “I can’t really tell about the education. I wasn’t serious about high school when I was coming into it so I don’t know about that...” This statement reflects her general disinterest in her classes and the topics she was studying. Even though she seemed motivated to complete her assignments and claimed that she wanted to go college, she was subdued when talking about her academic work. For instance, when I asked Jasmine about her reading habits, she sighed and said, “It’s bad that I don’t read more.” Jasmine’s teachers felt they she did not have much academic confidence, a sentiment that came through numerous times throughout the study. Like Mariah and Justin, Jasmine participated in the College Bound Program, which she said she applied for on the recommendation of a family friend. The best part of the program, according to Jasmine, was that they helped her with her math work, which she described as “very challenging.”

Jasmine came to life when talking about singing, dancing, and performing. She said definitively that her favorite part of the school day was her 3rd period elective, the Spring musical, and that she spent most of her time outside of school in dance or voice classes. When asked about her future goals, she said that she wanted to find a college program for the performing arts. She said, “I love doing it and I enjoy it so much. To do it everyday and get paid for it...”

Data Sources and Data Collection

I employed qualitative methods, using observations and interviews to gather data and engage in an iterative analysis of the data throughout the study (Merriam, 1995; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). See Table 2 below for how my data sources aligned with my research questions.

Table 2. Research Questions & Data Source Alignment

Research Question	Data Source
1. What literacy demands, expectations, and experiences do high school students encounter across their English, Social Studies, and Science classes? How are those contexts the same or different?	<p><i>Observations</i></p> <p>I observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the teacher said and did in the classroom related to literacy. • How the teachers used a variety of texts and implemented reading tasks • Resources in the classroom related to learning content from text (posters, visual aids, vocabulary lists, processes, etc.) <p><i>Artifacts</i></p> <p>I examined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The texts and other reading material used or referenced • Handouts (e.g. lab sheets, articles, activity sheets) • Samples of student work related to reading tasks <p><i>Teacher Interviews</i></p> <p>I inquired about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers’ rationale for the text material selected for instruction or independent reading • Teachers’ rationale for how he or she used the texts • Teachers’ content learning goals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers' thinking about text-based activities
<p>2. What are students' perceptions of the literacy demands, expectations, and experiences they encounter in different content area classes?</p>	<p><i>Observations</i> I observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focal students' participation of and engagement in text-related activities – whole group, small group, and individual <p><i>Student interviews</i> I inquired about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' perception of the difficulty of the text and task Students' understanding of the purpose of the text-based task Students' sense of the degree to which the text related to content learning Students' perception of the teacher and instruction related to texts or text-based tasks
<p>3. How do students engage with the literacy demands and respond to literacy-related learning tasks? What are the similarities and differences for individual students across these different contexts?</p>	<p><i>Observations</i> I observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' engagement with texts and reading activities Students' talk with teacher or peers about text and content Academic language used by the teacher, texts, and students <p><i>Student interviews</i> I inquired about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' interest in the topic and/or subject-matter domain Students' motivation to engage in the reading task Students' understanding of the purpose of the reading task Students' ability to decode the text Students' understanding of the text Students' approach to text-based tasks

Data Collection Overview. Data collection occurred over 8-week period of time, during which I conducted observations of the students' ELA, World History (AP and Regular), and Ecology classes and interviews with focal students and their content area teachers. Prior to beginning formal data collection, I spent two weeks meeting with and

recruiting teacher and student participants. In addition, I collected samples of texts and documents related to literacy instruction and activities from each content area classroom. By triangulating data collection, I was able to gain multiple perspectives to clarify and verify meaning and thereby reduce the chances of misinterpretation. During all interviews, I used an audio recorder with permission from the participants to make sure I had a record of everything that was said for later analysis (Merriam, 1998). While conducting observations, I took field notes for later analysis. In conducting classroom observations, collecting artifacts, conducting interviews with teachers, and interviews with the focus students, I aimed to gain an understanding of the interaction between the content area literacy instruction and demands and the students responses to those demands. See Table 3 below for an overview of my rotation through each content area class and Table 4 for the students' content area periods.

Table 3: Data Collection Schedule

Week	Observe, Take Fieldnotes, Collect Texts & Reading Assignments	Student Interviews	Teacher Interviews
1	Conduct 2-3 observations in each content area	All students Interview #1 – Protocol A	All teachers Interview #1 – Protocol A
2	Observe in Ecology 3-4 days, 2 nd & 5 th period	All students Interview #2 - Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)	Ecology teacher Interview #2 – Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)
3	Observe in AP & Regular World History 3-4 days, periods 2 nd , 3 rd , & 6 th period	All students Interview #3 – Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)	World History teacher Interview #2 – Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)
4	Observe in ELA 3-4 days, 2 nd & 6 th period	All students Interview #4 - Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)	ELA teacher Interview #2 – Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)
5	Observe in Ecology 3-4 days, 2 nd & 6 th period	All students Interview #5 - Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts	Ecology teacher Interview #3 - Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts

		from week's classes)	from week's classes)
6	Observe in AP & Regular World History 3-4 days, 2 nd , 3 rd , & 6 th period	All student Interview #6 - Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)	World History teacher Interview #3 - Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)
7	Observe in ELA 3-4 days, 2 nd & 6 th period	All students Interview #7 - Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)	ELA teacher Interview #3 - Protocol B (focused on reading activities & texts from week's classes)
8	No observations	Make-up/Additional interview	Make-up/Additional interview

Table 4: Students by Content Area Period

	Meyer- Ecology	Harris- ELA	Berkman- World History
Mariah Woods	5 th period	2 nd period	6 th period AP
Justin King	2 nd period	6 th period	3 rd period AP
Jasmine Robinson	5 th period	6 th period	2 nd period Regular

Observations. To get a sense of each classroom context, including subject matter instruction, literacy instruction, literacy-related activities in each content area, and how students engaged with those activities, I conducted observations in each content area classroom for a total of three weeks during the study. During the initial week of the study, I observed in each content area between two to three days to get a sense of the general schedule of classroom activities, the content instruction, the use of texts, and the classroom culture, as well as to begin to develop a relationship with the teachers and students. Since the focal students were split between two or three periods in each class, I made an attempt to observe in each period during the first week. Additionally, Wednesday and Thursday were block days and I observed each class for a block period. Following this initial week, I worked with Mr. Harris, Mr. Berkman, and Ms. Meyer to establish the observation schedule for the subsequent weeks of the study, spending two

additional weeks in each content area. At the completion of the study, I conducted a total of fourteen observations in Ecology, seventeen in AP & Regular World History, and twelve in ELA for a total of forty-three observations. See Table 5 below for a sample week of my data collection schedule.

Table 5: Sample Data Collection – Week #1 in Ecology

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Observations	2 nd period 5 th period	2 nd period 5 th period	5 th period Block	2 nd period Block	
Student Interview				Mariah Justin	Jasmine
Teacher Interview					Ms. Meyer

During my observations in each content area, I documented what happened in the class by recording field notes, paying close attention to anything that involved texts and text-based tasks. I recorded in my field notes the types of texts used that were used or referenced and the ways that they were used. I also documented any reading, writing, or vocabulary resources or charts displayed or referenced, and the amount of reading expected from students. As I typed a running record of the teachers' instruction and students' actions and participation, I closely observed how teachers introduced text-based tasks or activities, including the stated and unstated purpose and intended outcome(s), and anything teachers did to tap into students' prior discipline, domain, or specific topic knowledge. I also attended to any during reading and post-reading activities that might have support students in developing their understanding of concepts they were to have gained during reading (i.e. through discussion, writing, post-reading exercises). During whole-class discussions, I noted focal students' participation and engagement, including

documenting the types of questions asked by the teacher, if texts or reading activities are brought to bear, and, if possible, the content learning goals. I also specifically attended to each focal student's participation by noting what he or she was doing every few minutes (e.g. writing notes, raising his or her hand, looking out the window, etc.), as well as recording everything he or she said. I noted the mode of any reading that occurred – be it whole class, small group, round robin or independent reading. If students were working or discussing in small groups, I attempted to rotate between groups with the focal students and focus in particular on their engagement and participation, which I then referenced during our subsequent interviews.

A limitation of this study was that I only spent a total of 3 weeks in each content area class. Though I felt that I got to know the teachers' instructional routines and talked extensively with teachers and students about the classes, I could not account for any changes over time.

Artifacts. During the study, I collected any reading or writing assignments, made copies of texts, and collected focal student work involving any reading–related activity. After spending a week in each content area, I analyzed my field notes and collected artifacts and selected one reading activity to reference in the follow-up student and teacher interviews. I repeated this process twice for each content area.

Interviews.

All interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. I listened to the audio recordings to confirm the accuracy of the transcriptions and then entered the transcriptions in my qualitative data analysis program for coding.

Student interviews. To begin, I interviewed each focal student during the first week of the study, using a semi-structured interview format (Merriam, 1998). I asked Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine to speak generally about their current experiences in ELA, World History, and Ecology classes. I used Likert scales to ascertain the degree to which they were interested in the discipline and in the more specific subject-matter they were studying and how often they read for each class and out of school. I interviewed each of the focal students during lunch or after school so as not to disrupt classroom learning (See Appendix A for interview protocol). In addition to the initial interview, I conducted between six-seven additional interviews with each student over the course of the study, two per content area. Each interview was conducted at the end of the week of observation. For these interviews, I prepared by reviewing my fieldnotes, identifying any particular activities or moments from the class that I wanted to reference during the interview (Alexander, 2012). I also selected a text (e.g. a chapter, article, passage, or handout) used during the previous week to engage with during the interview. I asked students to bring their texts and assignments to the interview sessions (See Appendix B for interview protocol).

During each interview session, which lasted between 20-30 minutes, I began by telling the student that I was interested in their thoughts and opinions about the ELA, World History or Ecology classes, and specifically the text-based tasks, that I observed in the past week. I used Likert scales to prompt discussion about students' interest in the domain and topic they covered and their prior knowledge on the topic, which then served as a point of comparison for what they felt they learned about the topic.

Then, I directed students to think about one particular text-based task (either in class or as homework) and ascertained their thinking about the text and how related to the content goals of the class. In order to better understand the reading skills and background knowledge of the students, I conducted Think Alouds in which I asked them to read a passage from their assigned text, regardless of what their teacher had asked them to do, and to talk about their understanding of the passage. To begin, students read aloud a small portion of the text so that I could assess their ability to decode and read fluently (ability to read accurately with proper rate and expression). I began by assessing fluency because it is a critical factor in reading comprehension; to effectively comprehend text, readers must be able to quickly and easily identify words (National Reading Panel, 2000; Samuels, 2002). When readers who make no word errors, read with proper rate and expression, and can demonstrate comprehension of the text, that text is at their ‘independent level,’ meaning they can read and comprehend without instructional support. High school readers who struggle to comprehend text may appear to be well matched to texts because they can read them fluently. However, they may struggle to comprehend because they are lacking the skills, strategies, word knowledge, or content knowledge. I then asked them continue reading the passage silently, after which we talked about what they understood. If students stalled, I asked a series of prompting questions, such as “What does xxx word mean?”, “What sense do you make from this particular section?” I also asked students to relate the passage to an event or activity from class.

Teacher interviews. I conducted a 30 minute pre-study interview with each teacher to ascertain a basic description of their content area class, their goals for the

students, and their thinking about using texts in their teaching (See Appendix C). Next, I conducted interviews with each content area teacher following a week of observations and asked them to speak specifically about the same text-based tasks that I asked the students to speak about. I asked the teachers to talk about their intended outcomes for the task, how they went about setting up the reading activity, and how they felt it went. I asked them about the types of texts they used in their classrooms and why, to discuss the reading-related activities that I observed, and the homework they assigned during the study. Then, I asked the teachers to compare that particular assignment to typical reading tasks, including purpose and intended outcomes. Working from my field notes, I probed for each teacher's perceptions of reading in her/his content area, for the relevance of that reading to content area learning, and for their perceptions of the focal students as readers, including their performance during the observed activities (See Appendix D).

Analytic Methods

In concert with qualitative research and ethnographic methods, my goal in data analysis was to develop rich descriptions of students' literacy experiences in different contexts, looking at the various factors that influenced the ways students responded to literacy demands. During data collection, I engaged in an ongoing review of the data corpus, which helped me structure subsequent interviews and observations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Prior to each student and teacher interview, I reviewed all my field notes from the week's observations and noted particular text-based activities, portions of class discussion, and segments of assigned texts to discuss in interviews. For example, I asked teachers to talk about their thinking about a particular text-based task that I had observed in class, including how they felt each focal student did with the task. I also

listened to interviews throughout the data collection period so that I could follow up with questions or return to comments that resonated with my research questions. At the end of the data collection period and before I began coding the data, I drafted several memos capturing initial thoughts about themes or potential trends. I made a note of quotations or interview segments that stood out for me and drafted memos about their possible salience.

To begin my coding and analysis, I transcribed all interviews and entered all interview transcripts and observation field notes into HyperResearch, a qualitative data analysis software program. Throughout data analysis process, I used my research questions and disciplinary-focused RAND heuristic as a guide to develop codes and look for themes (Meriam, 1998; Yin, 2006). I engaged in a constant iterative analysis of the data set, alternately focusing on coding within one data source (e.g. teacher interviews or student interviews), and then moving between data sources, looking across teacher interviews, student interviews, observation field notes, and data derived from artifacts to identify patterns and inconsistencies with regards to the interaction between the reader, text, activity, and context. For example, to understand Mariah's experiences with a particular text-based task in her Ecology class, I looked at the intersection between the what she did in class from the observation field notes, interview data capturing her thoughts about the task, interview data with her Ecology teacher's thoughts, the text(s), and artifacts related to the task. I then looked at other text-based tasks in Ecology and the other contexts for similarities or differences. Often after focusing closely on one particular student or task, I engaged in broader sweep of the data to reorient and reevaluate the coding. See Appendix E for a list of codes.

Field notes. I began with a set of general codes to capture the broader patterns and routines of each content area (e.g. “activity,” “content,” “text,” and “reading,”). From there, I looked closely within the general codes, using my conceptual framework to guide the development of nested sub-codes (Glaser & Straus, 1967). For example, I went back to every occurrence in my field notes in which I coded for “reading,” and created nested codes to delineate every instance the teacher provided “before,” “during,” “after,” reading instruction or support, or the lack thereof, and whether readings tasks were done independently, as part of a group, or as a read aloud. Within each “activity,” I created codes to capture both the teacher’s “set up” of the activity, as well as any instances in which the focal students participated in whole-class discussion by asking a question or by making a comment or connection.

After coding all field notes, I reviewed each content area looking for types of activities or instructional patterns that repeated across several observations as well as things that stood out as atypical and took several steps to capture those patterns. First, for each content area, I created a table representing the activities, teacher instruction, and student actions for each class I observed. This allowed me to calculate the frequency of various types of activities, to identify the time spent on activities, to align texts with tasks and instruction, and to identify similarities and differences both within and across each content area. Because the texts and tasks were more varied in Ecology than in the other two classes, I created a second table specifically for Ecology that included a section for each task, corresponding text, text features/modification, the task goal, and before, during or after reading supports (see Appendix K). Then, I drafted memos for each context, including detailed descriptions of all the text-based tasks, analyses of text, and related

instruction. Both the chart and the memos were useful as I coded teacher and student interview data and helped me to begin to look at interactions. In this process, I identified a number of text-based tasks and classroom interactions from each context representative of the nature of the literacy demands, expectations, and instruction.

Teacher and Student Interviews. After coding all my field notes, I moved to the teacher and student interviews, working initially from my original set of general codes and adding new sub-codes within each. For example, I asked both teachers and students to talk about the activities that I observed and from their responses, I added codes under “activity” to capture the teachers’ rationale, design of the activity, and intended outcomes, as well as the students’ thinking about the relevance and purpose of the activity and whether they felt the activity inhibited or promoted their content learning. For the students, I added new codes to account for specific reader factors, such as “interest” and “reading strategies.” Within the instances I coded for “interest,” I looked closely at the data (from interviews and Likert scales) to tease apart what Alexander et al. (1994) call long term interest and situational interest. Because a facet of the RAND framework is considering the student’s reading abilities and skills, I created a detailed set of sub-codes to account for the specific reading strategies each student either enacted during a Think Aloud session or mentioned during an interview. These included:

- PK (prior knowledge)
- M (metacognitive)
- RR (rereads)
- V (visualizes)
- P (predicts)
- CC (uses context clues for unfamiliar vocabulary)
- Sk (skims to answer questions)
- M (identifies main idea)
- A (aware of comprehension breakdown)
- POV (recognizes point of view)

- LitAnal (recognizes need for literary analysis)
- T-S (text to self connection)
- Asks teacher for help

Additionally, during each Think Aloud, I assessed the students' ability to read the passage fluently and coded for the students' prior knowledge and understanding of the content. After completing my coding, I was able to look across my data and compare the ways each student read from assigned ELA, World History, and Ecology texts and to identify all instances in which each student either enacted or reported he or she enacted a reading strategy.

While working with the teacher and student interview data, I also created a code for "perceptions/beliefs" to capture their thinking about literacy, texts, tasks, and content. Within this general code, I coded separately for students' perceptions of their own academic ability and teachers' perceptions of their academic ability so that I could look for similarities or differences across contexts and different text-based tasks. In addition, I searched for other factors that may have impacted the teachers' thinking about literacy and text-based tasks and thus decided to create a code for instances in which teachers talked about their more general stance on teaching, which I then looked at in conjunction with their beliefs about literacy and content learning.

I looked to see if there was variation in students' perception of the relationship between reading and disciplinary content learning between their ELA, World History, and Ecology classes. These data also helped to describe if or how perceptions in one content area may 'travel' or impact perception and participation in another content area.

Constant Comparison. As I reviewed my data and codes, I engaged in a constant comparative analysis of the codes from all the data sources to capture emerging themes

(Glaser & Straus, 1967). Looking across each context helped to illuminate important differences and similarities between the content area classes and, as I went, I adjusted and refined codes to capture those comparisons. Within each context, I compared the challenges and reader supports for texts with the teachers' expectations, goals, and instruction for each activity. I then brought the reader into the picture and drafted analytic memos to explore preliminary inferences and claims in addition to looking for disconfirming evidence that might lead to alternative explanations (Stake, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Miles & Huberman (1994) stated, the researcher attempts to see "processes and outcomes that occur across many cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanation (1994, p. 172). My aim in writing the report was to provide detailed description (Merriam, 1998) of the focal students' experiences reading across content areas.

Next Chapters:

Literacy Demands & Expectations for Learning from and Using Texts

Across the three 10th-grade content area contexts I observed – English Language Arts, World History and Ecology -- teachers used texts in different ways and for different purposes, implicitly or explicitly setting particular expectations, supports, and demands for their students. Teachers were attentive to the challenges and affordances of their chosen texts (e.g. textbooks, newspaper articles, novels, websites) to different degrees. They engaged students in a range of literacy tasks for a range of purposes, including note taking from texts or lectures, completing highly structured graphic organizers, making flash cards to study for a test, or writing summaries of texts for group posters to share

with peers. Reading was core to the content learning in some cases and in other cases much more peripheral.

In the next three chapters, I look at each content area classroom, considering the demands, supports, and expectations related to texts and the tasks. Then I look at how Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine responded to, navigated, and learned from the texts and tasks, drawing on classroom observations, interviews, and student work.

Chapter 4

Findings: AP World History

Teacher's Use of the Text and Implicit Expectations

Through his use of the textbook, Mr. Berkman implicitly communicated to his students that the content was important. He assigned textbook chapters (averaging 35 pages) to be read at home over the course of a week, holding students accountable for the reading with an ongoing notebook assignment. With the exception of two days that students watched films, during each of the class periods I observed¹⁰, Mr. Berkman lectured on selected topics that he drew directly from the textbook, pausing periodically to engage students in an IRE model of questioning¹¹. Students were expected to take notes both from lectures and from reading the text. He described his 10th-grade AP classes as “rigorous” classes in which students do a lot of reading and writing and “an incredible amount of testing.” To that end, he gave students a chapter test every two weeks and encouraged them to take practice tests via the textbook’s online website. These assessments accounted for 50% of their final grade.

With the exception of reading short excerpts on practice Document Based Essay Questions, all of the reading in AP World History was done in the textbook, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History*. Typical of history textbooks, *Ways of the World* is

¹⁰I observed in two different periods of AP World History in order to follow case study students. On most days, I was able to sit in on both periods so that I could compare field notes. In this section, I looked across the two periods because I do not believe the differences are substantial enough to warrant separate analyses. Mr. Berkman’s tone, content, and questioning were very similar across the two periods.

¹¹IRE stands for teacher *initiated* question, student *response*, and teacher *evaluation* of the response. This style is widely used in classrooms despite research documenting its ineffectiveness in promoting deep thinking or developing understanding.

structured chronologically (Reisman, 2012), but rather than covering countries or regions separately, the textbook is also organized thematically. According to the publisher, the thematic organization is intended to help students track themes and trends and connect to “big ideas” in history and could serve, in theory, to help interrupt students’ view of learning in history as a series of facts to be memorized (Wineburg, 1991). Each chapter supports its theme with a variety of worldwide examples. For example, Chapter 1 “First Peoples: Populating the Planet, to 10,000 B.C.E.” and Chapter 8, “Commerce and Culture, 500-1500” look at a range of regions as they related to the central themes of population growth and how the means to travel led to the spreading of commerce and culture. When I conducted my observations, the class was working on the final chapter, “Chapter 24 – Accelerating Global Interactions Since 1945.” In Chapter 24, students read about globalization as it has impacted the United States, China, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The only comment Mr. Berkman made about the textbook during all classroom observations and interviews was to briefly state that he liked the textbook for its “good narrative style” and thematic organization, which he felt made it more like a college text than a typical high school textbook. Though he said he “pulled topics” from each chapter for his lectures, he did not talk explicitly about *how* the thematic organization informed his teaching or supported student learning. He also did not talk about any possible challenges or affordances the textbook may have presented for his students nor did his practices indicate that he anticipated possible difficulty for students. Yet, as the RAND Framework and the Common Core State Standards assert, considering text complexity is

essential in looking at the reading demands in a given context and how texts and tasks align.

Ways of the World, with an average Lexile level of 1400L¹² is a dense, challenging text on a number of levels. To begin, Lexile score, which is slightly above grade level expectations, results from lengthy sentences replete with varied and sophisticated language. Photographs or graphics appear only every 3 to 4 pages and main headings and subheadings break up otherwise very long paragraphs of small print. Periodically, a reader will come across a quotation or excerpt from a primary source, but in order to find information about the source he or she would need to flip to a footnote at the end of the chapter. The thematic and narrative nature of the textbook, while liked by Mr. Berkman, requires readers to make connections between the smaller topics and the chapter's big ideas, continually synthesizing as they read. Similarly, rather than spotlighting key terms and concepts by bolding font or using a sidebar box, definitions are embedded within text, requiring readers to draw on knowledge of other concepts or events learned previously. For example, in Chapter 24's section on fundamentalism, a student would need prior knowledge on a number of topics to deepen his or her understanding of the term:

The term 'fundamentalism' derived from the United States, where religious conservatives in the early twentieth century were outraged by critical and 'scientific' approaches to the Bible, by Darwinian evolution, and by liberal versions of Christianity that accommodated these heresies" (Strayer, p. 741).

A student lacking prior knowledge of these references or who does not know the word 'heresy' might have a difficult time making sense of how fundamentalism is related.

¹²Lexile levels are a quantitative measurement of text difficulty. The recommended range for 10th grade is 1050-1335L. Lexiles and other readability measures provide useful, albeit limited, information about text. Also important to consider are qualitative measures, such as clarity of how clearly purpose is conveyed in a text, knowledge demands, text structure and features, and language conventionality.

Students may also struggle with sentences containing multiple embedded clauses. For example, the following sentence requires a student to read closely, accurately attending to conjunctions and commas to understand who the “enemy” is and how it relates to the World Trade Center at the end of sentence:

At the international level, the great enemy was not Christianity itself or even Western civilization, but irreligious Western-style modernity, U.S. imperialism, and an American-led economic globalization so aptly symbolized by the World Trade Center (Strayer, p. 746).

Students who skim sections of the textbook may have a difficult time connecting subtopics to the big ideas or understanding embedded definitions.

The AP Exam and Document Based Essay Questions (DBQs)

Mr. Berkman talked about the AP exam¹³ in 4 out of 10 of the classes I observed and repeatedly mentioned the exam during our interviews, saying that he felt his students’ performance was reflective of his teaching. As part of preparing students for the upcoming Spring AP exam, Mr. Berkman reported that he periodically had them complete practice exams, including practice Document Based Essay Questions (DBQs), one of the three free-response essay questions on the AP World History exam. Whereas the other two free-response essay questions, continuity and change over time and compare and contrast, require students to draw on their knowledge of historical background, the DBQ requires students to address a historical question by reading across a series of documents,¹⁴ analyzing and contextualizing those documents, and then formulating an answer from historical documentary evidence, skills at the core of

¹³ The AP World History Exam is comprised a multiple-choice section and a free-response section. In the free-response section, students complete three essays: a document-based essay question (DBQ), a continuity and change over time question (CCOT), and a compare and contrast question (COMP).

¹⁴ Documents on DBQs include maps, charts, photographs, artwork, speeches, eyewitness accounts, diaries, and historical passages. These documents can come from primary sources, textbooks, or archived materials.

historical inquiry (Reisman, 2012). According the College Board's Advanced Placement Program¹⁵ website, the AP World History exam assesses students historical thinking, which they state:

Involves the ability to identify, describe, and evaluate evidence about the past from diverse sources with respect to content, authorship, purpose, format, and audience. It involves the capacity to extract useful information, make supportable inferences and draw appropriate conclusions from historical evidence while also understanding such evidence in its context, recognizing its limitations and assessing the points of view that it reflects.
(http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/AP_WorldHistoryCED_Effective_Fall_2011.pdf)

To my knowledge, these DBQ practice essays were the only exposure students had to reading other types of texts (aside from the sporadic primary source excerpts in their textbooks) or do doing the type of source-based historical thinking work described in the quotation above, as Mr. Berkman never referenced any other text sources during class or our interviews. During my interviews with students, they said Mr. Berkman had been instructing them throughout the year how to write good thesis statements, but neither the teacher nor the students talked explicitly about what that instruction entailed. They also did not reference any instruction on how they should read or draw evidence from the range of documents in the DBQ.

The only instance in which I observed Mr. Berkman break from his lecture style was when he designed a peer assessment activity of a recent practice DBQ, which he afforded 20 minutes of a 110-minute block period. Mr. Berkman confirmed that this was the first time all year he had students conduct a peer assessment with the scoring guide (see Appendix F) and yet, aside from a brief explanation of one of the criteria, he did not

¹⁵ The College Board is a membership association that, in addition to administering standardized assessments such as the SAT, offers an advanced placement program designed to give high school students an opportunity to take. The program allows students to gain college credit for performance on AP exams.

model or instruct students how to use the criteria to judge peer's responses. Rather, he handed out the scoring guidelines and rubrics and gave the students a set of instructions:

The first thing you should have done is put the ID number and period on your scorecards. Do so right now. Now you definitely can confer with one another. For example, if student is not clear about a thesis statement, she can confer with another student. That's what actually happens when the readers grade these papers. I encourage you to check in with each other. Questions? I will check in with you in about 20 minutes to see how far you've gotten. This is an excellent way to train yourself to do a DBQ. I recommend that you look at the guidelines first. If there is a word you can't make out, ask your neighbor.

The majority of students appeared engaged in the activity (reading DBQs and writing on rubrics) -- from my vantage point I could hear several pairs of students conferring about various parts of the DBQs. Those who finished early were invited to "chat amiably" with classmates and after about 15 minutes, many were socializing. About halfway through the activity, a student asked what the word "grouping" on the scoring guide meant. The language on the scoring reads: "5. Analyzes documents by grouping them in two or three ways, depending on the question." Mr. Berkman responded, "Grouping is using two or more documents to support a point in a paragraph. If you have a paragraph with only one supporting document, that is not a group. The two documents have to support the point being made in the paragraph." This could have been an opportunity for Mr. Berkman to talk about how students can group documents (chronologically, culturally, or thematically) or how to determine the appropriate grouping for the question. At the end of the activity, he told students to use the scoring guidelines as a study tool to prepare for the AP Exam. In this activity, Mr. Berkman was not only asking students to apply their own knowledge of writing effective DBQs to assess peers' responses, but also to marry that knowledge with language on a rubric they were seeing for the first time. The fact that Mr. Berkman broke from his lecture format to have students do this activity implied

the value he placed on the AP exam and DBQs, and yet the absence of substantive teacher guidance was noteworthy.

Accountability through Task Completion

As stated previously, Mr. Berkman expected students to take notes both from lectures and from the textbook. His use of the textbook – assigning chapters to be read at home with no teacher preparation or guidance -- not only conveyed its importance, it implicitly communicated the expectation that he thought students could *independently* learn the necessary content from the reading. He said he felt the need to hold students accountable for the reading or he knew they would not do it and thus required students to keep a notebook containing notes on the key terms listed at the end of each chapter (e.g. neo-liberalism, antiglobalization, Che Guevara).

Mr. Berkman provided students support in the form of showing them how to set up their notebooks with a Table of Contents, dates, and headings such as “Chapter 3, Section 2” or “Class notes.” When students handed in their notebooks at the end of the school year, Mr. Berkman allowed me to peruse a stack and I saw simple bulleted lists of key terms with brief definitions as well as a handful of notebooks with more elaborate reading and lecture notes. Part of the notebook homework task was to respond in writing to each Chapter’s Big Picture Questions. These “Big Picture Questions” asked students to discuss main ideas from the chapter as they relate to central themes (e.g. *What have been the benefits and drawbacks of globalization since 1945?*), to summarize what they learned and synthesize new knowledge with prior knowledge (e.g. *Does the twentieth century as a whole confirm or undermine the Enlightenment predictions about the future of humankind?*”), and to use evidence in support of an argument (e.g. *To what extent do*

you think the various liberation movements of the twentieth century—communism, nationalism, democracy, feminism, internationalism – have achieved their goal?). While students might be able to define terms or identify figures by skimming and scanning, they would need to read the text much more closely and draw ideas and information from multiple sections of the text in order to fully answer these Big Picture questions.

It was evident from Mr. Berkman’s assessment criteria (see Appendix G), however, that he did not actually expect students to read the textbook closely. Rather, the purpose of the task was to hold students accountable for ‘completion.’ To begin, notebooks were worth 15% of their final grade and only assessed at the end of each quarter. Aside from showing students how to set up their notebooks at the beginning of the year, he said that he did not otherwise provide explicit instruction on *how* they ought to take notes or fully answer Big Picture Questions and likewise did not score them on the quality of their notes or question answers. As long as students wrote something, they would receive credit and could always boost a low notebook score by completing extra class notes or by completing a practice test via the textbook’s website. I stopped by Mr. Berkman’s classroom after school had let out for the year to return a borrowed textbook and found him at his desk grading stacks of notebooks. We had an informal conversation in which he asked for ideas as to how to better hold students accountable for the textbook reading. As he flipped through student notebooks, he acknowledged that that many students had probably rushed to complete the requirements just for the score, but that they didn’t actually read the text, indicating he sensed it was not as effective as it could be.

Based on the answers students gave to Mr. Berkman's questions in class, it was evident that many had either not read, or if they had, had only taken notes on isolated terms or facts rather than doing the thinking work required by the Big Picture Questions. Ultimately, the construction and assessment of the note-taking task sent students a conflicting message: on the one hand, they should value the textbook as an important, if not *the* most important source of information, and yet on the other hand, reading the textbook closely was unnecessary both for class participation or their final grade.

'Being' versus 'Doing'

In order to understand Mr. Berkman's treatment of the textbook as simultaneously bearing important content and peripheral to the class and why he held students loosely accountable for learning content from reading, it is helpful to consider his stance on literacy and teaching. Despite the fact that he pulled his lecture content from the textbook, sometimes even focusing an entire lecture on one of the Big Question questions, he was dismissive of the textbook and text-based tasks during our interviews. At the end of our first interview, he skirted a question about the reading and he said that he believes there is too much attention in education on the textbook and on what teachers and kids are doing (e.g. designing text-based activities, teaching reading strategies). He said this focus on the *doing* misses the most important aspect of education, which he stated is, "Who are we *being*? First as human beings and then as students, who are we *being*? There's almost no attention on that and that's why nothing works."

This focus on 'being' resonates with what I observed during each of my observations and with my subsequent conversations with Mr. Berkman. During the lectures, he returned again and to the values and habits of mind he tries to instill in his

students and the universal themes he hopes they will carry away from his classroom. For example, in many of my observations, he referred students to one or more of the signs posted on the walls: “Without Integrity Nothing Works” or, “Notice your resistance to following instructions!” If students had their heads down, Mr. Berkman, who has booming voice, often shouted, “Wake up!” On one occasion when a student complained that he did not want to do any work in class, Mr. Berkman told him, “High school is a place you can try things out before you go out into the real world. You can practice being an adult. Get used to acting with some sense of dignity and responsibility.” Mr. Berkman went on to talk with students about how developing these values and habits of mind in school would serve them out in the “real world.” Students responded to Mr. Berkman’s focus on ‘being’ by paying attention during his lectures and rallying when he pushed them to take responsibility for their learning and actions. During break and lunch, his classroom was always full of students, present and past, who seemed eager to engage him in banter about current events or media or tell him about a college acceptance or rejection letter or their upcoming track meet. In creating such an atmosphere, Mr. Berkman likely helped foster students’ sense of connectedness to school, a factor shown to be important for adolescents’ academic success.

“Write this down!” -- Lectures in AP World History

In every class I observed, Mr. Berkman not only talked with students about how they were ‘being’ as students, he also used lectures and an IRE style of questioning to reinforce reasoning skills and core concepts or principles. In this section, I examine the role of lecture in the AP World History classroom context and how it related to the textbook and content learning. Lecture occupied the majority of each class period (75-

90%) depending on whether Mr. Berkman also showed students a film. During lectures, student talk was always directed to the teacher and usually comprised of single word or short answers. Students were expected to bring their notebooks to class everyday and take notes during the lecture.

Mr. Berkman used the textbook to guide his lectures in the sense that he started every class with a list of terms, dates, people, or a Big Picture Question from the current assigned chapter written on the board, which he said in an interview that he choose based on what he found most interesting. What he did not say was that he chose topics because they were most important for students to learn or because they best illustrated the key themes of the textbook, though he may well have felt that way. When I looked at these lists alongside the textbook chapter, I was able to identify each item in the text, but not without careful searching as many were buried in the midst of long paragraphs or given brief mention. Some items on the lists were included in the set of 'key terms' at the end of the chapter, but many were not and so even if students had completed the reading assignment and taken notes on the key terms, they might not have notes on all of the items listed on the board. Mr. Berkman incorporated each item from the list into his lectures, to greater or lesser degrees, though he never explicitly communicated the relationship between the items he listed on the board or talked about his purpose for including them in the lecture. Since he rarely wrote anything additional on the board during lecture, it was up to students to determine what to write down and how to organize their notes though he often prompted them by saying, "Write this down!" or "This is important, I'll say it again."

For example, the following list, in the order seen below, was on the board at the start of one observation:

- Prague Spring 1968
- Dubcek
- Liberation
- US-Civil Rights
- Counter-culture
- Europe – 1968 Revolts
- China – Cultural Revolution
- Che Guevara
- Liberation Theology

After comparing the list about with the text, I found that the items came from a section of the Chapter titled, “The Globalization of Liberation: Comparing Feminist Movements,” though Mr. Berkman did not say as much to the class. He began the lecture stating, “We are going to talk about liberation” but did not go the next step to explain that all the items on the board were examples of various types of liberation movements. It was up to students to figure out how everything related (e.g. Dubcek was the leader of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia during the “Prague Spring”), which at times could be challenging since Mr. Berkman often transitioned from one topic to another without a clear segue. For example, after talking about the rioting in Paris in the 1960s, he said, “Mao is going to transform China again” as a way of transitioning to talking about the Chinese Cultural Revolution. How the liberation movement in France related to that in China was not discussed, though a careful read of the text linked the events. Mr. Berkman also frequently incorporated information in his lectures beyond the textbook content, though he did not differentiate textbook-based from non-textbook based content. For instance, later in the same lecture on liberation, he spent over five minutes talking about *Brown v. Board of Education*, which was not covered in the textbook, going into detail

about the roles of Eisenhower and Chief Justice Earl Warren and even giving his opinion on the proceedings. The time he allocated this to seemed to communicate its importance, but he ended the segment saying, “You’ll learn about all this next year,” leaving it ambiguous as to what students should have written down or be taking away. Thus, while the textbook informed Mr. Berkman’s lectures, it seemed to serve as a launching point rather than a strict guide.

There was no explicit relationship between the notes students took from their reading assignments and those they took during lectures. Only once during all of my observations did Mr. Berkman ask students to use their reading notes in class. He had written one of the Chapter’s “Big Questions” on the board and asked students to review what they had written in their notebooks. Students sat unmoving at their desks and when Mr. Berkman asked who had completed it for homework, no hands went up. Several students giggled and Mr. Berkman said, “You are all doing pretty well. I expect all of you to pass the AP exam next week. Just imagine how much better you would do if you did the homework as assigned. But hope springs eternal.” In line with his resignation, students could, and did, respond to Mr. Berkman’s questions without having read the text, or if they had read, without referencing the text. Instead of rebuking them for not reading, he pushed students to make up for their lack of text-based knowledge by giving them a little content and then asking them a series of questions that encouraged them to use reasoning skills, to unpack terms, or to draw on prior knowledge. Having said that, these exchanges also effectively disconnected learning from text from learning in the classroom.

Below I share examples that illustrate the types of interchanges I saw frequently across my ten observations and discuss how they encouraged the type of thinking and reasoning skills discussed above and also how they represent missed opportunities to promote learning from the text. The first example occurred during the aforementioned lecture on liberation, which students should have read about in their textbook. Mr. Berkman called on Nicole¹⁶, a student who had clearly not read the text or at least not read it well enough to have developed an understanding of liberation. Nicole did not hesitate to say that she did not know the term and readily offered a guess. Mr. Berkman then asked her to bring forward knowledge learned earlier in the course about the three types of freedom, reinforcing “basic principles,” which she was able to do. He then went on to answer his own question, missing the opportunity to have Nicole identify which type aligned with the 1960s, possibly because he assumed she would not know the answer:

Mr. Berkman: Today we are going to talk about liberation. Ms. Brown, tell the class what you understand *liberation* to mean. I know that being a rigorous speaker, you never use words you don't understand.

Nicole: I don't know. Kind of like freedom?

Mr. Berkman: Good start. What kind of freedom? Please always go back to our basic principles. What are the 3 kinds of freedom?

Nicole: Political, national, and personal?

Mr. Berkman: This is the liberation movement of the 1960s. Was it concerned with national freedom? The liberation movement of the 1962 did not concern itself with national freedom. It concerned itself with personal and political freedom.

¹⁶ All student names are pseudonyms.

In this interchange, Mr. Berkman made a point of impressing the expectation that being a “rigorous speaker” in a history class entails unpacking terms and concepts and communicated that one could do so by linking to knowledge learned previously in the class. He did not suggest that it would be useful to draw on text-based knowledge.

Similarly, Mr. Berkman reinforced the importance of unpacking terms and drawing on existing schema during another lecture that focused on the Big Picture Question: “*What obstacles impeded the economic development of third- world countries?*” Before delving into the question, he stated, “As Socrates would say, before you get into any discussion, you have to define your terms.” In the interchange that followed with Marcus, Mr. Berkman pushed him to be specific in his explanation of the term “economic development”:

Mr. Berkman: Marcus – do you understand what ‘economic development’ means?

Marcus: Progress regarding wealth and prosperity?

Mr. Berkman: Can you be a little more specific? How do you know if something is progressing economically?

Marcus: Increased standard of living?

Mr. Berkman: How do you measure standard of living?

Marcus: Better nutrition, better resources.

After engaging other students in examples of how one measures ‘standard of living,’ Mr. Berkman returned again to Marcus and his original question, asking him to provide evidence and to consider why they should entertain such a question:

Mr. Berkman: But if you are looking at a country, like the Central African Republic. How would we know if the Central African Republic is advanced economically or not? What evidence would we have?

Marcus: Poverty rate?

Mr. Berkman: Ok but that gets back to standard of living. We look for: are they industrialized? The level of industry relates to standard of living. Why are we concerned about this?

Marcus: Industrialization provides jobs?

Two of Mr. Berkman's questions in the interchange above, "What evidence would we have?" and "Why are we concerned about this?" serve to promote the students' reasoning skills, but not text-based reasoning, as he never referred Marcus back to the text or modeled doing that himself.

For Mr. Berkman, it seemed that more important than learning content from the textbook was students' ability to apply principles and ways of thinking to historical questions. For instance, during a lecture on the Kyoto protocol, an international agreement aimed at reducing carbon emissions, Mr. Berkman asked, "Why would people disagree about imposing restrictions on activities that would reduce carbon emissions?" He referred students back to something he called "The Universal Hypothesis," with which all students seemed very familiar as several immediately called out the definition. The Universal Hypothesis, which Mr. Berkman said he borrowed from an old teacher, posits that the drive for survival is at the root of almost all (personal and political) decisions. Though several pages of the textbook chapter were dedicated to environmentalism and related conflicts that have arisen in recent years, Mr. Berkman encouraged students to use the Universal Hypothesis rather than the text to reason their way through the answer.

Another common occurrence during lectures was a deviation from the day's topics to discuss something interesting or relevant in the news. For example, the day after the presidential election in France, Mr. Berkman began the class asking students about

this event and what they knew about socialism. He seemed to use this opportunity to reinforce (or re-teach) previously learned knowledge and to link that knowledge to local examples:

Mr. Berkman: We now have a socialist who is going to be president of France. What does it mean to be a socialist?

Cameron: I don't know. Is it like halfway between capitalism and communism?

Mr. Berkman: Not half bad.

Abby: Someone who likes a lot of government programs, particularly aiding the people.

Mr. Berkman: Are we are a socialist government then?

Abby: I feel like we have aspects of socialism. Like Medicare.

Mr. Berkman: Yes. Socialism is an economic and political system in which the government owns major industries. The government owns Medicare; it owns the Veteran Administration, but the government doesn't own the railroad and it doesn't own the power plants. In France the government does. So we are now going to have a socialist government that will reverse the policies of austerity. Write it down.

Instead of discussing the concept of socialism on an abstract level, Mr. Berkman related it to current events both nationally and internationally. He drew out Abby's prior knowledge before providing a formal definition, which, at least for her, likely aided her understanding.

In addition to drawing on recent news, Mr. Berkman also shared personal stories to build students' background knowledge. Having been born in Hungary, he folded stories into lectures, including brief anecdotes of his own experiences living in Eastern Europe and having family members that died in the Holocaust. For example, when

talking with students about the political and social upheavals of the 1950s and 60s around the world, he said:

There were riots in the middle 50s in Poland and in Germany; in Hungary there was a full-scale rebellion. I was in the 6th grade at the time. I recall watching television newsfeed from Budapest where the soviet tanks came out of the army camps and these tanks attacked the civilians in Budapest. It was nasty and the revolt was suppressed. Lots of people were killed. The revolutionaries begged for American help – we wouldn't do it.

Suddenly the riots in Poland, Germany and Hungary that happened in the distant past and were mentioned briefly in the textbook, became real and personal. Students perked up and began peppering Mr. Berkman with questions about his past, which they often did after he relayed personal stories. By incorporating these stories, Mr. Berkman humanized history, taking events and people out of the abstract past and demonstrating how they impacted real people.

Summary

Through his lectures, Mr. Berkman demonstrated a commitment to a high level of subject matter conceptualization by pressing students to access existing schema to unpack heady concepts and by consistently circling back to core historical principles and themes. These lectures likely served to build students' motivation, interest, and to provide them with some degree of subject matter knowledge and more often than not students appeared engaged. However, since students were supposed to have read prior to the lectures but did not need to, the lectures were not intended to set students up for reading nor did they explicitly help student process what they read; never once did Mr. Berkman talk about or instruct on using textual evidence to support reasoning or a claim. In his lectures, he prioritized the development of historical reasoning devoid of textual evidence, coaching students to value their prior knowledge and thinking skills above text-based knowledge.

If students learned anything from reading the text, they may have done better on chapter tests and possibly the AP exam, but text-based subject matter knowledge was not necessary for them to ‘be’ engaged and thoughtful students in class.

Mariah and Justin in AP World History

Having examined the context of the AP World History class and the implicit and explicit literacy demands, I now to turn first to Mariah and then to Justin, adding the ‘reader’ into the picture.

Mariah – AP World History

Engagement and Interest Mattered for Mariah

Despite Mr. Berkman’s loose expectations for students to read and take notes prior to class, as discussed in the previous section, Mariah almost always came to World History with her textbook reading and notes complete. She said during an interview that she prioritized her World History homework since reading “history is one of her favorite subjects,” even though she described the textbook as “really, really boring...with long chapters, like over 20 pages of small text, so it’s really hard.” Mariah cited two primary reasons for engaging in the class: 1) her interest in history, though she preferred history “way way back” as opposed to current events and, 2) Mr. Berkman’s ability to make the material relevant and interesting (she appreciated that he shared personal stories about his childhood in Eastern Europe and family that died in the Holocaust). Of Mariah, Mr. Berkman said that he had no concerns about her and that she, “is one of my best students – she’s engaged with the material, she participates, she answers the questions.” Mr. Berkman’s commitment to engaging students both in ‘being’ better students and citizens

and in the subject matter through personal stories and relevant connections resonated for Mariah and translated into her investing effort in all her AP World History Tasks.

Mariah was in the 6th period AP World History class, which I observed five times. During lectures, she participated on average more than any other student in her class and in one particular class period, was responsible for seven out of twenty-one student responses. Looking across all Mariah's questions and comments, I categorized her responses into three types: requests for clarification; content-based answers, comments or questions; and comments indirectly related to the content that drew upon her prior knowledge. I also looked at her responses alongside related sections of the textbook and found that her participation was not tied to content she learned from textbook, See Appendix H for examples of Mariah's participation in AP World History¹⁷.

Mariah demonstrated she was trying to make sense of the information or connections with her prior knowledge. For example, during a lecture on the 1960's liberation movement, she interrupted Mr. Berkman to ask, "What were they rebelling against?" Later in the same lecture after Mr. Berkman lectured about Che Guevara and told the class that the CIA found him in Bolivia and killed him, she asked, "Why did the US kill him and not Castro?" indicating a genuine interest in the topic and a prior knowledge about Castro. Mariah's explanation of Mr. Berkman's lecture style was that he tried to get students to "think" about how things connect, a comment that resonated with my observations. For example, during a lecture on feminism, Mr. Berkman asked students for an example of feminism before the 20th Century. While I was not privy to topics discussed earlier in the school year, to my knowledge this was not a question that

¹⁷ It was useful to chart each focal student's participation in AP and Regular World History because of the lecture-style format. I also created similar participation charts for Ecology, but not for ELA because much of class time was spent in activities rather than lecture or whole class discussion.

beckoned a text-based answer. Mariah offered a response that demonstrated she felt free to pull from non-text based examples:

Mr. Berkman: Let's talk about Feminism. Tell me about it before the 20th c. Give me an example.

Olivia: I can't think of one.

Mr. Berkman: Think about it this way. Think about legal rights, property rights, and marriage rights. Did women have property rights in the old days? [Mariah raised her hand.] Yes, Ms. Woods?

Mariah: I was going to say military. Now we have women in the military. They haven't fought in battles, except for Mulan.

Mr. Berkman: No cartoons. [pause] Well, actually, what is the theme of Mulan? Does she become a warrior as a girl?

Mariah: No. She has to pretend she is a man.

Mr. Berkman: Lots of women disguised themselves as men to be able to fight with men.

It was interesting to note that Mariah's historical evidence comes from a Disney film and not from the textbook or another historical source. Mariah's contribution was nearly dismissed by Mr. Berkman. Instead, he chose to use take it up and pushed her on whether it was a real example of feminism in history. This resonated with Mr. Berkman's general stance toward honoring all student contributions, whether or not they were text-based, and likely encouraged more of this type of participation from Mariah.

Approach to Text-based Tasks

“I'm not going to read the entire chapter, I can tell you that.” Mariah used her knowledge of text structures to help her strategically approach her text-based reading tasks. During interviews, she talked about the structural differences between her World History textbook, fiction novels, and the reading packets she received in Ecology and

demonstrated that she adjusted her reading accordingly, regardless of whether her teachers explicitly referenced text structure or provided reading instruction on the text. For example, in World History, Mariah reported that she always used headings and subheadings to help her decide which parts of the text to read closely and which to skim or skip entirely. Mariah said that she only needed to read enough of the text to take a few notes on key terms and to do the Big Picture Questions. She called this approach her “trickery device” and explained it this way:

I’m going to look at the questions and find where the answer is, because it takes a lot of time and it’s [the chapter] 23 pages and I have a lot of projects to do, so... You could look up anything. Well, most of it’s in here [the glossary], but you can look it up and then ... so when it asks for, ‘What did Nicolas Copernicus do?’ Then I could go, whoop, that’s that page, look it up and then that’s how I find my questions for that.”

Mariah said that she heavily relied on the glossary to take notes on the key terms and figures listed at the end of each chapter. She also reported that she did not have difficulty finding answers to chapter questions. However, when I examined her notebook and looked across her answers to Big Question Pictures throughout the year, I found a mix of more and less complete answers. It was not clear whether or not she was capable of answering all the questions thoughtfully. For example, in response to the question “*What have been the benefits and drawbacks of globalization since 1945?*”), she answered, “The benefits are that things are easier to get to and receive, especially the internet, and drawbacks are the mistakes that can happen.” Though she got full credit for this response and it was one of her lengthier responses, it shows that she either did not read the text, that she did not take the time to actually formulate an answer to the question, or that she did not understand the question. Since Mr. Berkman graded the notebooks by quickly scanning for completion, the only evidence he had of her learning

was from the chapter tests and his impression that she was an “engaged” student because she completed her notebook assignments and participated in class.

Self-initiated Note Taking. Despite using her ‘trickery device’ to quickly locate key terms and despite the fact that Mr. Berkman provided no instruction on taking notes from the textbooks or lectures, Mariah’s reading and lecture notes demonstrated that she had developed some note-taking skills. In her reading and lecture notes, she consistently distinguished more important from less important information by starring and underlining dates, names, and key terms, strategies that she said help her stay organized. She drew arrows to show how things were connected and even frequently created charts to organize information. For example, when reading a chapter on the Enlightenment, she drew the following chart in Figure 3 below to compare Traditional European ideas with those in the Enlightenment about politics, economics, religion and philosophy:

Figure 3. Mariah’s AP World History Notebook

Another aspect of mercantilism - highly regulated by the government.

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Domains	Traditional Euro Thought	Enlightenment
Politics	absolute monarchy • Divine Right theory	constitutional monarchy • consent of the governed. (England)
economics	mercantilism	laissez faire (free market) supply and demand controlled prices no tariffs competition
religion	• Roman Catholics • protestant • Bible/scripture = source of authority	• Deism = the belief of a creator, so rejects scripture rejects the notion of hell • Utilitarianism = greatest good for the greatest # of people
Philosophical	rejected presumed authority in favor of experience	• experience

Mariah said taking notes like this helped her study for tests. My assumption was that Mariah used these note-taking strategies to help her process the content, at least at a superficial level, as they did not seem to help her answer the Big Picture Questions more completely.

The AP Exam

While Mariah was generally upbeat when talking about AP World History and seemed fairly confident in her academic skills, her demeanor decidedly shifted whenever we discussed the AP exam and, in particular, the DBQ portion of the exam. “I suck at those,” she lamented. When I asked her why she felt that way, she went on to talk about how, beyond writing a good thesis statement, she struggled to read the documents and to use evidence from them to support her thesis. “My theses ... they are good...I try to add

more but then it's ... but then I have to go back [to the texts], so it's -- yeah, it's bad."

Mariah said Mr. Berkman had worked with the class throughout the year on writing good thesis statements and she felt confident in her ability to craft strong theses. According to Mariah, Mr. Berkman taught them that supporting a thesis when writing in history required, "an assertion, evidence, commentary, and point of view." While I did not see any of Mariah's DBQs, based on her earlier statement that "it's bad" when she had to read the texts, my assumption was that she had a difficult time drawing evidence from the documents.

Mariah admitted that she found many of the DBQ documents confusing or, as she said, "tricky" for her to read. In particular, she worried about misinterpreting something or getting stuck on words she did not know and so she read by "going bit by bit" through the documents looking for "key words" that might relate to the question. Thus, while Mariah took up Mr. Berkman's instruction in writing strong theses, she had no idea to take the next step and read with a historical lens in order to draw out appropriate evidence and compare multiple perspectives to form a strong argument.

Close Reading of the Text

Mariah demonstrated similar difficulty when engaging in close readings of the textbook. As described in Chapter 3, during individual interviews, I asked Mariah to read on two separate occasions from the chapter she had been assigned that week. Prior to reading from the text each time, I asked her to rate her interest in and background knowledge of the topic. Mariah seemed to have some knowledge of the majority of topics covered in World History. She attributed much of her background knowledge to prior history classes and connections she made with other classes (e.g. ELA, Ecology, Spanish). For example, when I asked her how she knew about Al Qaeda, she said:

[Last year] we studied Christianity and Islam and we had to learn about the Sunni and Shiite's split, and then in language arts we actually had a Middle Eastern section and Mr. Harris gave us papers about different things of Muslim and Middle Eastern so we learned about that too.

In this case, Mariah brought forward prior knowledge from a range of sources, including previous history classes and her current ELA class. Though she had something to say about almost all topics, her “knowing” about a topic often entailed a very cursory understanding. For example, she claimed she knew all about Che Guevara because she was on an airplane once when the flight attendant gave the passengers a brief history about Guevara. She did not distinguish between having surface level knowledge and deep, multifaceted knowledge – it all counted as “knowing” about a topic.

After discussing her interest in and prior knowledge of the topics, Mariah read from a passage in her history book. Rather than preselecting a passage, I asked her to pick a part of the chapter she had read (or at least skimmed) or, if she had not read anything, to pick a part that she planned to read. I asked her to read aloud for several paragraphs to ascertain fluency (ability to read accurately with proper rate and expression) and then to continue reading silently for another paragraph or two, after which we explored comprehension. During both interviews, Mariah was able to read from her textbook fluently, making no word errors and reading with proper rate and expression, putting her at an independent level for fluency which indicated that her comprehension was not hampered by decoding or word recognition. When asked what sense she made of the passage, on each occasion Mariah looked back at the beginning of the passage, reread a few lines and then gave a basic retelling, paraphrasing the main idea. For example, she looked back at the following section and then offered a summary statement:

Table 6. Mariah's AP World History Close Reading #1

Text	Mariah's Response
<p>The first half of the 20th Century, particularly in the decades between the two World Wars, witnessed a deep contraction of global economic linkages as the aftermath of World War I and then the Great Depression wreaked havoc on the world's economy. International trade, investment, and labor migration dropped sharply as major states turned inward, favoring high tariffs and economic autonomy in the face of a global economic collapse.</p>	<p>“The people in the first half of the 20th Century had some troubles in their economy because of the World Wars and Great Depression and probably a lot of politics.”</p>

Here she was able to use her own words to successfully articulate the literal main idea – that there were economic problems in the first half of the 20th Century, but she did not go further to make an inference as to why this happened. I asked Mariah about several words and phrases in the passage to ascertain whether her comprehension was hindered by a lack of vocabulary. She demonstrated understanding of all vocabulary, for instance, when I asked Mariah what “wreaked havoc” meant and she said it, “basically meant causing chaos.” As she continued to talk about the passage, though, she began to parrot the text and, when pressed to explain what it meant, struggled to use her own words, engaging with the text on a surface level. For example, Mariah struggled with the passive voice and the need to hold onto the concept of “globalization” in the following segment:

Table 7. Mariah's AP World History Close Reading #2

Text	Mariah's Response
<p>When most people speak of globalization, they are referring to the immense growth in international economics transactions that took place in the second half of the 20th Century and that continues into the 21st. Many have come to see this process as almost natural; certainly inevitable and practically unstoppable.</p>	<p>“I think it is unstoppable so the economy and stuff will be better and it's inevitable.”</p>

What she means by “it” is unclear. Additionally, she used the words “unstoppable” and “inevitable” without thinking about what they meant in the context of this passage or question why “many have to come to see this” that way. She eventually shrugged and said that she usually does not worry about reading the text so closely. In order to do a close reading of the text, the reader must make connections to themes and hold onto abstract concepts as they are applied across a range of global examples. Mariah demonstrated in her readings that she was not used to reading her textbook closely and thus felt this task laborious.

Justin – AP World History

“I’m not lazy, I’m efficient.”

Mr. Berkman had just asked the class to take out a handout he had distributed in a previous class when Justin turned around in his seat and told me that he did not feel like getting his out and would just ask for another one. He said, “I’m not lazy, I’m efficient.” Justin was very savvy in World History, using Mr. Berkman’s grading system to do the bare minimum for a decent grade, though he said he was capable of “getting an A” if he applied himself. Mr. Berkman also sensed that Justin could do well in the class if put effort into his work. He describe him as “laid back” and more interested in “being cool” and seemed to accept that this was where Justin was in ‘being’ a student when he reflected, “That’s totally appropriate for his age because he’s trying to figure out how to be in the world. He doesn’t know how to be in the world. It’s the job of the teenager,” indicating that what he felt was holding Justin back was the way he was ‘being’ as a student, not his ability to learn the content.

Contradictions

Whereas Mariah's interest in history and broad motivation to do well in school fueled her engagement in AP World History, what resonated most with Justin was Mr. Berkman's focus on 'being' and his effort to make learning relevant for students. Justin explained that, even though he was generally not interested in history, he had learned more in World History than in any other class he'd taken and alluded to both content and ways of 'being':

Because he's just a good teacher. He makes it simple to understand complex things in History. He knows how to tie learning into to the world and stuff that we can use everyday. Like the Universal Hypothesis. He teaches you a lot. I don't know how to really describe it. I think it's just his morals that he's teaching you.

I conducted five observations of Justin's 3rd-period AP World History class and, as I did for Mariah, tracked his participation and engagement. He participated only sporadically and most when particular topics interested him. None of Justin's questions or comments seemed to be based in content from the text. See Appendix I for Justin's participation in AP World History.

At times, Justin appeared to be closely following and taking notes on Mr. Berkman's lectures, as exemplified by the two occasions when he asked for definitions for "despotic" and "imposition," though it is not clear whether Mr. Berkman's responses aided his understanding. He also participated on one occasion by relating the content to his own interests and schema and asked if the movie *Rambo* was based on the Vietnam War. As he did with Mariah's comment about Mulan, Mr. Berkman took up Justin's question and responded that *Rambo* was a reaction to the war and the American need for heroes. At times, Justin seemed genuinely interested in the topic and tried to push Mr. Berkman for deeper conversation so that he might better understand how culture and laws

intersect in other countries. For example, during a talk on Fundamentalism, Mr. Berkman was talking about the restrictions the Taliban puts on women. He said that girls who are found walking in public with a man who is not a relative, they will be shot. Justin chimed in:

Justin: Why can't they just lie?

Mr. Berkman: Why would you want to live in a place where you have to lie, Justin?"

Justin: At least you'd be alive.

Mr. Berkman: What you are trying to do is game the question. It's the law!

[Justin shook his head and tossed down his pencil.]

Mr. Berkman's dismissal of Justin's comment seemed to frustrate him and he disengaged for the remainder of the class period by putting his head down. Likewise, when he was uninterested in the lecture topic, he would turn around and provide commentary to me during class on how bored he was. One day it was, "I can't believe we have to sit through two hours of lecture. I don't know how people in college do it." In addition to expressing some boredom, Justin also talked about how Mr. Berkman's lectures made it difficult for him to learn the content because he felt like a lot of things were all "jumbled together":

It's kind of confusing, because he goes from Al-Qaeda now, then it's Bretton Woods in 1944. I feel like we should just learn it all in sections with dates, so we'll have some kind of sense of where we're going...It's just confusing how we'll talk about something... We'll talk about the French Revolution, but in the same breath, we'll talk about the government now. I know we have to make those 'compare and contrasts' but he talks in depth about the government now, and then he tries to fit it in with the French Revolution. It's kind of confusing. You should just let those two things be different.

Justin said he preferred to learn about history chronologically and by region but then said, “But I’m not a teacher,” as if to imply he might be missing the point of a thematic approach. Thus, while on the one hand he appreciated Mr. Berkman’s focus on ‘being’ and attempts to make learning relevant, he had a hard time actually making sense of the history content in the lectures because he could not track the connections between topics, themes, and the modern world.

Approach to Text-based Tasks

Justin’s positive feelings about Mr. Berkman did not translate into engagement with text or text-based tasks. He articulated during an interview that he would have “understood everything” had he done his reading, but stated, “I knew that I could get away by not reading it so I decided not to.” He took some notes during all lectures, writing down terms or phrases emphasized by Mr. Berkman, which indicates he felt at least some of the content was important. Justin did not, however, read any of the assigned chapter or complete any of the Big Picture Questions. He barely passed the Chapter tests and was only able to muster a ‘B’ through bonus points he earned by repeatedly taking practice tests via the textbook’s website, demonstrating that learning content from the text was not necessary to pass the class.

Justin’s strategy to complete the homework reading notes requirement was to go to the website for the textbook, which all students had access to, read through the chapter summaries, and copy down information on the key terms and figures. He did this because, “They [the chapters] are too dense. It takes too long. It's not a high school book. I can read it if I wanted to, but I don't have the attention span to. It would take me like two weeks to read a chapter.” These comments indicate that Justin at least recognized the challenges of the textbook and he knew that he could not read the textbook in full with

the close attention it required in the time allotted. It is difficult to say, though, if he would have been able to read and take notes on the text had he attempted to do so or if he had been given support from his teacher. Justin instead “opted out,” skipping the reading altogether even though it resulted in his learning less in the class.

Struggles with Close Reading

Even though Justin had confidence in his ability to read the text if he had wanted to, when talking with him about the textbook and actually engaging him in a close reading of a passage, it became evident that he struggled with its thematic structure because it broke from the typical structure of a history text.

As with Mariah, I asked Justin about this interest in and background knowledge on the topics in the text. He said that he was particularly interested in understanding how current government works and how decisions are made about going to war and engaging with other countries. For example, he said that he doesn’t care about events like “Bretton Woods” because they are “not going on right now.” Unlike Mariah, Justin had a more nuanced understanding of what it means to “know” about a topic. He admitted that the only reason he recognized the name Che Guevara because he once had a t-shirt of the man, but that he had no idea who he was, even after sitting through the lecture that week and that his only knowledge of Al-Qaeda was related to the 9-11 attacks. Justin seemed to determine whether or not to invest effort in learning about a topic based on how relevant his found the topic to the current day.

Justin read a portion of textbook section aloud from the section titled “The Globalization of Liberation: Comparing Feminist Movements” and I was able to assess that he read fluently at independent level, demonstrating that he could accurately decode

all of the words in the text and read with appropriate rate and expression. When asked for a retelling of the passage, Justin gave very brief retelling of the passage and did not elaborate when pressed for more detail.

Table 8. Justin’s AP World History Close Reading

Text	Justin’s Response
<p>The 1960s in particular witnessed an unusual convergence of protest movements around the world, suggesting the emergence of a global culture of liberation. Within the United States, the civil rights demands of the African Americans and Hispanic Americans; the youthful counterculture of music, sex, and drugs; and the prolonged and highly diverse protests against the war in Vietnam gave the 1960s a distinctive place in the country’s recent history.</p>	<p>There was a lot of stuff going on in the 60’s about like drugs and the war, and like civil rights stuff too. It’s just about freedom. That’s it.</p>

He could provide simple definitions for the terms in the text, for example saying that “liberation” has to do with freedom, but had nothing to add when I pressed for additional thoughts. For example, when I asked him who Alexander Dubcek was in the line, “The community world too was rocked by protest. In 1968, the new Community Party leadership in Czechoslovakia, led by Alexander Dubcek, initiated a sweeping series of reforms aimed at creating ‘socialism with a human face,’” (Strayer, p. 734), Justin responded, “Uhh, I don’t know.” As a result, I am not able to elaborate on Justin’s reading comprehension skills in the AP World History text except to say that he seemed ill at ease with close reading and that he expressed frustration at the idea of having to go back and reread text.

DBQs: “I need structure”

Just as Justin articulated a preference content presented in a clear and linear fashion, he also appreciated highly structured writing tasks. Though he identified essays as his least favorite activity in AP World History, he said it was ‘free response’ essays that he really disliked, saying, “I don’t know – I have to guess what I’m writing is correct but...I need structure.” The structure of the DBQs made that task “easy for him” and, in contrast to Mariah, Justin seemed to know that sourcing and identifying point of view were important in the DBQ. He stated that he, “goes through [the documents] and gets a point of view on everything. So he’s from Spain, or he’s Mexican. Or this is by a Spanish Priest. Then you have his point of view on how silver trade is throughout the world.” Since he only had to use the documents provided, Justin felt like the DBQ was a clear and focused writing task. In contrast, responding to a free response question meant that he “actually has to know the work,” indicating he felt unsure of the knowledge it was assumed he learned in the course.

Regular World History

My third focal student, Jasmine, had Regular World History with Mr. Berkman instead of the AP class. Before examining her experiences, I look at the literacy demands and expectations in World History, as they differed dramatically from the AP class.

Lower Expectations for Content Learning and Reading

From my seven class observations and individual interviews with Mr. Berkman, it became evident that he had much lower content learning expectations for his regular class than he did for his AP classes. To begin, they moved much more slowly through their textbook; by April when the AP was on Chapter 24 (out of 24), the regular class was on

Chapter 4 (out of 20). Where his weekly assignment for his AP class was to read through an entire 20-30 page chapter, he assigned short 3-4 page sections to his regular class. His explanation for the pace was to make sure students grasped the big idea of global relatedness while not overwhelming them with content, indicating that he anticipated that his regular World History students would have challenges reading the text and integrating ideas:

I don't want to push it. I want to keep them engaged and give them things to do. I want them to get what there is to get. And what there is to get is that we live in a world that is connected to which they are related; that they are part of a world. That they are profoundly related to everyone and that their culture and how they live is a function of being profoundly related. So that is the whole point of World History in my 2nd period."

The broad theme of global relatedness and the notion of "not pushing it" came through several other times during our conversations. For example, after observing two class periods focused on the French Revolution, I asked Mr. Berkman how he thought the students were doing. He responded, "Pretty good. Some of it will settle in. What I'd like them to get out of this is to how this relates to their life. What does the French revolution have to do with my life?" His goal of relating history to students' lives and connecting to broad themes was similar across both his AP and regular classes, but he did not seem to expect his regular students to either retain much content or be able to make those connections on their own.

An "Inoffensive" Textbook

Mr. Berkman, who was on the district committee to select the textbook, called the writing style "inoffensive" and appreciated the text for all the visual support it had for students and for the instructional resources for teachers. In contrast with the thematic

organizations of *Ways of the World* in AP World History, the regular World History textbook, *Modern World History*¹⁸ was more typical of history textbooks in that it was organized chronologically and regionally. The text was peppered with colorful images, timelines, charts, headings and subheadings, bolded terms, and much larger print than *Ways of the World* and includes numerous features to guide readers before, during and after reading. For example, the opening pages for each chapter prepared students to read with brief and clear main ideas, a map spotlighting the chapter's focal region, and timeline showing key events. Then, each section of the chapter included more specific main idea, a statement about "why it matters now," and a list of key terms and names. For example, Section 1, "Europeans Explore the East," of Chapter 3, "An Age of Explorations and Isolation, 1400-1800," began with:

Main Idea: Advances in sailing technology enabled Europeans to explore other parts of the world.

Why It Matters Now: European exploration was an important step toward the global interaction existing in the world today.

Terms & Names:

- Bartolomeu Dias
- Prince Henry
- Vasco da Gama
- Treaty of Tordesillas
- Dutch East India Company

While students were reading, they were encouraged via highlight boxes in the side panels to take notes by making a timeline or a compare/contrast chart, to ask themselves a reflection question, or to make a connection between the topic and today.

Whereas the AP World History text required close reading in order to make connections between topics and big ideas and to wade through long, complex sentences, a

¹⁸ *Modern World History* has an average Lexile of 1000L, below the Common Core State Standards' proposed text measures for 10th grade (1080L-1335L).

qualitative examination of the Regular World History text showed that it was much easier to navigate. Main ideas were clearly stated at the beginning of paragraphs and all details that followed were explicitly linked, often in the form of cause and effect statements (e.g. because *this* happened, then *that* happened). The textbook supported readers with limited background by defining terms both in context and side panels and by providing brief reviews of key events that students should have learned about in previous chapters or history courses. For example, in the following excerpt from Chapter 3, Section 1 on European exploration, the first sentence left no ambiguity about the reason for European exploration. The remainder of the paragraph provided details and causal statements. If a student lacked background knowledge about the Crusades, support was embedded in the text:

Europeans Seek New Trade Routes

The desire for new sources of wealth was the main reason for European exploration. Through overseas exploration, merchants and traders hoped ultimately to benefit from what had become a profitable business in Europe: the trade of spices and other luxury goods from Asia. The people of Europe had been introduced to these items during the Crusades, the wars fought between Christians and Muslims from 1096 to 1270. After the Crusades ended, Europeans continued to demand such spices as nutmeg, ginger, cinnamon, and pepper, all of which added flavor to the bland foods of Europe. Because demand for these goods was greater than supply, merchants could charge high prices and thus make great profits (p. 95).

What Mr. Berkman perceived as an “inoffensive” style was likely the fact that this textbook resembled most high school textbooks and did not require a substantial amount of effort on the part of the reader. The text itself read as objective and neutral, making complex history events seemingly, and possibly overly, simple. While maps and timelines appeared throughout and mark *Modern World History* as a “history” textbook, most of the features were not distinctive to any discipline (Reisman, 2012).

“Things to do”

In the quotation at the beginning of this section, Mr. Berkman said that he “wanted to keep students engaged in and give them things to do.” From my observations, giving students “things to do” translated into highly prescribed text-based worksheets, flashcards of key events and figures, and watching films. Similar to the AP class, from my observations it appeared that the vast majority of students came to class without having read the textbook or completed the assigned tasks but rather did these tasks ‘after the fact’ to get the marks in the grade book.

Worksheets. In both AP and Regular World History, Mr. Berkman used the textbook to guide his lectures. Whereas in the AP class he lectured on themes and big ideas from chapters without ever referencing the actual text, in the regular class he stayed much closer to the text, walking through worksheets provided by the textbook publisher which included exercises such as putting events in chronological order, analyzing cause and effects, and determining main ideas. During all seven classes I observed, Mr. Berkman began each day asking students to get out the previously assigned worksheet and then proceeded to lecture by asking and answering each of the questions on the worksheet, implying that he did not expect students to have completed the assignment, or even if they had, that he did not expect them to have a good grasp of the content. He typically delivered some basic content that students should have gotten from the textbook, and then elaborated on that content by telling stories or adding information, relating the topics to students’ lives, or by connecting to topics studied earlier in the school year. I offer an example below that is illustrative of many of my observations both in the way he used the worksheet and the way he engaged students in the content.

At the start of a lecture on European exploration of the East, Mr. Berkman asked the students to take out their Chapter 3, Section 1 worksheets and said:

Ok, let's start with the timeline [worksheet]. See if we can get some understanding. It's not possible to explore outer space without the appropriate technology. Same thing for world exploration. You have to have the appropriate technology to make exploration possible. What kind of technology would be required?

His question, which was a slightly rephrased version of the first question on the worksheet, directly aligned with two paragraphs in the textbook under the heading, "Technology Makes Exploration Possible." The text stated that triangular sails, sturdier vessels, the astrolabe, and the compass were the technological advances that made the age of exploration possible. Mr. Berkman proceeded to ask a series of questions to get at each advance. For instance, after eliciting "compass" and "astrolabe" from students and giving them additional information about how they were used, he asked, "What other kinds of technological advances must you have?" A student raised his hand and answered, "boats," but rather than asking this student to elaborate on what he learned from the text about advances for boats, Mr. Berkman took the floor and lectured on the basic information from the textbook and then included additional details about the new sails and how they helped navigation:

Mr. Berkman: Ship building technology is also very important. New kinds of sails, no steam power or nuclear power yet. They had to use wind power. The original European sails were square sails [draws on boards] The Arabs had developed a sail called the Latin sail [draws on boards] the Latin sails allows you to give more direction. Lateral motion.

The student who answered "boats" may have guessed at the answer or may have actually read the section, learned what he needed from the textbook, and been able to share it with the class, but it was impossible to know since Mr. Berkman did not give him the

opportunity to share more of his knowledge or even explain how he knew “boats” were one of the technological advances.

Mr. Berkman lectured as if he was responsible for imparting the necessary content to students, at least enough so that students could make educated guesses. For example, in the following interchange, he asked a question from a worksheet on China and isolationism. When the student balked at the question, Mr. Berkman gave him more information and encouraged him to use that and his own reasoning to get to the answer:

Mr. Berkman: Why was only the government allowed to conduct foreign trade? [#3 on worksheet] These are not mysterious questions if you think about China. Listen to this, before the 18th Century over half the world’s production was produced by China and India. Why do you think the government would take over complete control of foreign trade?

Colin: Are you asking me?

Mr. Berkman: Yes. I want you to use your intelligence. Work it out using the circumstance of what I’ve told you. Why would they go that? What purpose would it serve for them to control trade with the outside world. This is the time when the outside world is coming to them. The Portuguese and the Spanish are coming to them.

Colin: Monopoly?

Mr. Berkman: That’s true; they would get all the income. You’ve played monopoly, right? The purpose of the game is to corner the market and get all you want. What cultural reasons might they have for wanting to control trade? It’s the same reason that the Japanese will isolate themselves off for 250 years.

Colin: They don’t want the public to create their own business workings.

Even though Mr. Berkman stayed closer to the text using these worksheets than he did in the AP class, he never opened or read from the text, asked students to reference the text to answer the questions, or provided any instruction on reading. In this way, he

encouraged participation and even at times promoted reasoning skills, but he also communicated to the students that they did not need to read their textbook to learn in the class.

Timeline Cards. In addition to the worksheets, Mr. Berkman had his Regular World History students complete timeline cards on which they recorded important dates, events, and figures on the cards (e.g. 1492- Columbus discovered America). Mr. Berkman said he intended these cards to be used to study for tests and then had students turn them in at the end of the quarter for a completion grade. During one of our interviews, Mr. Berkman said he had designed an activity for the following day for students to “look for themes” across their timeline cards. He said that he planned to give them a few examples of themes before sending them off to work independently and the following day, Mr. Berkman began by articulating the overarching goal of the activity – noticing how things change over time in history. He then shifted the focus and gave students a set of instructions that focused them on sequencing:

What you’ll do after you complete all these cards, you’ll pick up two cards and not look at the date. You’ll say, ‘hmm China withdrew into isolation and Yang Lo [inaudible]’. You’ll put it into time sequence just to see how your sense of change over time is. Once you’ve done that you turn it over and see if you put it in the right order. You’ll see what your sense of time is. One of the things you study in history is change over time.

It was unclear how students were supposed to arrive at themes, or even what might constitute a “theme,” by perusing their timeline cards or, if they followed Mr. Berkman’s instructions and focused on sequencing, how putting the cards in chronological order would help them see change over time. The results were hugely varied -- about half of the class spent the majority of the 45 minutes completing their unfinished timeline cards or socializing while those who had completed cards organized them chronologically. When

I asked Mr. Berkman how he felt the activity went, he said, “surprisingly well” because some of the students had seemed engaged. He did not talk about what students had learned from the exercise (either about sequencing or themes), but instead focused on their engagement and participation as markers of a successful activity. While Mr. Berkman sounded confident that the activity went as intended, I wondered if he subconsciously shifted his original goals because he either did not know how to set students up to do the kind of thinking work that he wanted them to do or because he did not believe his students were capable of more than sequencing events.

“You Should Always Have a Historical Example Ready”

Potentially due to Mr. Berkman’s low confidence that his students *could* learn content from the text and connect that information to big ideas, he was much more deliberate in Regular History lectures than he was in AP lectures about spotlighting the habits of mind and purposes for studying history than he was with his AP students and did so at least once in four out of seven classes I observed. He said in an interview that, in addition to the big idea of global relatedness, his content goals were for students to be able to “interpret information” or take factual information (e.g. dates, events, figures) and make meaning from them and pushed on these goals during his lectures. For example, in the following question-answer segment, Mr. Berkman made a statement about using historical examples to back up ideas:

Mr. Berkman: You know the difference between cultural diffusion and economic globalization? Ms. Sampson?

Kayla: Cultural diffusion is when traditions and stuff have spread.

Mr. Berkman: Give me an example. You should always have a historical example ready.

Kayla: Buddhism.

Mr. Berkman: Excellent example. Buddhism was not spread by force. It is spread by monks and missionaries.

Similarly, during a lecture on the Congress of Vienna, he impressed upon his students that the purpose for studying history is to better understand the modern world. He said:

[The Congress of Vienna] is very very important because it sets the stage for the conflicts in the 20th Century. That's the reason to study history- how is it that we ended up the way we are. What actions were taken that influence the way we live our lives, our values, the laws, what is the social structure in which we live, how did we get here? In the World History curriculum, the idea is for you to get some basic understanding of how we got here and for the most part, the influence of Europe in our lives."

Summary

On the one hand, these moves demonstrate Mr. Berkman's commitment to helping his students understand the ways of thinking important in studying history. On the other hand, the need to impress upon students the historical importance of past events may have been compensating for his belief that his Regular World History students were not inherently motivated to engage in their academics or able to grasp it from reading the text.

Jasmine – Regular World History

"I'm interested in that, but not really."

Every time Jasmine and I talked about her World History class, she was quick to tell me that she "learned something" or found a topic interesting, but when pressed to elaborate she usually admitted that she wasn't actually interested. For instance, when reflecting on a lesson about trade and war in ancient Japan she said, "Well, I'm interested

in Samurais because I think Samurais are so cool. I'm interested in that and I think I'm interested in trade ... like I'm interested in that, but not really ... I don't know, but I'll listen. You have to listen, but you know." With little to no reported prior knowledge about any of the topics covered in the class, Jasmine seemed to struggle to see the content as relevant and meaningful unless it was embedded in a narrative that she found compelling. The more I talked with her about topics from the class, the more it became clear that Jasmine often looked and sounded like she was engaged during lectures and when talking about her reading assignments, when in fact she was not invested in learning the content beyond a superficial level.

Jasmine looked like an engaged student by answering and asking a range of questions in five out of the seven classes I observed (See Appendix J for examples of her contributions). Her class was generally noisy, with students almost constantly engaged in some degree of side talk while Mr. Berkman lectured. In comparison with many of her classmates, Jasmine, who sat in the front, seemed attentive and often took notes, saving her singing outbursts for breaks in instruction. Towards the end of the quarter, she had her head down more and more frequently, which she attributed to being tired from late-night school play rehearsals. Jasmine's contributions showed that she was paying attention to the lecture and that, at least some of the time, she had read the text. Participating, at least by looking attentive and completing assignments, was important for Jasmine and she expressed frustration about classmates who talked too much during class, sometimes shushing or chastising them. She also expressed frustration about her peers who came unprepared, taking advantage of what she felt was an overly lenient

grading system. She said, “It’s cool that he gives so many chances, but he gives *a lot* of chances.”

“Reading is easy...but I like Mr. Berkman explaining it.”

Jasmine claimed she liked her World History textbook more than any of the texts she read in ELA and Ecology and called the text-based tasks she did in history “easy work” and requiring “not a lot of reading.” She said that she did many of the assignments for Mr. Berkman and explained her diligence by saying, “Last year, my grades weren’t that good at all so I tried to do my best in each class and there are some days when I’m just like, ‘Oh, I cannot do this like today.’ There are some days when I’m like happy, I’m motivated, and I want to get to where I need to be so I think ‘I need to do this.’” She recognized that she could not achieve good grades without investing time and effort.

Jasmine would likely have agreed with Mr. Berkman’s description of *Modern World History* as a “supportive” textbook. She said, “Reading is easy to me [in history] because they just explain stuff if you read it carefully...they don’t have all those big words. They get to the point, like okay, thank you!” Like Mariah and Justin, Jasmine used the textbook features to help her read efficiently. For example, when talking about her approach to answering one of her worksheet questions, “*What role did the Renaissance play in launching an age of exploration?*” she said that she would skim the section for bolded words and headings, saying, “If I find anything to do with it, then I would read the paragraph.” Jasmine said that she always read over the worksheet questions before reading in the textbook because otherwise she would have to “read everything just to answer like three little questions.” Clearly for her, the point of reading in the textbook was not to learn the material, but to complete the task as quickly as

possible, which she felt she able to do by scanning for key words and reading small segments.

Despite the accessibility of the text, Jasmine preferred Mr. Berkman's lectures to reading the text because, she said, "I like Mr. Berman explaining it." Though she did not explicitly say so, Mr. Berkman's explanations of the textbook content and attempts to make distant historical events meaningful and relevant for students seemed to help her understand main ideas. Additionally, since Jasmine only read the portions of the textbook directly associated with the worksheet questions or key terms, lectures also provided her with important missing information.

Lectures Supported Jasmine's Reading of the Text

On the two occasions Jasmine and I met to talk about her World History class, she read portions from the textbook fluently, meaning she had no word errors and read with appropriate rate and expression. She was able to identify main idea statements and key facts, but did not demonstrate deeper or more nuanced comprehension of the text.

Jasmine reported having "zero" background knowledge about any of the topics prior to reading and thus everything she reported learning came from either the text or the lectures. During our first interview about her World History class, she read a passage under the heading, "Portugal's Trading Empire" stopping after the final paragraph and pointing to what she felt was the main idea statement. Instead of then paraphrasing or summarizing the rest of the passage, she moved off the text and provided commentary on what made the text easy for her to read, but otherwise gave no indication that she understood how the facts related to the main idea or the rest of the chapter. She treated the text segment as an isolated entity in the sense that she did not draw in any prior

knowledge, relate what she read to Mr. Berkman’s lecture, or connect to other segments of the text.

Table 9. Jasmine’s World History Close Reading #1

Text Segment	Jasmine’s response
<p>In time, Portugal’s success in Asia attracted the attention of other European nation. As early as 1521, a Spanish expedition led by Ferdinand Magellan arrived in the Philippines. Spain claimed the islands and began settling them in 1565. By the early 1600s, the rest of Europe had begun to descend upon Asia. They wanted to establish their own trade empires in the East (<i>Modern World History</i>, Chapter 3, Section 1, page 100).</p>	<p>“Basically, it’s just – the point is they wanted to establish their own trade empires in the East. There you go. It’s not like biology books or like ecology books because those go on and on with words, words, words, but it just says like, ‘As early as 1521, a Spanish expedition led by Ferdinand,’ like it’s who, the year, and where. That’s it.”</p>

This ‘hunt and peck’ approach, looking for main ideas, names, dates, and locations, was likely sufficient for Jasmine when completing her worksheets and indicated that she thought reading and learning from her history textbook was about finding facts, rather than sense making or connecting facts to bigger ideas, which Mr. Berkman did for his students.

The second time Jasmine read a passage from her textbook, she drew on content she learned from Mr. Berkman’s lecture to help her make sense of the text, specifically incorporating a narrative he told in class about the lives of King Louie and Marie Antoinette. Jasmine paused after the segment below (See Table 10) to talk about what she knew about the Third Estate, which she had gotten from Mr. Berkman’s lecture the day before. She then moved away from the text, pointed to the name “Louie,” and launched into an animated narrative about him and Marie Antoinette by drawing on what she had heard in class. She eventually circled back around to the text in explaining why Louie assembled the Estates-General. By incorporating content from the lecture, Jasmine was

able to demonstrate an understanding of why these events occurred. She went on to say that Mr. Berkman wanted them to learn about the French Revolution because history repeats itself, saying, “Do you know the 1% and 99%? It's just like that.”

Table 10. Jasmine’s World History Close Reading #2.

Text Segment	Jasmine’s response
<p>Three days later, the Third Estate delegates found themselves locked out of their meeting room. They broke down a door to an indoor tennis court, pledging to stay until they had drawn up a new constitution. This pledge became known as the Tennis Court Oath. Soon after, nobles and members of the clergy who favored reform joined the Third Estate delegates. In response to these events, Louis stationed his mercenary army of Swiss guards around Versailles. East (<i>Modern World History</i>, Chapter 3, Section 1, page x).</p>	<p>“Basically, the Third Estate was trying to voice their opinion. This is the second meeting before they had their first one in 175 years. They come to share their opinion, but they're locked out and they can't the clergy and the nobles don't want their opinion. They just think they're just low class and they don't deserve freedom or equality.</p> <p>He [pointing to 'Louie'] is the worst leader ever. He owes a whole bunch of other states and whole bunch of other nations, all those other places that he owes a ton of money. His wife, Marie Antoinette, that I was kind of interested in, she gambles and blows off all the money and gives him really bad money advice so she has more money.</p> <p>She's really selfish. She was the whole France's enemy. It was her against France because nobody liked her. She was just really self-centered and spent it all on clothes and jewels. So basically, he assembled the Estates General and called everybody together. He asked the . . . since the Third Estate pays the taxes, he asked the Third Estate, but they wouldn't give him money because it's just like, 'I'm not going to give you money when you treat me like this.'”</p>

Jasmine claimed that she read this section of the textbook prior to Mr. Berkman's lecture on the content, but admitted that she did not "understand it very well." While she read and then reflected on the text during our interview, she still did not attend closely to details in the text, but she was able to make sense of the bigger ideas. Thus, while Mr. Berkman did not intend his lectures to prepare students to read, Jasmine demonstrated that without the content and narratives he provided in class, she only "read" the text for isolated facts and was not able to fully grasp the big ideas. Jasmine found reading her history textbook "easy" because her purpose for reading was not to read closely or engage with any of the ideas in a deep or meaningful way. She was not inherently interested in the topics and the worksheets did nothing to encourage her to think more about what she read. Mr. Berkman's "explaining" of the content helped her see a broader purpose to study historical events and figures.

Chapter 5

Findings: Ecology

“I want them to get that they are already academics.”

Ms. Meyer was first and foremost committed to helping her students believe in their academic abilities, especially as young scientists. She reiterated again and again during our four interviews that she was most interested in working with students who have not had positive experiences in school and who find little to connect with in the school curriculum. These are the students, she said, who often come to high school having internalized the perception that they are not capable academically. Ms. Meyer wanted her students to see the connection between science and their roles as active and informed citizens. During our initial interview, Ms. Meyer talked about these goals for her students:

I want them to get they are already academics. I want them to come out in touch that they are doing the thinking work we do in science, they just don't always know it. And that what they learn is going to making a difference in their ability to make decisions, like policy decisions. And that you can explain everything through science, so getting a facility with learning *how to learn* science. They don't have to learn it all in my class but learning how to learn and ask good questions is going to be the key to having access to what they want.

In each of our subsequent interviews, Ms. Meyer referred back to these broader goals when she talked about designing activities and her efforts to both make the content relevant and give students them the skills and content they needed to become independent, thoughtful citizens. For instance, when I began my observations, students

were getting started with “The Lifestyle Project,” during which over the course of a month, they had to enact and journal about small changes to their lifestyles, such as eating less meat, throwing away less garbage, or using less hot water. Ms. Meyer said the purpose of the project was to encourage students to become ‘at home’ scientists and observe firsthand how the small changes they make impact the environment. She also set purposes for learning that made the content relevant to students’ lives. For example, when they transitioned from studying the health of forest to energy, she said, “You might be wondering why we are talking about energy all of a sudden. You know that one of the main components of global climate change is carbon dioxide and that is a byproduct of different types of energy. We are going to cover the basics so that you can make informed choices, like the cars you buy.”

Across the fourteen observations I conducted in her 2nd and 5th period Ecology classes, Ms. Meyer consistently tried to motivate students and get them interested in the content by referencing popular media and culture. For example, in a lecture and discussion on energy efficiency, Ms. Meyer asked the class to guess what percentage of our food intake is converted to useful energy. She then projected an image of a sweaty LeBron James, star player for the Miami Heat, to make a humorous connection with students who play basketball and said:

15% of the food we eat goes into useful energy. We lose a ton of energy through heat. What team is that? The Miami *Heat!* As I said energy transformation isn’t very efficient. It is important for you to remember that in our bodies we use about 15% of what we eat and the rest mainly leaves our bodies as heat.

Several students laughed at this reference and one even gave Ms. Meyer a ‘high five’ in appreciation for her effort to connect to their interests.

To meet her students' needs and to reflect contemporary environmental issues, Mr. Meyer said that she essentially 'reinvented' the curriculum each year. She stated, "My impression is that many of my colleagues don't do that. I'm curious if that is a laziness thing or whether when you're teaching a different demographic you can just map on an existing curriculum." By "different demographic," Ms. Meyer said she was referring to white middle class students whose lives generally align with school culture and practices. In addition to incorporating popular sports or media references such as LeBron James, Ms. Meyer 'reinvented' the curriculum by constantly searching for new texts and activities and by redesigning units. An interesting example of her 'reinventing' the curriculum to meet her students' diverse needs was an attempt she made at the start of the school year to do standards-based grading by designing a range of different activities students could select from to practice and master each standard. Students could choose between a Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 assignment with Level 1 being the simplest and Level 3 requiring the most data analysis. Each level had a reading and a corresponding hands-on activity. She said that students, "really, really liked it" and that, surprisingly, they usually selected the appropriate level. Students would sometimes select a Level 3 assignment and then later swap it out for a Level 2 if they felt they did not understand the material. While the approach was effective for many students, Ms. Meyer said it was unsustainable due the planning time and effort required and so moved to more traditional whole class readings and activities. Part of the problem, she said, was that she could not find any support on how to effectively and efficiently differentiate her science material for her diverse learners. She even went to a National Science Teacher's Conference in search of an answer, saying, "My entire mission was I'm going to go and learn how to

differentiate. There's nobody who is saying, here's how to do it. They're just talking about the necessity of it. But no- 'and here's how it gets done.' I just don't think we know."

Ms. Meyer's drive to differentiate and to 'reinvent' the curriculum showed she was aware the different abilities or dispositions of her students and that she knew they needed to be accommodated in some way. However, her efforts proved problematic for her in that she lamented that she never felt like she 'got it right' with regards to her curriculum and since she was often trying material or activities for the first time, she was not able to fine-tune them for the following year. Additionally, she said that it seemed that no matter what new curriculum she tried that, inevitably, there was never enough time to cover all the content, especially when students often came to her missing foundational concepts and skills, such as basic mathematics or concepts students needed to know in order to understand the ones they were studying. If they came to her without foundational knowledge, she had to backtrack and fill in the missing content. Ms. Meyer struggled to find the time to include all the necessary content *and* engage students in interesting lab activities and so often ended up forgoing the hands-on science for lecture-based learning or jigsaw reading tasks.

Students were clearly at the heart of Ms. Meyer's practice and even if she was not able to incorporate as many lab activities as she would have liked, she tried to encourage active participation in other ways. For instance, when students expressed disdain for a topic or felt it irrelevant, she treated their comments as valid and thoughtful, paying them

with “Meyer bucks¹⁹” for their contribution. This move indicated she perceived class participation as a valuable aspect of student learning Ecology. On one particular day when the class was getting ready to read an article on the environmental impact of meat consumption, a student said, “I don’t understand why we’re learning this because even if you don’t eat meat, it is still produced.” Ms. Meyer valued the student’s question in her response:

I love your question. It just takes one person to change their mind and one more person to change their mind. The only way to alter the course of events with our planet is for one person at a time to start changing their ways. I totally get the cynicism. Here is a Meyer buck. Really good questions.

Ms. Meyer reinforced that asking good questions and thinking critically (even cynically) can make students smarter citizens.

Using Data to Make a Claim

In addition to developing a belief in their academic abilities in science and helping students see how science was relevant to their lives, Ms. Meyer specifically wanted her students to learn to use evidence and evidence-based reasoning to make a claim. Their biggest challenge, she said, was that when presented with data, they did not know how to generate a claim or tie to another concept. Her goal was that students would “see the story that’s already in the data set, and then use it to back up whatever they are trying to say and use it to make connections.” This goal was evident to some degree in the text-based tasks Ms. Meyer designed, which I will discuss shortly, as well as in class discussions in the way she encouraged students to draw on evidence to support their statement. For example, in the following exchange, Ms. Meyer asked the class to

¹⁹ Ms. Meyer handed out “Meyer bucks” to students who participated in class discussions, no matter how small the contribution. Students used their Meyer bucks to add points to quizzes or to get free passes on homework assignments.

consider what would happen to Lowry Park, a local urban forest the class was visiting each week to conduct field ecology, if humans weren't involved anymore and, when a student cited the relationship between trees, CO₂ and O₂, she spotlighted the use of evidence:

Ms. Meyer: Should the city be allocating resources to the restoration of the park?"

Taylor: We should be allocating resources because that day we had the meeting with Mr. Drummond [local forest restoration advocate], he said that plants absorb CO₂ and put out O₂. So the more plants we have, it will slow down global warming.

Ms. Meyer: Really great. I love that you are using evidence to support your argument. That's the only way it really gets done in the world. The minute you site data people will start to listen.

Here, Ms. Meyer connected to her broader goal of cultivating engaged citizens by impressing on students that using data or evidence to support an argument is necessary to get "people to listen." In the following exchange, she pressed students to answer the question, "What does the invasive plant cover say about the health of a forest?" by drawing on what they had learned about invasive species:

Mariah: It's not healthy if more than 50% is covered with an invasive.

Ms. Meyer: Good, an invasive is not supposed to be there. You got it but we're going to take a cut deeper. Jasmine?

Jasmine: It's the start of it spreading.

Ms. Meyer: Ok, but who cares if it is all covered by English ivy?

Yumi: Don't they consume the native plants?

Ms. Meyer: Good! You all got there on your own. That's part of it. If everything is covered with English Ivy, it will die. If I'm a little maple seed and I'm spiraling to the ground and I land here [on ivy], what's going to happen?

- Jesse: It won't get any water.
- Ms. Meyer: Right. Little baby seeds need resources to grow. The ivy will hog it all up. Can you now answer that question. What does the % invasive cover says about the health of the forest?
- Mariah: It's not healthy.
- Ms. Meyer: Say why. Why is it not healthy?
- Tiana: 'Cuz it eats all the resources.

Ms. Meyer did not move on to the next question until she felt satisfied students had used evidence to back up the claim that the presence of nonnative plants means a forest is unhealthy. Though she was not explicit about it, she was modeling the type of evidence-based reasoning she wanted to see from students on their text-based tasks.

A Broad Range of Texts

In contrast with Mr. Berkman's use of a single textbook, Ms. Meyer used a range of texts, all of which were targeted for specific in-class tasks. See Appendix K for a table summarizing each task and its corresponding text, including details about each text and how the teacher and students used the texts. Ms. Meyer explained that as a rule she did not assign reading for homework for the simple reason that her students would not do it. Instead, she typically delivered key content by lecturing (with PowerPoint) on a topic, and then had students read short texts in class and use information from those texts to complete a group project or lab. After completing the task, students typically conveyed what they learned through writing and drawing. Ms. Meyer's selection and use of texts reflected her commitment to both making the content relevant and to wanting students to learn how to use data from texts to make scientific claims.

Rows of Ecology textbooks sat untouched on a bookshelf in the classroom. In lieu of the dated textbook, Ms. Meyer compiled varied texts from a range of sources, some of which she had used in the past and others that she was using for the first time. During the observations I conducted in her classroom over a period of two months, she had students working with two reading packets as well as in a series of smaller texts, including a 2008 *New York Times* article by Mark Bittman called, “Rethinking the Meat Guzzler,” a handout on invasive plants, a ‘how-to’ handout on creating a graph using Excel, and articles on the final exam. I also observed students reading and gathering data on a local urban forest from <http://www.earthcorps.org>. The two reading packets (4-8 pages each) corresponded with the two projects I observed – the Global Climate Change Project and the Energy Project. Ms. Meyer structured each project as a jigsaw, which she said was a time-saving measure, and so small groups of students read about a different type of renewable or nonrenewable energy or, for the climate change project, about either penguins, the Caribbean, or human health. The packets for the energy project came directly from The National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project²⁰ whereas the packets for the Global Climate Change project were adapted and partially generated by the teacher (source unknown). Though the two packets presented very different demands for readers, they both contained facts and data in the form of prose, graphs, tables, and charts. In sum, I observed students engaging with a huge range of reading material in their Ecology class, ranging in Lexile level from 960-1470L, some very accessible and some quite challenging, requiring students to make adjustments as they

²⁰ The NEED Project is an organization that supplies teacher and students with curriculum about energy. Activities promote hands-on, inquiry-based learning. Lessons come with readings, student materials, and resources. (<http://www.need.org/>)

encountered different text structures demands. Rather than going through the challenges and affordances of each text here, I will discuss specific texts below as I examine the ways that Ms. Meyer used the texts and attempted to support text-based content learning.

Efforts to Support Text-based Tasks

Ms. Meyer anticipated that her students would have difficulty reading and learning from texts and so employed a number of strategies to support reading tasks and, at times, to minimize the amount and complexity of the texts she assigned. Her use of pre-, during-, and post-reading supports and strategies indicated that she saw the importance of learning from text in Ecology. However, many of her attempts to support comprehension, while well intentioned, either fell short of the goal or ended up taking the comprehension work away from students.

Preparing Students to Read. During my fourteen observations, Ms. Meyer consistently set students up to read using anticipation exercises (e.g. *Put the following in order from most energy use to least energy use: transportation, industrial, residential & commercial*), as well as images, video and audio clips from popular culture, indicating an understanding of the relationship between motivation, background knowledge, and reading comprehension. Below I discuss two examples of how Ms. Meyer designed pre-reading activities to tap into prior knowledge and pique students' interest in topics.

In the first example, students were about to read the *New York Times* article on the environmental impacts of meat consumption. To prepare students for the article, she had them do a 1-question interview activity to “get their brains warmed up.” Each student was given a sheet of questions about meat consumption and production (e.g. Does it require more energy to produce meat or to grow crops?), one of which was highlighted

and they had five minutes to ask their highlighted question to as many classmates as possible. After students completed their 1-minute interviews, Ms. Meyer had them write a short paragraph summarizing what they learned. She provided sentence starters to help students:

I interviewed _____ people. The three most interesting responses I got were _____. What I can conclude from all this information is _____.

In addition to helping students get ready to read the article by accessing any prior knowledge they had about meat consumption and by generating good questions about the topic, this summarizing exercise helped students practice using data to make a claim. Later in the same class period, Ms. Meyer supported students' comprehension of the article, which was challenging to read, by pausing reading and playing a short animated video called, "The Meatrix." The video was a spoof of the 1999 film "The Matrix" and was intended to help students visualize factory farms and to, as Ms. Meyer said, "break up the long reading."

Another example in which Ms. Meyer designed an activity specifically to prepare students to read was in a lesson introducing different forms of energy. After lecturing on the main types of energy, kinetic and potential, Ms. Meyer gave each pair of students a small whiteboard and marker and asked them to pick one form of kinetic (electrical, motion, sound, radiant, thermal) or potential (chemical, stored mechanical, gravitational, nuclear) energy and to draw "a picture representing that type of energy." Students worked for about ten minutes and then circulated to look at classmates' drawings. Ms. Meyer referenced these drawings later in the lecture when she got into the specifics of kinetic (electrical, radiant, thermal, motion, sound) and potential (chemical, stored mechanical,

nuclear, gravitational) energy. Students were very engaged in this exercise and asked Ms. Meyer thoughtful questions about whether they were accurately representing their type of energy. For example, a pair of students showed a picture of a car with fumes coming out of the tail pipe and said they had represented chemical energy. Another student asked if this wasn't also electrical since cars also run by electricity. Ms. Meyer explained that both were at play in cars and asked students about the difference between electric and gas-powered cars.

Reading Out Loud and Embedding Questions in Text. Despite Ms. Meyer's efforts to prepare students to read the meat consumption article, they seemed to struggle with the actual reading, likely due to the fact that the article contained a large amount of sophisticated and specialized language and required readers to have some background knowledge about the oil and meat industries in our country. For example, to make sense of the following sentence, students would need to understand the words "affluence" and "proliferation" and have some knowledge of meat factories: "Global demand for meat has multiplied in recent years, encouraged by growing affluence and nourished by the proliferation of huge, confined animal feeding operations." (Bittman, 2008). One of Ms. Meyer's strategies to deal with the article's complexity was to read it out loud to the class, something she said she often did in anticipation of her students having difficulty reading. If students were working as a group, she encouraged them read through texts out loud together in a 'round-robin' style. She said that even though students complained about it, she persisted in the hope that it would foster discussion and help those with low-level literacy skills better comprehend the text, but admitted that more often than not, students read silently and didn't talk to their peers about the text.

As Ms. Meyer was reading out loud from the meat consumption article, she paused periodically to ask questions that she had embedded into the text (after every or every other paragraph), calling on one student at a time to answer the questions. She said later that she often embedded questions in text to encourage students to read the entire text and then go back and reread for answers, explaining:

So I think what happens when you hand them a reading and then the questions is they read the question and they skim and look for the answer. And I think when it's embedded that they actually read the paragraph and then get to the question and look back at the paragraph. I think they work through it forward the way that I want them to. I want them to read it and reflect on the questions not just look for the answer to the question. And they are much more likely to do it when the questions are embedded.

Ms. Meyer's questions were text-specific, often focusing on specific terms that she thought they might not know. For instance, she paused after reading the first two sentences out loud and asked called on Tiffany to answer the question, "What does it mean when it says, like oil, meat is subsidized by the federal government?" Ms. Meyer then connected the term back to meat production.

Table 11. Discussion Excerpt from Ecology

Text Excerpt	Question and Answer
<p>A sea change in the consumption of a resource that Americans take for granted may be in store – something cheap, plentiful, widely enjoyed and a part of daily life. And it isn't oil. It's meat.</p> <p>The two commodities share a great deal: Like oil, meat is subsidized by the federal government. Like oil, meat is subject to accelerating demand as nations become wealthier, and this, in turn, sends prices higher. Finally – like oil – meat is something people are encouraged to consume less of, as the toll exacted by industrial production increases, and becomes increasingly visible (Rethinking the Meat Guzzler, <i>New York Times</i>, January 27, 2008).</p> <p><i>[Embedded Question: What does it mean when it</i></p>	<p>Ms. Meyer: What does it mean when it says, like oil, meat is subsidized by the federal government? Tiffany?</p> <p>Tiffany: Does it mean they are trying to take control of it?</p> <p>Ms. Meyer: It does mean they influence the price.</p> <p>Tiffany: They get tax breaks?</p> <p>Ms. Meyer: They could get tax breaks. Subsidies can take a lot of different forms. Imagine I'm a meat farmer and I have a whole factory of cows. When I slaughter those cows I get paid for selling the meat but the government also pays me to grow the cows. I</p>

<i>says, like oil, meat is subsidized by the federal government?]</i>	get paid twice. It also could mean that the government might make it less expensive for people. Next paragraph, Wyatt?
---	--

Throughout the reading of the four-page article, Ms. Meyer continued to do the majority of the talking and more and more students put their heads down. This reading activity was an example of Ms. Meyer anticipating her students' challenges with text and employing several measures to help them. Unfortunately students disengaged from the reading and, as the article progressed, Ms. Meyer seemed to grow increasingly anxious to tell them what it said and to finish quickly.

Shortening and Simplifying Texts. Ms. Meyer also attempted to support students' reading by shortening or simplifying texts in a way that would make it easier (and faster) for them to read. For example, during a lesson on invasive species of plants, Ms. Meyer handed out a document to each table group on a particular species (e.g. English Ivy, Morning Glory). She said that she had simplified the text about each species by turning connected prose into short bulleted points and by breaking up the text with bolded headings that corresponded directly with headings on the chart she created (See the table below).

Table 12. Invasive Species Graphic Organizer

Species	Native Region	Why it is here?	Characteristics helping it thrive?	Effects on native ecosystems?	Removal techniques
English Ivy					
Morning Glory					

Students were supposed to take notes using the chart so they could share key information with peers. As I walked around the classroom, I saw many students copying the bullet points from their handouts, likely because the text had already been reduced to notes.

Another instance in which Ms. Meyer adjusted the text to make the reading less demanding was for the final exam. She originally designed the final exam so that students would read two articles and answer questions based on information in the articles. She worried, however, that this would end up assessing students' reading comprehension abilities rather than their content knowledge and she felt this wasn't fair because she had not provided sufficient instruction on reading comprehension. To remedy the problem, she rewrote the articles on the exam so that they provided context, but not answers, to the questions. Ms. Meyer reported that her more able readers picked up on this and were frustrated by having spent time reading and rereading the passages, looking for answers to the questions. To answer the questions on the final exam, students had to draw on knowledge gained from class lectures and activities, but not demonstrate the ability to draw data and meaning from text.

Both of these instances reflect the tension Ms. Meyer felt between the time needed to cover content and the need to teach literacy skills. By reducing the reading demands, she said, "I know we are doing them a disservice. I don't know when they learn to do the reading...when do they gain the skill of reading scientific stuff?" It was a catch-22 -- since she always worked with the class to digest the reading material, she worried that they never gained the skills to do it on their own. Then, when she asked students to read and discuss a text on their own, they would sit in "complete silence" until she came around to assist. I could hear the frustration in Ms. Meyer's voice -- she knew that reducing the need to read texts was not the answer, but she was also committed to only assessing them on what she felt she had instructed.

Varied Support for Text-Based Tasks. In addition to engaging students in pre-reading activities and modifying texts by embedding questions or simplifying them, Ms. Meyer provided different types and degrees of support for students' independent reading and text-based tasks. Below, I discuss two activities in which Ms. Meyer supported students to draw data out of text and then make a claim based on that data. In both activities, students were able to gather and document data, but had a difficult time making a claim based on their data.

In the first example, Ms. Meyer provided students with a highly structured step-by-step task sheet and note taking graphic organizer to assist them in a virtual data collection activity of plant species in Lowry Park using the Earth Core website (www.earthcorps.org). On the task sheet, students were explicitly directed how to navigate the site to find the percentages of invasive and noninvasive species and then to record that data on their graphic organizer. After gathering their data, students were then instructed to make maps showing the presence of key native and nonnative species in areas of the park under active and non-active restoration. As I walked around the room, students seemed able to independently use their tasks sheets to navigate the website, record data, and create maps. They seemed unsure, however, about the final step of the activity, which was to write a statement about what the maps said about the health of the Lowry Park. I overheard a student say to her peers, "I'm not sure what we are supposed to do now [that we finished the map]." I approached another group and asked them what they could say about the health of the park based on their map and they shrugged and said, "I don't know. I guess it's kind of unhealthy." Their uncertainty reflected Ms. Meyer's concern that her students struggled to make meaning from data.

The Global Climate Change Project was similar to the task above in that students were given task sheets and directed to read text and gather data, but it was more complex in that it required students to work with a much larger data set. The class had just finished a series of lessons exploring climate change and feedback loops and the data for each of the three packets – penguins, the Caribbean, and human health –demonstrated feedback loops. Ms. Meyer was hoping students would go into the reading task familiar with the larger concept and be able to practice looking at new data as it related to feedback loops.

Each group selected a topic and was given a teacher-generated packet containing a detailed two-page task sheet that explained the final product (“A poster session in which they would explain their findings to a scientific community”), context for the task (“You are a climatologist with the Intergovernmental Panel studying climate change...”), a three step process for the task, a scoring rubric, a sample of the final poster, and a how-to guide to create graphs using Excel. Groups were also given five-six pages of “research fact sheets” for their assigned topic that contained bulleted lists of facts, and data in the form of graphs, charts, and tables. The first step was to, “Orient yourself to the data,” which involved reading across all the research data sheets, graphing the data sets, summarizing patterns or trends in the data, and listing possible explanations. The bulleted facts had already been distilled by Ms. Meyer so as to be readable and brief. Before sending groups off to work independently, Ms. Meyer talked through the procedure and demonstrated how to create a graph in Excel. She did not elaborate, however, on how they should move from graphing data to summarizing to identifying explanations. Reflecting on the activity, she was satisfied with groups’ use of Excel to graph their data, but said that some groups struggled to look at the entire data set and identify the most

likely explanations for their phenomena. This comment resonated with what I observed on the groups' posters – many had posted graphs and summaries, but did not identify connections between the data sets.

In contrast to the tasks above in which students were charged to gather and make sense of data, for the Energy project, they read to learn about a specific type of energy (Uranium, Coal, Hydropower, Geothermal, Wind, Solar, Propane, Natural Gas, Petroleum, Biomass, and Hydrogen) by answering a set of four questions:

1. What type of energy do you have and how is it recovered?
2. Where is the energy stored and how is it converted into useable energy? (words and pictures)
3. What/who uses this type of energy and for what purposes?
4. What are the advantages & disadvantages of using this type of energy?

After reading their designated four-page packet, each group had to create a 'mini poster' with the answers to the questions, which they then shared with peers in a gallery walk.

Ms. Meyer supported reading by posting the questions on the projector, telling the students that the packets were "lengthy," and suggesting that they read the text out loud and use highlighters to track important information.

Though the reading questions were straightforward, they did not align well with the texts, which were dense and replete with technical information that did not relate to the questions. For example, the Uranium packet included the following subheadings: What is Uranium?, What is Nuclear Energy?, History of Nuclear Energy, The Nuclear Fuel Cycle, Waste Repository, Nuclear Energy Use, Licensing Nuclear Power Plants, Economics of Nuclear Energy, and Nuclear Energy and the Environment. In addition, the packet also contained a graphic of the fission process, a graphic depicting the uranium fuel cycle, and shaded boxes about radiation, the price of uranium, and nuclear safety. It is not clear from the subheadings exactly where students would find the answers to their

four questions and yet, if they read through the entire packet, they would be wading through very technical language about the intricacies of the nuclear fuel cycle. For example, in the section about how uranium is prepared for the nuclear reactor under the “The Nuclear Fuel Cycle” subheading, it read:

The enriched uranium is taken to a fuel fabrication plant where it is prepared for the nuclear reactor. Here, the uranium is made into a solid ceramic material and formed into small barrel-shaped pellets. These ceramic fuel pellets can withstand very high temperatures, just like the ceramic tiles on the space shuttle. Fuel pellets are about the size of your fingertip, yet each one can produce as much energy as 150 gallons of oil. The pellets are sealed in a 12-foot metal tubes called fuel rods. Finally, the fuel rods are bundled into groups called fuel assemblies (The NEED Project, Uranium, p. 45).

Clearly, Ms. Meyer did not intend for students to learn about the details of nuclear reactors or ceramic fuel pellets, but exactly what they should get out of this section was unclear. If a student read this carefully, he or she might hone in on the sentence about the fuel pellets producing as much energy as 150 gallons of oil as an “advantage,” but it is unlikely they would read closely enough to pick up that detail. When I perused the students’ mini posters after class that day, I noticed that some groups answered the questions very generally (e.g. “Coal is sometimes destructive to mine.”), some provided incorrect or partially correct answers (e.g. “Coal’s energy is stored in the solar energy of partly decomposed plants), and some even included unnecessary information (e.g. “Top Coal Producing States are WY, WV, KY, PA, and TX”). Students also noticed the huge range in the posters -- during the gallery walk in which students were instructed to take notes on each other’s posters, I overheard a student tell Ms. Meyer, “Some of the posters are vague and I don’t know what to write.” She responded to the student saying, “For the quiz I want you to understand what renewable and nonrenewable energy is and how to convert something like water into energy. But I understand – I’ve seen the posters.” Ms.

Meyer recognized that she could not hold students accountable for the content students failed to teach each other.

Later during our interview Ms. Meyer talked about how the Energy reading packets were not an optimal fit for her activity, saying that they took students more in-depth than she wanted. When I asked her to talk about potential challenges her students faced with this text, she said the length and hard words probably shut them down immediately. She said that ideally she would have “distilled” the text down to the “important stuff,” but then in the next breath said that she believed it was important for kids to learn how to read technical texts such as NEED energy packets and acknowledged that she did not provide them with the necessary instruction. When I asked her what it might look like to teach them how to read texts like this she said:

I think that I would need to use talking-to-the-text techniques or something where kids are summarizing each paragraph or coming up with something they don't understand in each paragraph and then having a dialogue with another kid to see whether they can understand it together...if I'm going have them read something like this, then we're going to take two class periods to do one reading. I think that's the way it's supposed to be done.

Ms. Meyer' indicated here that she thought engaging students in close reading and peer dialogue would help them make sense of challenging texts. The task, as it was designed, did not call for close reading.

Content Learning and Grading

It was not clear to me what students took away from these text-based tasks. One issue was that they were always group tasks and, inevitably, some students did the bulk of the heavy lifting while others sat by. When I talked with students about how they approached these tasks, they said they usually divvied up the reading and tasks, which meant that no one read the entire text. Additionally, on all of the group text-based tasks,

Ms. Meyer graded students on content, completion/effort, and presentation. Even if students demonstrated a lack of content knowledge, she said they could end up with a passing grade if they made a good poster and appeared to be working hard during class time. I visited with Ms. Meyer at the end of the quarter and she talked with me about students' performance on their final exam and final grades. She said that she ended up curving the final exam because there was "such a big gap between what we were asking for and what we got" with the class average about 66%. Students who had barely passed the final but turned in their work could end up with a C or better in the class even if it did not demonstrate their understanding of the concepts.

Summary

There was a lot of "literacy potential" in Ms. Meyer's Ecology class, meaning she selected and used texts for specific tasks and employed a number of strategies to support students' learning from text. She recognized and accounted for differences in abilities and she motivated students by making the tasks and topics relevant to their lives. Ms. Meyer articulated what she believed good readers in science needed to do: read across the data, summarize findings, identify trends, and make claims. She felt, however, that she was doing her students a "disservice" because though she designed text-based activities, she did not teach them *how* to read in science. Ms. Meyer was at an impasse because though she recognized the need to incorporate more literacy instruction, she had exhausted all the resources at her disposal and was reluctant to take any more time away from content coverage.

Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine in Ecology

I now examine how Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine navigated and responded to the literacy demands in Ecology.

Mariah -- Ecology

“Ms. Meyer makes it really, really fun.”

Mariah had nothing but positive things to say about Ms. Meyer, especially her efforts to “make stuff fun” and to design hands-on activities, for which she referenced a lab they did earlier in the school year in which they used dye to observe how heat spread through cell. She said, “That was cool because I could see the heat moving up.” In particular, Mariah liked the contemporary videos, nods to popular culture, and relevant topics, which she said made the content “much more interesting.” For example, she said it was “cool” to learn about penguins during the Global Climate Change project and said that since she does not live in Antarctica, she did not know that melting sea ice was such a problem for penguin populations and even exclaimed with genuine feeling, “Oh my god, penguins are dying!” Ms. Meyer’s perception of Mariah echoed these sentiments – she felt that she was genuinely interested in the material and that she was particularly adept at her ability to self-reflect on her content understanding of content and ask for help when needed.

Mariah perceived that Ms. Meyer was more interested in students’ learning experiences than in whether they followed activities perfectly. For instance, between bites of a turkey sandwich during one of our interviews, Mariah said she had been trying to cut meat out of her diet as part of the Lifestyle project. It had been challenging because, she said, “In my culture, we just have a lot of meat,” and described recent family

picnics and events brimming with platters of ribs and fried chicken. She said she liked the project because she could be honest about her experiences, explaining, “Even if you didn’t do good on one day, you still got the full points.” Mariah’s comment aligned with what I observed in class -- Ms. Meyer fielded questions and comments from students who explained how they failed at the Lifestyle project by breaking down and eating a McDonalds hamburger or making it all day without producing trash and then eating a bag of chips before bed. In each case, she affirmed their experiences as part of the process.

Participation Focused on Content

Since Ms. Meyer almost always incorporated both whole class lecture and discussion and small group tasks into each lesson, I tallied Mariah’s participation in each setting to look for trends or patterns. Consistent with her participation in AP World History, Mariah participated in all seven classes Ecology observed, both in the whole discussion and in small group tasks. See Appendix L for examples of Mariah’s participation in Ecology. Though Ecology was her 5th period class, which was right after lunch and at times rambunctious, she consistently paid attention and engaged with the content during lectures, class discussions, and activities. While Mariah asked a few clarification questions during group tasks, the vast majority of her contributions in Ecology directly related to the content; she either drew on knowledge learned in previous lectures or asked thoughtful questions about the content presented during the current lecture.

Whereas in World History she periodically participated with comments not directly related to the content, in Ecology her participation was more content-focused, likely because Ms. Meyer’s lectures and discussions were more focused -- she was clear

with students about the topics and learning objectives and stayed the course and, as a result, student participation rarely deviated from the content. For example, during a lecture about the ways Ecologists determine the health of a forest, Ms. Meyer talked about canopy cover as one indicator. Mariah raised her hand as asked, “How do you determine canopy cover?,” providing Ms. Meyer a segue into her demonstration, which included a series of visual depictions of canopy coverage, an explanation of how ecologists use a mirror to measure canopy coverage, and a chance for students to practice approximating the percentage of coverage. In asking this question, Mariah was demonstrating an understanding that scientists collect data to measure things such as canopy cover. Later, when Mariah talked about canopy cover during our interview, she was able to clearly explain both what it is and how it is measured, drawing heavily on Ms. Meyer’s visual demonstration from class. She explained:

You have a mirror, and you take the mirror and you’re looking at leaves. Say I was under that tree [gestured outside]. You see how many leaves... You divide the thing into fours. Then you see, out of the fours parts, how many leaves you can see, and then how much sky you can see. If this is all sky [pointing to the center of the mirror], but then the sides are leaves, you could say that’s 50%, because if you put these two like that it would be 50%. If you’re in a big forest, and there’s just all trees and there’s only a little bit of sunlight, it’s pretty much all covered.

The combination of Mariah’s curiosity to learn how real ecologists measure canopy coverage with Ms. Meyer’s clear lecture and demonstration supporting her learning about the topic.

In another instance, Mariah’s response to a warm-up question indicated her ability to appropriately draw on knowledge learned in a prior lecture. Ms. Meyer had asked students to put the following categories in order from the most energy use to the least energy use: residential and commercial, transportation, and industry. After giving students a few minute to write, she elicited responses. Mariah raised her hand and

volunteered, “I said industrial first because we burn a lot of coal and use a lot fossil fuels.” While her answer was not correct, it showed that she understood that the burning of coal and fossil fuels was bad for the environment, something they had discussed in a previous class period.

Text-based Tasks

During four of my observations, Mariah spent a portion of each class period working with peers on a text-based group task²¹ and on each occasion, she served as the group leader, guiding the work of her peers. She seemed organized and attentive to the task at hand and could always explain to me what they were doing and the purpose of the task, both during the activity and later during our interviews. Having said that, Mariah admitted that she was sometimes “off-task” during group activities, naming two reasons: 1) it was tempting to chat with her friends and 2) sometimes the tasks were “pretty easy” and did not require a significant amount of close attention. The latter seemed to be the case for her with the computer simulation activity in which she and her group had to record the percentage of native and nonnative plant species in their local urban forest. She said she understood that the purpose of the task was to use data to determine the health of the forest but found the actual activity just “busy work.” Mariah was adept at following task instructions and gathering data and if this was all she was asked to do, she tended to, as she put it, “goof off.”

During my observations of group tasks, Mariah consistently corralled her group members and supplied her group with explanatory statements about their data. She stayed focused on the task at hand and seemed committed to turning in good work. For instance,

²¹ Mariah and Jasmine were in the same group for all group tasks I observed and I learned from Ms. Meyer that they often chose to work together. While some of the data presented here includes Jasmine, I will hold on analyzing her engagement with texts and tasks until her section.

when working with her group on the Global Climate Change project, Mariah asked her group if anyone had the scoring rubric handy. She read over the rubric and then called Ms. Meyer over and said, “So to get ‘exceeds standard’ you have to additional information? Can you go on the Discovery Channel?” Ms. Meyer confirmed that this was an appropriate source for additional information. She then asked the group about their ‘game plan’ for finishing up their project. Mariah spoke for the group, saying that she planned to secure something from the Discovery Channel at home that evening and that they planned to work after school to finish their project. She seemed to enjoy being the group organizer and, through these group interactions, conveyed an understanding of their data and what they learned from it.

The Texts are “pretty straightforward.”

Mariah described the texts she had to read in Ecology as mostly “pretty straightforward,” meaning they had clear headings and easy-to-read text. Having straightforward text and questions that corresponded with the text, such as the reading task on invasive plant species (she read about English Ivy), made the tasks “easy” for her. When reading and taking notes on English Ivy, she said she just followed the questions on her chart because, “It [the text] was broken up [by headings] so you could see where the answers are.” Mariah said she did not have to work hard to read or take notes and successfully honed in on key points, avoiding extraneous details. For example, she paraphrased the bullet point, “English ivy contains slightly toxic compounds. The sap can cause dermatitis and blistering in some people” and wrote on her chart, “It is slightly toxic.” When I asked her if she learned anything, she paused and then said, “Yeah...I

guess it was pretty informational.” Though Mariah was successful in the sense that she completed the chart, she did not find the text or task compelling.

Content Knowledge, Text, & Task Contribute to Challenges

Not all of the texts in Ecology were easy for Mariah and I turn now to a text with which she struggled. As previously stated, Ms. Meyer acknowledged that the Energy project packets were unusually technical text for her class and so Mariah’s difficulties reading the Uranium packet were not surprising. What became clear as she talked about the topic and task and then attempted to read and discuss a passage, though, was a combination of content knowledge, the task itself, and the text all contributed to her feeling challenged.

To begin, I asked Mariah about her interest in and prior understanding of the concepts covered in class that week: energy, energy transformation, and renewable and nonrenewable energy. She said that even *after* the lectures, class activities, reading on energy, and gallery walk of her classmates’ posters, she still felt “shaky” about the concept, saying,

Honestly, all I know is that you have energy when you eat, but I don’t know if it’s ... I don’t really know how to define the word ‘energy’ because to say, ‘I have a lot of energy,’ ... is that the same context as the energy your body gets from eating an apple is 10% of the apple’s energy? I don’t know if that’s the same. I now get that your body doesn’t get 100% of energy from food or else you wouldn’t be eating that much. I knew that cars burn a lot of energy and you waste a lot of energy in showers and when you have your computers plugged up all day, but that’s pretty much the extent of it.

She said that she was not interested in energy except for the isolated “cool facts” she learned about meat consumption and electric cars. Mariah could give an example of nonrenewable energy, saying, “For example you can’t get coal from its gas state back to a liquid or solid form again,” but fumbled when I pressed her on nonrenewable energy,

saying, “Well, I know that you can get it back into, water for example, that’s renewable because we can get water vapor back into ice and just regular water to its liquid form. I know that that’s renewable, but I’m shaky on what else is.” Going into a challenging text with shaky knowledge of the concepts proved problematic for Mariah and left her struggling to differentiate between more or less important details.

“I really hated that activity.”

Mariah said that another part of the problem was that some her classmates’ posters were not very good, so it was hard for her to develop an understanding of the different types of energy and how they are converted to usable energy. She also said that she didn’t feel confident teaching her peers about Uranium since she did not understand what she read and lamented, “I’m almost setting them up for failure. How can I teach somebody? And...how would I know [on their posters] what’s the right answer the question?” I asked Mariah if she or other students ever asked Ms. Meyer for help if they did not understand what they read. She said that she only asked for help if she “really really didn’t get it,” but otherwise just used “context clues” to make sense of difficult text. When I asked her if there were any other strategies she used when she got stuck in the text, she replied, “No, just context clues.”

Before reading a section from her Uranium text, I asked Mariah to describe how she had approached the reading task earlier in the week. She said she and her group mates divided up the questions and that she “scanned for answers” to her assigned question, which was: #1: *Describe the type of energy and how it is recovered.* She described the text as, “a bit much and all mashed together,” which made it hard for her find the answer to her question. She said that she focused on the section with the heading, “What is

Uranium?” to answer her question, but struggled to tease out more from less important information in text:

Table 13. Mariah’s Ecology Close Reading #1

Text	Mariah’s Response
<p>Uranium is the heaviest of the 92 naturally occurring elements and is classified as a metal. It is the fuel used by nuclear power plants for fissioning.</p> <p>It is also one of the few elements that is easily fissioned. Uranium was formed when the earth was created and is found in rocks all over the world. Rocks that contain a lot of uranium are called uranium ore, or pitch-blende. Uranium, although abundant, is a nonrenewable energy source.</p> <p>Two forms (isotopes) of uranium are found in nature, uranium-235 and uranium-238. These numbers refer to the number of neutrons and protons in each atom. Uranium-235 is the form commonly used for energy production because, unlike uranium-238, its nucleus splits easily when bombarded by a neutron. During fissioning, the uranium-235 atom absorbs a bombarding neutron, causing its nucleus to split apart into two atoms of lighter weight.</p> <p>At the same time, the fission reaction releases energy as heat and radiation, as well as more neutrons. The newly released neutrons go onto bombard other uranium atoms, and the process repeats itself over and over. (“Uranium,” Secondary Energy Infobook, <i>The NEED Project</i>, p. 44).</p>	<p>It says that it’s in the uranium ore or a pitch blend, and then it says it’s recovered by rocks, and it’s fissioned.</p> <p>Yeah, let’s see for example it’s saying there’s two type of Uranium atoms found, and then you have to break them up into separate...it’s hard! I just said [on my poster] that you have to break the neutron to get the energy. It was confusing.</p>

Mariah felt inhibited by the amount of technical vocabulary in the text and said she was “just trying really hard to make educational guesses.” She thought that ‘fissioning’ might be the opposite of fusion and so thought it might mean ‘detachment,’ which is close, but not quite accurate. Even though she stumbled over these words and claimed she did not understand the passage, her summary was somewhat accurate. She understood that uranium is found in rocks and that energy is released when uranium atoms are fissioned,

but she was thrown off by the information about the two types of Uranium and by not understanding fissioning.

Even though her comprehension suffered, Mariah was able to read the Uranium text fluently, making no word errors and reading with proper rate and expression. After she read the following passage, she tried and failed to visualize the fissioning process. Since I knew Ms. Meyer had talked with students in class about turbines, I pushed on her when she said she did not know what a turbine was. Mariah was able to draw on Ms. Meyer's explanation and answer accurately, though she required my prompting to draw on the content she learned in class.

Table 14. Mariah's Ecology Close Reading #2

Text	Mariah's Response
<p>The uranium fuel is now ready for use in a nuclear reactor. Fissioning takes place in the reactor core. Surrounding the core of the reactor is a shell called the reactor pressure vessel to prevent heat or radiation leaks. The reactor core and the vessel are housed in an airtight containment building made of steel and concrete several feet thick. The reactor core houses about 200 fuel assemblies. Spaced between the fuel assemblies are movable control rods. Control rods absorb neutrons and slow down the nuclear reaction.</p> <p>Water also flows through the fuel assemblies and control rods to remove some of the heat from the chain reaction. The nuclear reaction generates heat energy just as burning coal or oil generates heat energy. Likewise, the heat is used to boil water into steam that turns a turbine generator to produce electricity.</p> <p>Afterward, the steam is condensed back into water in and cooled. Some plants use a local body of water for cooling. Others use a stretch of water at the power plant called a cooling tower.</p>	<p>Mariah: Basically, what I got out of that is you ... I didn't get anything out of that, honestly. When it started at the reactor and the fuel assemblies, because I don't know what a fuel assembly is, so how can I go on if I don't know what a fuel assembly is?</p> <p>Oh, I got this part, this sentence that says, "The nuclear reaction generates heat energy just as burning coal or oil generates heat energy." It's the equivalent basically, but let me get... I mean, I guess I just can't picture it because I've never seen it, but I can't picture where it starts from because I've never seen a turbine generator.</p> <p>Carol: I heard Ms. Meyer use the word "turbine" and "generate energy" several times today in class. What's a turbine?</p> <p>Mariah: A turbine, as far as I know, it's like a turning thing. For example, a windmill or you know water turbines back in the 1800s. It used</p>

	<p>to be ... and it spins water... and the water flows. And it starts creating electricity because of the wind and stuff. That is sort of a turbine, so a turbine generator is ... it just generates electricity.</p> <p>I'm a little foggy, but I think I get it. It's a circular thing that spins and spins and the faster it goes like a windmill...it creates electricity.</p>
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It seemed important for Mariah's comprehension in Ecology to be able to picture the abstract concepts she was reading or learning about, which may be why she liked the lab on cellular heat earlier in the year. It also seemed that Mariah's expectation for comprehending the text may have been higher than Ms. Meyer's expectation. Her understanding of a turbine is exactly what Ms. Meyer said she wanted students to understand and yet Mariah still felt "foggy" about it.

Jasmine – Ecology

Waning Enthusiasm

Jasmine was effusive about Ecology and Ms. Meyer during our first interview, saying that she loved her teacher, praising her for keeping the mood light with songs and jokes, and that the content in the class was "really engaging." She especially appreciated that Ms. Meyer never gave up on students, saying that she "won't stop until you understand the concept she's talking about." But the more we talked about the class over the course over the following eight weeks, the more Jasmine lost her zeal. For instance, during our second interview, she admitted, "It's not fun, but I'm learning. Like I didn't know much about penguins, so I'm learning about them." My perception was not that the class actually got worse for her over that period of time, but that Jasmine's initial

response was overly positive. Perhaps she thought it was what I, as a teacher-like figure, wanted to hear. This was the case for all her classes, not just Ecology, and she became less enthusiastic about her academic work as our interviews progressed, especially when her play rehearsal and evening performances picked up. It was as if Jasmine wanted to do well in school in the abstract, but when faced with real deadlines and challenging assignments, she grew weary. While Jasmine was interested in doing well in school and often expressed that desire, she seemed to struggle with the content when pressed to talk about the concepts or to engage in text-based tasks.

Learning Challenges Illuminated

Jasmine was consistent about her perception of the workload in Ecology— that is, she felt her teacher assigned very little work, saying, “It’s rare that she gives us homework or reading, we mostly have class work or projects or labs.” She did not feel like Ecology was a challenging class, especially since the bulk of the work they did was in groups but, according to Ms. Meyer, Jasmine relied heavily on her peers, choosing to work with those she knew would help her (like Mariah). My observations supported Ms. Meyer’s comments -- it was observing Jasmine in these small groups that I was able to get a better sense of her content and task understanding. Jasmine always engaged in the group tasks, most often in the role of ‘recorder,’ but she leaned on her peers to navigate the tasks and do the thinking work. When she was actually engaged in the task rather than merely recording other’s comments, she moved more slowly than her peers, reading and rereading instructions and text passages.

Ms. Meyer expressed concern about Jasmine and felt she had some real learning challenges, especially when it came to focusing on tasks. She said that Jasmine often

distracted herself and others by singing, having to “crank out a song and then come back to it [her task].” Ms. Meyer’s deeper concern about Jasmine, though, was in her ability to comprehend what she read. Jasmine, on her end, seemed to be aware of her reading challenges, saying that she was grateful not to have to read much and that she preferred the teaching “explaining it,” saying, “I have to have it explained to me as simple as possible, same with math, just the most simplest way they explain it to me and they [Ms. Meyer and her student teacher] do.” The more teacher-directed the task, said Ms. Meyer, the better Jasmine did. She required explicit instruction – when there was any ambiguity about what to do or how to do it, she floundered.

Jasmine also struggled with tests and quizzes, reportedly getting increasingly anxious leading up to test day. Ms. Meyer said she would often come in repeatedly to clarify that she could retake the test if she did badly and would become “emotional” if she felt unprepared. Her poor performance, from Ms. Meyer’s perspective, reflected her struggles to retain important concepts and to understand texts, and she ended up failing the final exam. Jasmine’s test anxiety manifested in a productive way – whereas Ms. Meyer said most her of her struggling students would hide their lack of understanding, Jasmine was not afraid to admit that she did not understand something and was eager to get support from teachers and peers. As Ms. Meyer said, “Jasmine had worked a good system to combat her learning challenges.” The more time I spent with Jasmine discussing and engaging in her text-based tasks, the less I agreed with Ms. Meyer’s statement. Jasmine’s system helped her get by in the class, but it did not help her learn.

I now turn to examine Jasmine’s engagement with several particular text-based tasks. As noted above, she participated fairly actively during small groups tasks, but

commented only once during whole class lectures and discussions. See Appendix M for examples of Jasmine's participation, which was minimal.

Text-based Tasks

Group Recorder. When I observed Jasmine's group working on the Global Climate Change project, she was typing up the group's explanations for each of their data sets, working off of hand-written notes, which I gather were mostly written by Mariah. She talked out loud as she typed (e.g. "one reason why they decrease is they spend their spring and summer in open water..."). Jasmine seemed to have a grasp of their current task, as evidenced by her confirming with her peers that they needed to separate their explanations to go with each data set, which she repeated three times during their work session. Jasmine conveyed some understanding of her data when she commented that she was not sure they could include a reference to a video they found about penguin populations decreasing since it was not about the same types of penguins they read about, naming "Chinstrap and Adelie penguins." While the group's poster did a good job explaining their data sets and making a claim about the decrease in the penguin population, my sense was that Jasmine relied on her peers to make sense of what she read.

"I think very highly of plants, but..." Ms. Meyer said during an interview that she felt Jasmine learned best when she could map topics onto her own life. In the case of the invasive species web-based simulation, Jasmine did not find the material relevant. Before asking her to walk me through the task, I asked her about her interest in learning about invasive plant species. She thought for a moment and then said earnestly, "I think very highly of plants because the trees give us oxygen, but I just think plants are plants."

I'm not interested. What I'm going to be doing in the future has nothing to do with plants." As Jasmine entered the website and talked out loud as she went through the task, it was clear that she did not have a good understanding of the content. As previously stated, the purpose of the task was for students to use the data they gathered about the plants to make a statement about the health of the forest. Jasmine's explanation of Ms. Meyer's purpose missed the point. She said, "Maybe she wanted us to learn about the different species, to measure each one. I really have no idea." She said she had listened during the part of the lecture when Ms. Meyer was demonstrating how to measure canopy coverage, but had "phased out" during the part about native and invasive species. While she appreciated having the steps laid out for her on her task sheet as opposed to having to write them down herself from oral instructions, she could not explain all the steps because she was "only doing the definitions" while Mariah did the actual data collection. I asked her to give it a try and she dictated as she selected "Beach Hazelnut" and then clicked on the map to see the percentage of the plant in active restoration vs. inactive restoration areas:

I'm looking at Beach Hazelnut. So that's inactive...the information with the colors, it will you which one is active or not and it is more yellow...wait. If it's in active restoration, it's a little bit yellow or orange...I guess you'd write that down. I'm not sure. She [Mariah] was really doing that part.

Jasmine was not even sure what her data comprised and therefore, was not able to make sense of the data. Divvying up the tasks among group members did not benefit Jasmine's understanding of the purpose of the task or the content involved. She likely chose to record definitions because she was not interested in the task, but the result was that she did not take anything substantial away from the task. Ms. Meyer assessed the whole group on their work and thus it appeared as if she had learned content that she had not.

Reading as “Skimming” the Text

Jasmine had gained only minimal knowledge about energy from Ms. Meyer’s lecture and class activities before reading about Uranium with her small group. She had little interest in the topic, saying that most of the time in Ecology she felt “Oh wow!” about topics, but with energy, she only felt “Oh.” When I asked why, she said that she just did not really get it. Energy and energy sources was not something she had ever thought about previously – she would just plug her phone in without thinking about where the energy to charge it came from. Prior to reading her Uranium packet, she had “heard of” but knew nothing about Uranium. Of renewable and nonrenewable energy, which Ms. Meyer had lectured on in class the day before, she said:

I know renewable is the one that ... I guess it can renew itself like water. You can use that and nonrenewable is the stuff that’s we make out of something else so it can’t renew itself. It’s made from machines or something. I hope I’m right.

Since Ms. Meyer did not check for content understanding during the lecture, she was unaware of that Jasmine had taken little, if anything, away from the class. Jasmine had scarce hope of making sense of her Uranium reading without understanding the basics about energy and renewable and nonrenewable energy.

Jasmine said that she approached the reading task by ‘skimming it,’ explaining skimming as, “just looking, I guess, looking for familiar words.” Whereas Mariah had told me that their group divvied up the reading to answer their four questions,²² Jasmine

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1. ²² Description of type of energy and how it is recovered
 2. Where is the energy stored and how is it converted into useable energy? (words and pictures)
 3. What/who uses this type of energy and for what purposes?
 4. What are the advantages & disadvantages of using this type of energy?

said that they all looked through the packet together, trying to find answers to the questions, but not really talking about anything they read. When I asked her if this was a typical approach to text in Ecology, she said that she usually she did not actually “read” the text, meaning read several paragraphs in a row. Rather, she just skimmed until she found the answers to the questions. This approach was not a good match for this dense text, but Jasmine did not adjust her approach nor recognize that it was inappropriate.

Next, I asked Jasmine to read aloud from a portion of the text. Like Mariah, Jasmine read from the Uranium packet. She made one word error when reading, mispronouncing “isotopes,” but otherwise read the text fluently with proper rate and expression. As she read, she paused after the paragraph about fissioning, clearly struggling to make sense of what she had read. She tried to draw on background knowledge to make sense of the words “absorption” and “bombarding” but that did not help her understand fissioning. She could state that it involved breaking two atoms, but I was not clear whether she understood what atoms are or if she could in any way connect that to energy.

Table 15. Jasmine’s Ecology Close Reading

Text	Jasmine’s Response
<p>What is uranium? Uranium is the heaviest of the 92 naturally occurring elements and is classified as a metal. It is the fuel used by nuclear power plant for fissioning. It is also one of the fuel elements that is easily fissioned. Uranium was formed when the earth was created and is found in rocks all over the world. Rocks that contain a lot of uranium are called uranium ore or pitchblende. Uranium also abundant is a nonrenewable energy source.</p>	<p>Basically, this uranium, it’s breaking the atoms I guess. It’s not absorption bombarding. I don’t ...</p> <p>I know what absorbs like if you pour water into the towel, it absorbs it and then bombarding is like breaking. It’s breaking up neutrons into atoms, the nucleus splits apart into two atoms for lighter weight, but I don’t understand how ... that’s why I really just skim.</p>
<p>Two forms (isopes) [mispronounces ‘isotopes’] of uranium are found in nature,</p>	<p>It’s splitting the nucleuses apart into atoms</p>

<p>uranium 235 and uranium 238. These numbers refers to the number of neutrons and protons in each atom. Uranium 235 is formed commonly, commonly used for energy production because unlike uranium 238, its nucleus splits easily when bombarded by a neutron.</p> <p>During fissioning, the uranium 235 atom absorbs bombarding neutron causing its nucleus to split apart into two atoms of lighter weight.</p> <p>[Jasmine paused here and said, “I’m trying to ...I’m trying to think of how it would occur. Umm, okay sorry. I’ll keep reading.”]</p> <p>At the same time, the fission reaction releases energy as heat and radiation, as well as releasing more neutrons, the newly released neutrons go on to bombard other uranium atoms and the process repeats itself over and over. This is called a chain reaction.</p>	<p>making it lighter, but I didn’t get the fission part.</p> <p>That was hard.</p>
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Jasmine was at a loss with the text, but she said that the graphic image of fissioning next to the text passage helped her because she is a visual person. She said, “Oh, so the neutron breaks the uranium out and it’s making two neutrons and it’s making energy.” She said that she usually tried to visualize while reading – sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn’t.

The most interesting part of our conversation was when Jasmine told me that she would “definitely” recommend that Ms. Meyer use this specific reading and task for her students next year because, “It is part of the whole thing you have to learn.” She said that she learned a lot from the gallery walk of her peers’ posters and that they had clearly put a lot of effort into them. Jasmine felt prepared for her quiz because she believed that the

questions they answered on their posters would be the same questions they would see on the quiz, so she said, “We’ll have a fair chance.” This indicated that Jasmine’s idea of ‘understanding the concepts’ was not the same as her teacher’s idea of ‘understanding the concepts.’ Whereas Mariah felt that she was not equipped to either teach others or learn from their posters, Jasmine felt that because she took notes on *something*, she had successfully accomplished the task.

Justin – Ecology

“He’s really bright but not super motivated.”

When I read through my observation transcripts for data reflecting Justin’s experiences in Ecology the first thing that struck was the *absence* of data. Justin never participated in class discussions, not even to ask a clarifying question. When students broke up to work in small groups, he either worked alone, saying he had ‘finished’ earlier, socialized with peers, or sat with a group but did not actively participate. For example, during one observation Ms. Meyer had just sent students off to finish their energy project posters in small groups. I overheard her check-in with Justin, who claimed to be done with his poster. Without looking over his poster, she acknowledged his completion and suggested he spent the next twenty minutes working at a computer on an ecological footprint assignment. When I asked him what he was doing, he just sighed and said, “This is so boring.” During each observation, I also have record of Justin leaving the classroom with the restroom pass and made a note in five out of my seven observations that Justin had his head down and looked asleep.

Despite his lack of engagement in all class activities, when Justin met with me outside of class to talk about Ecology and engage with the reading materials, he said that he actually found Ecology interesting because it was relevant and about “stuff that’s happening right now with the weather and that’s always something you need to know.” Like Jasmine, he pointed to the cell and heat lab as one of the more interesting activities in the class. Justin said that he generally preferred “stuff that’s interactive,” but by ‘interactive’ I assumed he meant interacting with materials and interesting tasks rather than simply engaging with peers, which did not seem to be very motivating for him during my observations. Also like Jasmine, Justin perceived the workload in Ecology as light and requiring very little reading. If Ms. Meyer were to assign reading, he said he would “do it,” but what he conceived of as ‘doing’ a reading assignment did not necessarily mean he read it, instead he would do what was necessary to meet the minimal requirements of the task.

Ms. Meyer found Justin to be somewhat of an enigma. She said that at the start of the school year she was tempted to pigeonhole him as a “cool” athlete with weak academic skills. Reviewing her grade book, Ms. Meyer said that Justin would regularly go through periods of time when he would not turn in any work and “just tank.” He was never outright defiant, aside from sleeping in class, but he was instead just “jumping through the hoops,” doing the minimal amount of work possible. For example, Justin did poorly on the final exam, getting a D+, but with his make-up work managed to bring his final grade up to a B-. Still, Ms. Meyer felt Justin’s grades and work ethic were not reflective of his potential:

“He’s really, really bright. When you talk to him, he’ll say I don’t know. But when you sit down to talk to him he really *is* thinking through the material and he

really *is* thinking about it outside of class. He can track that we did that last week – ‘here’s what I learned from it’ and ‘here’s how it applies to what we’re doing this week.’ If you ask him. But on his own he doesn’t necessarily engage enough to put together the pieces. So he’s really bright but not super motivated.”

Justin typically rallied late in the quarter and turned in missing work because, as Ms. Meyer said, he had a strong parent presence and would, “get the squeeze at home.” So while Justin often appeared disengaged, slumped in his seat with his hat pulled down, Ms. Meyer said she had to remind herself that he was listening and interested. She said, “I find him fascinating because he doesn’t fit any of my molds” and during our interviews kept asking the question, “What would motivate him, or someone like him, to engage in class activities and assignments?” Despite Ms. Meyer’s dismay that she never figured out to motivate Justin, the fact was that he was engaged *enough* to meet the requirements of the course. Ms. Meyer had designed tasks and structured her grading system in such a way as to allow for a student like Justin to do minimal work and get by.

Justin’s Response to Ms. Meyer’s Use of Text

In addition to having scant data on Justin from classroom observations, I also had only one opportunity to talk with Justin about a specific text-based task in Ecology. He missed our other interview about Ecology, needing to make up a quiz with his Spanish teacher. We were unable to reschedule and thus this was the only data I was able to draw from to speak to Justin’s reading in this class.

When Justin and I met to discuss what he had been learning about renewable and nonrenewable energy, he demonstrated having gained some knowledge of the concepts from her lectures, in spite of his apparent lack of interest. He explained nonrenewable energy as, “something that you use and then it is gone, like coal” and renewable energy as, “something you use and still have it,” which while overly simplistic were sufficient

for Ms. Meyer. He also said he understood the energy transformation process as, “heating up water and then it goes into the turbine, which turns and makes electricity,” which was almost exactly how Ms. Meyer explained the process in class. While Justin did not elaborate on these definitions, he seemed to have taken up a certain amount of the content delivered through lecture and was able to use the vocabulary appropriately. He said that other than seeing things on the news related to energy sources, he had never learned about the topic before, thereby confirming that the knowledge he had he gained from the class lecture and activities.

Justin correctly assumed that Ms. Meyer did not intend for students to carefully read and attend to all the information in the energy packet readings. He had been randomly assigned the packet about coal and said that it was not important for him to learn about the history of coal, but instead just focused on Ms. Meyer’s questions.²³ To answer the first question, “How coal is formed?” he wrote on his poster that it was from “dead plants and animals a long time ago.” Justin got the answer to this question simply by reading through a graphic title “How Coal was Formed” on the first page of the packet in which a series of three panels depicted the process by which plants and animals turned into coal. He said he had nothing to add to this statement. To answer the second part of the Question #1, “how was it recovered?” Justin wrote “mining” on his poster. He said he got this answer by reading the heading “Coal Mining” from his packet. He did not elaborate on anything about coal mining because he did not read the text under the

²³1. Description of type of energy and how it is recovered

2. Where is the energy stored and how is it converted into useable energy? (words and pictures)
3. What/who uses this type of energy and for what purposes?
4. What are the advantages & disadvantages of using this type of energy?

heading. Justin was confident that these simple answers were sufficient, saying that Ms. Meyer would not test the class on extraneous facts, “she always tells us what we have to know.” These comments indicate that Justin aptly approached the reading task based on the questions he needed to answer.

Justin’s group approached his reading task in much the same way as Mariah and Jasmine did, by divvying up the questions. However, it did not appear that he actually read his assigned sections. Rather, he said that he “skimmed” the text to answer his questions. Justin also included information on his poster that he did not get from the text, but rather was just tangentially related to the topic. On his poster, under his brief statement that coal is recovered through mining, he wrote, “Coal is being used immensely in the US. It is causing tension between nations and may cause wars,” which he explained he learned in his World History class. Also on his poster, he wrote, “Coal is causing global warming and contributing to sea ice melting in the poles,” which he explained he learned from the Global Climate Change project. Justin said he wrote these statements on his poster so that his project would “look good” and he could get full credit for the assignment, which he did.

I then asked Justin to read a passage from the coal packet. Before beginning, he said that he found all the texts in Ecology “easy” to read. He read fluently with no word errors and with appropriate rate and expression. After reading, I asked Justin to talk about what he got from the text.

Table 16. Justin’s Ecology Close Reading

Text	Justin’s Response
Eventually, as the effects of pollution became more noticeable, Americans decided it was time to balance the needs of the industry and the environment. Over a	After World War II there was more cars and so more pollution and there wasn’t a Clear Air Act and Clean Water Act yet, which probably worked but not for long.

<p>century ago, concerns for the environment was not at the forefront of public attention. For years, smokestacks from electrical and industrial plants emitted pollutants into the air. Coal mining left some land areas barren and destroyed. Automobiles, coming on strong after World War II, contributed noxious gases to the air.</p>	
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The Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act require industries to reduce pollutants released into the air and the water. Laws also require companies to reclaim the land damaged by surface mining. Progress has been made toward cleaning and preserving the environment.

Justin focused in on a detail about automobiles contributing to air pollution. When I pressed him for another contributor to air pollution he included smokestacks from factories, but did not connect those contributors to the resulting legislation. Instead, Justin moved away from the text and made a skeptical comment about whether the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts were making a difference regarding coal pollution. He said that based on what he learned from Ms. Meyer and his peers during the Global Climate Change project, that air pollution was worsening. Thus, while he seemed to get the gist of the passage, he did not engage in a close reading.

Chapter 6

Findings: English Language Arts (ELA)

“A work in progress.”

Organization was not a top priority for Mr. Harris; during interviews, he described himself as “improvisational” and “not a big planner.” He avoided positioning himself as “the sage on the stage,” teaching through whole-class instruction and detailed lessons in advance. In general, Mr. Harris felt his role was to facilitate learning by encouraging students to construct their own knowledge. For instance, when introducing a new writing activity called Telling Sentences, which I will discuss in detail later in this chapter, Mr. Harris told students that he preferred *not* to explain it in too much detail, but rather to let them figure it out on their own. Thus, instead of front-loading instruction for the whole class, Mr. Harris he said he responded to individual students’ needs, questions, or ideas, which he felt would encourage them to become independent and creative thinkers. He liked to think of both himself and his students as, “a work in progress.”

Reflecting on the school year for his 10th grade ELA students, Mr. Harris expressed some regret about letting his units unfold organically, primarily because there had been numerous changes to his curriculum. He felt the year had been full of rocky starts: three of the four literary works he taught were new to his course; and his core year-long project called the Personal Anthology was revamped for the first time in 17 years by a colleague, leaving him struggling with the changes. During our final interview, he reflected on the year and said, “everything I’m realizing needs some pretty serious

reengineering.” In addition to the curricular changes, Mr. Harris’s year was further disrupted because he was out on medical leave for a month and had just returned when I began my observations. During the month he was out, his teacher intern took the lead in all his classes and he expressed the need to “win his students back,” sensing they preferred the intern’s teaching style to his.

There was only one instance when Mr. Harris talked about broader content objectives. He said that he planned to hold a Socratic seminar during the final week of school and ask the students, “What is world literature? What universal themes, conflicts, or human struggles we can say that we share with seven billion people on the planet?” Mr. Harris did not hold the Socratic seminar and never returned to the question during our interviews.

Anchor Books

Texts were at the core of Mr. Harris’s ELA class –he taught a series of novels with writing activities and projects to accompany each text. The novels came from a list of 20 possible “anchor books” suggested by the school district for 10th grade English Language Arts. The Whitman English department selected four books from the list, a process that Mr. Harris described as “informal at best” in which they attempted to incorporate diverse texts. Their selections included the following pieces of fiction: *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (840L), *Fountain and Tomb* by Naguib Mahfouz (unknown L), *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1490L), and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie (940L). Mr. Harris also taught Shakespeare’s *MacBeth* (650L), which he claimed to “be married to” because he taught it every year.

At the time of our initial interview, Mr. Harris had completed *The Kite Runner*, *Fountain in Tomb*, and *MacBeth* and was planning to begin *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* in the next few weeks. He said he was skeptical about having his students read the Rushdie book because he felt it was too satirical, indicating some reservation about their ability to understand the text. Some students, according to Mr. Harris, had found the novels they read challenging. For instance, he said the archaic language in *Macbeth* turned some students off and that many had found *Fountain and Tomb* very difficult read because it was a “disjointed” novel with each chapter having a different set of characters. He said the text left it up to reader to make sense of the how the pieces fit together as a whole and that some of his students were “not up for the challenge.” I asked him what he typically did to support struggling readers and he responded that he would probably try to work individually with students and show students how to use metacognitive strategies to make sense of text:

I suppose I would read it myself and kind of do a think aloud and talk about the habits of successful readers. In terms of having that sort of executive function of being able to think ‘Do I understand this?’ and ‘What do I need in order to understand it?’ That’s obviously the strongest tool as far as getting a kid to take on a challenging book.

Mr. Harris seemed to believe that an important part in supporting students’ reading comprehension was anticipating their challenges with the text. It was not clear, since he started this statement with “I suppose,” whether Mr. Harris was thinking hypothetically about what he conceived of as best practice or whether he was referencing practice that he actually enacted, but that I did not observe.

Reading Expectations

Mr. Harris expected students to read the novels on their own at home and typically assigned one or two chapters a week, depending on their length. He did not require students to take notes while they read, nor did he provide a reading guide or graphic organizer. Mr. Harris did build in a small amount of in-class reading time by designating the first 30 minutes of each weekly 110-minute block period for Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) during which time students could read their assigned book or anything of their choosing. He said during an interview that he used SSR time to check in with individual students and to help them find books they might enjoy; but on the days I observed, he spent the majority of the time working on his computer or talking with students about grades or missing assignments. As for students, I observed them reading the class's assigned novel, texts for other classes, books from home or ones they had just pulled from the bookshelves at the back of the classroom. Some students did not read anything and several students slept during this time – Mr. Harris only occasionally woke them or redirected those who were off-task. On the one hand, he communicated the importance of sustained reading, but since he only loosely enforced SSR – especially for resistant students, there was a sense that reading was optional.

Following SSR, Mr. Harris always asked students to turn and talk to a partner about “anything” they had read and then called on a few students to share out with the class. This likely served to hold students accountable to read during SSR and, theoretically, could have supported their comprehension by giving them the opportunity to dialogue with peers. In the excerpt below, Mr. Harris called on Mariah and another student, Shayna, to “check in” about the books they read during SSR. The comments and responses were representative of the share-outs I observed during five different block

periods. In this case, Mr. Harris's responses were somewhat instructive in that he helped Mariah attend to information about the author and affirmed Shayna's choice of book based on imagery:

Mr. Harris: Tell me what you read today. Mariah, tell us about what you read. Title and author.

Mariah: *Sold* by Patricia McCormick. Started it 20 minutes ago. It's about this girl who gets prostituted.

Mr. Harris: About sex trafficking. What's the setting?

Mariah: Nepal.

Mr. Harris: Do you know anything about the author?

Mariah: I don't know –she doesn't sound Nepali. [She looked at the 'about the author'] Oh, traveled to Nepal and interviewed women.

Mr. Harris: There you go. There's your research. Shayna?

Shayna: *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*. It's about a china rabbit. He doesn't love her but she loves him.

Mr. Harris: Sounds like an unusual book. How did you pick it?

Shayna: It has pictures in it.

Ms. Harris: That helps you focus, gives you some mental imagery.

Students seemed comfortable sharing, even if all they said was that they picked a book off the shelf and did not have anything to say about it yet.

A Close Look at *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*

I turn now to *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, first for an analysis of the novel and then to examine the activities that accompanied the text. The story, told by an unknown author, recounts the events of the murder of Santiago Nasar, who was thought to have taken the virginity of newly married Angela Vicario. When her new husband, Bayardo San Roman, discovered that she was not a virgin, she blamed Santiago and her twin brothers set off to kill him. Mr. Harris said he was excited to end the school year with

Chronicle of a Death Foretold, which he described as “thin and very readable” and said that when he taught the book in the past, it was with International Baccalaureate²⁴ 11th graders who, “ate it up and found the confusion to be a good challenge.” He also seemed to enjoy the challenges presented by the text, as he illustrated when he talked about the fact that every time he reread the text, especially the portions that incorporated magical realism, he discovered something new.

Mr. Harris described *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* as similar to *A Fountain in Tomb* because of its “nonlinear storyline.” In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, an unknown narrator moved back and forth between present and past as he or she recounted the details of Santiago’s murder. For instance, in one chapter Marquez wrote about the aftermath of the murder and in the next chapter detailed the night before the murder. Sometimes he moved back and forth in time in the same paragraph. Additionally, as stated above, Marquez incorporated magical realism into the novel, in which he combined strange or magical details with real, everyday events. It was up to the reader to decide whether the use of magical realism signaled a deeper or hidden meaning. A student might find these texts to be challenging if he or she expected a work of fiction to progress along a linear story line with all events grounded in reality.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold has a Lexile of 1490L, slightly above the recommended range for 10th grade students (1080L-1335L), which is likely due to lengthy sentences and highly descriptive and varied language. Many passages were replete with sophisticated vocabulary, which could cause a reader to struggle for meaning. For example, in the following sentence, the narrator describes Santiago waking

²⁴ The International Baccalaureate program (IB) is a demanding college prep series of courses and exams developed for juniors and seniors meeting particular academic requirements. Mr. Harris previously taught at a high school that offered the IB program.

up from a dream with a bad taste in his mouth (“sediment of copper stirrup on his palate”), which he attributed to the party (“natural havoc of the wedding revels”) the night before:

Nor did Santiago Nasar recognise the omen. He had slept little and poorly, without getting undressed, and he woke up with a headache and a sediment of copper stirrup on his palate, and he interpreted them as the natural havoc of the wedding revels that had gone on until after midnight. (Chapter 1, page x)

A reader who struggled with the language might be able, with close reading, to gather that Santiago slept badly because he was up late at a wedding, but would likely miss the subtle message that his poor sleep was instead the result of a dream foreshadowing his murder.

In addition to encountering descriptive language and attending to the shifts between past and present, the unnamed narrator periodically inserted himself into the story, which made it confusing to follow. For example, in the passage below, the narrator talks about returning to the village to construct the story of the murder while also telling the story as if it was happening in real time:

She had watched him from the same hammock and in the same position in which I found her prostrated by the last lights of old age when I returned to this forgotten village, trying to put the broken mirror of memory back together from so many scattered shards.

Readers might also be challenged by context-specific references (e.g. boats as “legendary paddle-wheelers”) and references to Columbian history, for which they may have little background knowledge. For example, the description of Bayardo’s father referenced events that many students would not likely know:

“But the main attraction was the father: General Petronio San Roman, hero of the civil wars of the past century, and one of the major glories of the Conservative regime for having put Colonel Aureliano Buendía to flight in the disaster of Tucurínca.” (Chapter 2, page x.)

The book was “thin,” only ninety-two pages long, but it was quite challenging. Mr. Harris set students up to begin reading the novel with a short film about Garcia Marquez, in which they learned about his life and particular writing style. After watching the film, students were sent home to read Chapter 1 (pages 2-23) for the following Monday. They were not expected to take notes while reading nor were they given any guidance or tips on how to navigate the text. Once students were several chapters into the book, I asked Mr. Harris how he thought it was going for them. He was distressed, saying that he felt that his that his struggling readers had probably “thrown up their hands...there’s just something elliptical about the story telling and I think they just lose the narrative.” He differentiated between his able and struggling readers, explaining that those who read and understood text came with what he termed “literary privilege,” which he described as having the “funds of knowledge required for reading a challenging text.” This seemed to set students up as either “having” or “not having” the requisite skills and knowledge to successfully comprehend the texts. After reflecting on the struggles of his students, Mr. Harris said that he thought a solution would be to teach the book earlier in the year so that students were not as tired.

Text-based Tasks and Instruction

With both *The Kite Runner* and *Fountain and Tomb*, Mr. Harris said that he had engaged students in literature circles where they discussed what they read. In addition, students constructed and then took reading ‘checks’ called Concrete Detail (CD) quizzes. Mr. Harris they also mentioned having student do in-class writing in response to text, but I do not know the nature of these writing tasks. He said that the purpose of all these

activities was “to lure kids through the books by creating an accountability moment where they have to have read it.”

In contrast with the previous novels, with *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Mr. Harris did not do literature circles or writing activities. Instead, when students returned to class having supposedly read Chapter 1 at home, the first activity he initiated was to have students identify quotations for an upcoming CD quiz. CD Quizzes contained excerpts from the novels that students had to contextualize by describing the characters and events. Worth twenty points each, students could take CD quizzes closed book for a full score or open book for a half score. If they chose to take all quizzes open book, their final grade would suffer. Mr. Harris said that his low readers and those who tried to “BS their way out of the work” by reading Spark Notes often opted to take the quiz open book but then just spent the whole time searching for the quotations and, when they found them, would read and reread them to “try to see if they could get it.” Mr. Harris said he felt these students were just lacking “faith in their ability to read the text” indicating he perceived it was more about their confidence than their ability or skill.

In the activity I observed, students were directed to work in pairs or trios to identify several quotations, or “concrete details,” from the book that they felt illustrated the characters’ traits. Mr. Harris would draw from these quotations for the CD Quiz. The extent of his instruction was as follows:

What I need you to do is you are going to create CD questions for tomorrow’s quiz. With your partner, you need to select four CDs. All right so everybody take out a piece of paper and your books please. Between you and your partner, I’m expecting a paper with 2 quotations and sentence commentaries. If you have not read it, I suggest you read it. You should have read pages 3-24.

Since they had done CD quizzes in the past, there was no instruction about how students ought to go about pulling quotations, but there was also no mention of how the activity

might be different given the particular text. Nevertheless, some students began working with one or two peers to record quotations on a piece of paper. After about fifteen minutes during which about a third of the class worked on the task, a third read, and a third socialized, Mr. Harris pulled the class back together and asked for volunteers to come to the front of their room and share the quotations they pulled for the quiz and explain why they pulled it. Each time a student shared, Mr. Harris responded with clarification if a student seemed confused, brief commentary on how the excerpt related to big events or issues in the novel, or a statement about Marquez's writing style (e.g. "He doesn't tell you all about characters at once"). In the example below from 2nd period, Mr. Harris coached Jayce to consider why the imagery was ironic:

Jayce: I did it but I didn't read the chapter yet. On page 7, it says, "He was dressed in white linen..." It kind of made me picture him as a neat and put together kind of person. But I didn't really understand when it said, "he couldn't stand the noise of starch."

Mr. Harris: That's kind of old school. What is starch? Makes your shirt real stiff. When you moved it might make crunchy noises. Ok, sort of ironic because he is a super clean guy who ends up what?

Jayce: Covered in blood.

This episode is reflective of Mr. Harris teaching style and beliefs in that he incorporated instruction in response to students' ideas and questions. The students who volunteered to share seemed to have at least a small grasp of the story, but the vast majority of students did not turn anything in or volunteer, and thus it was impossible to say whether they had read or had understood what they read. While Mr. Harris's back-and-forth conversations with individual students about their quotations may have been helpful for those students, it was not clear if it was helpful for the rest of the class, especially those who were still struggling to gain a basic understanding of the plot or characters. Thus, on the following

day, it was not surprising that during 2nd period there was some protesting about the quiz. Many students grumbled when he handed them out and then the following exchange took place:

Mr. Harris: Once you get your quiz, please stop talking. Keep your eyes on your own quiz.

[Trevon is protesting]

Mr. Harris: Stop the whining.

Trevon: It's not whining – I just don't want a really low score on a 20-point quiz.

James: I don't even know the main character's name.

Trevon: Can I take this quiz later when I've read the book?

Mr. Harris: No

Mr. Harris did not inquire as to why Trevon hadn't read, nor did he take up James' comment about not knowing the main character's name. Several days later, the issue seemed to come to a head and Mr. Harris entertained questions in both 2nd and 6th period about the complexity of the novel. In 2nd period, after at least six students had come up to him during SSR to complain that they did not understand the book, he addressed the whole the class, saying that the ending was worth it and that they should plow forward:

A number of you have come up to me to tell you are completely completely confused. That's understandable. It will make more sense if you read all the way through. The ending is incredible. It's all about build up. If you read it once all the way through then you can read it again for sense and for character.

Mr. Harris repeated this push to “just keep reading ” over the next few days, telling students that “the end was worth it.” During the 6th period, Brooke and Ryan asked questions about the characters and the identity of the narrator. Mr. Harris responded by

reminding students that he had given them a list of all the characters, but did not answer the question about the narrator other than to say that it was confusing:

Brooke: It's confusing with all the names. They'll come up and I'm not sure if they are the same people. And another thing –who is the narrator?

Mr. Harris: Brooke mentioned she couldn't keep track of characters. I passed the character list out- it really does help. So there is always a confusion about the narrator and the author. Who else? Anybody else have a question or confusion?

Ryan: The narrator isn't one of the characters, right? Are they related?

Mr. Harris: Yes, it seems like everyone is related.

Again, here Mr. Harris seemed to not want to give the story away for students, but to encourage them to struggle through, or at least tolerate, the complexity.

After students finished their CD Quiz for Chapter 1, Mr. Harris were put them into small groups to either 1) draw a character web showing the relationship between the characters, 2) draw a map of the town, or 3) create a timeline for the story. He did not provide an explanation to why they were doing these exercises, but theoretically, each would require students to read the text closely and serve to clarify confusion about what happened, where it happened, or who was involved. After briefly introducing the activity and the three choices, Mr. Harris then spent the remainder of the period circulating around talking with groups about their particular tasks, although he did not add much detail other than to give them a basic charge. For instance, Mr. Harris talked with a group about creating a map of the town, saying, “You guys are going to start and do some work with the text and basically lay out the town spatially. You have to come up with all the locales. You guys want to do the map?” Some groups worked diligently on this activity

while others did nothing at all. I cannot speak about whether these activities supported students' comprehension of the novel.

The culminating task for the novel was a mock trial. Students were assigned to play either characters or lawyers and their task was to use evidence from the story to determine who was complicit in the murder. While I did not observe the actual trial, I understood from students that they were preparing independently or with small peer groups, which again spoke to Mr. Harris's stance to let students make their own sense of the text.

Personal Anthology Project: “Unfortunately these guys were the guinea pigs.”

In addition to students reading *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, my observations also coincided with Mr. Harris re-engaging students in a yearlong project called the Personal Anthology. The project, which Mr. Harris has taught for more many years, was introduced at the beginning of the year, but abandoned until early April when he returned from his medical leave. Students were charged with assembling excerpts (1-5 pages each) from twenty-five pieces of literature, nonfiction, or poetry from around the world and, in doing so, would ideally learn about different genres and how to appropriately select an excerpt. Through this project students encountered a huge range of texts unmediated by their teacher and were supposed to read and then thoughtfully select excerpts representing each text that resonated with them. I observed many students printing excerpts from college-level essays or articles, simply because they fit the criteria of being a certain genre and from a particular region of the world. However, as far I as know, there was no discussion about how to appropriately select texts that both fit the criteria and were at the appropriate reading level for students. These excerpts were accompanied by a “preface”

of 1,000 words in which students had to explain their overarching theme for the anthology and discuss thirteen of the pieces in depth. The preface was also the place that Mr. Harris had students talk about their histories as readers, because he said, many had lost their love for reading and he wanted them to contemplate why that had happened and how they might “reignite it.”

According to Mr. Harris, the goal of the Personal Anthology was to reflect the students’ personalities, interests, philosophies, and way of looking at the world, “creating a snapshot in literature of who they are as a 16 year old.” Mr. Harris seemed to appreciate that the project allowed many entry points for students. He expected some students to engage with sophistication and produce “brilliant” projects and others to be working on a more “basic level,” which he said might be figuring out the function of a table of contents or noticing differences between text genres. Regardless of their approach, he liked that all students had to make their own way through the project. He said his role was primarily to encourage students to “push the envelope” and expand their reading boundaries. He hoped that by guiding them into news articles or other types of texts, they might realize how much they could relate to.

Mr. Harris talked favorably about the project in its previous manifestation, which he said was “fairly formless” and primarily served to help students figure out what they like to read. This year the project changed as a result of an English department colleague who wanted it to have more of a world literature focus, a change that seemed at odds with Mr. Harris’s goals. Instead of being able to pick anything of their choosing, students were required to find texts from five different geographical regions. Mr. Harris described this new feature as “a huge struggle.” He felt it was difficult for his students to find fiction,

nonfiction, and poetry from all the regions *and* have those texts be something they cared about. He would prefer, he stated, “to give a little bit more freedom to my kids to come up with their own way to approach the project.”

Students had very little support from Mr. Harris on their Anthologies. In our initial interview, he said that he planned to “model” and share examples of Personal Anthologies from past classes. I observed him encouraging students to look through sample Personal Anthologies during an SSR session and while many students did so, no discussion followed. During three of my observations, students were in the computer lab for all or part of class to work on their Personal Anthologies. While in the computer lab, they were either supposed to be typing their prefaces or searching on the Internet for news articles and other nonfiction pieces from the 5 designated regions. When they found something that fit the criteria, they could print it out. While students were in the computer lab, I observed approximately 60% of students in 2nd period and 40% of students in 6th period either playing computer games or surfing the web for personal interests. Some students searched or typed their prefaces but most used the time for socializing. Mr. Harris circulated and quietly encouraged students, without much success, to stop playing computer games and get to work.

Mr. Harris commented that his students were “fantastic about navigating the internet,” but in the next breath said that their internet searching was highly problematic because most students used Google to search to randomly search for poems or articles and ended up on sites that “were not that great.” It was not clear whether he felt the sites they landed on were unsatisfactory because they contained unpublished material (e.g. blogs) or because they could not independently read and understand the material on the

sites. During our interviews, he never talked about whether his students could read and understand the texts they found on the Internet or with his students in class about what to do if they came across text they felt they could not read and understand. Other than directing them to a few websites, such as www.poets.org or www.poetryfoundation.org, he felt that otherwise there was nothing he could do. During our final interview, after the project had been turned in, Mr. Harris admitted that kids found “pretty random stuff, like North Korea propaganda articles, but there wasn’t a lot of thought about why they picked it.” Since students only had to discuss thirteen of the twenty-five pieces they gathered, they could easily print off articles or poems that they had not even read.

In addition to assembling the excerpts, students had to include an artistic cover, a table of contents, works cited, and a preface explaining why they chose the pieces they did. Mr. Harris provided individual students with assistance creating bibliographies and locating publishing information because he felt providing whole class instruction on logistical elements would be just going “through the laundry list.” He preferred the instruction to be in response to a student articulating his or her needs. In addition to having all twenty-five excerpts, a bibliography, and a table of contents, students were graded on how well they wrote their preface. See Appendix N for the Anthology Preface scoring rubric. While the rubric was detailed, Mr. Harris said he preferred not to “go in with a scalpel” and analyze each section, but rather looked to see if students talked about their reading history, mentioned each excerpt, showed some connection to the texts, and generally used proper conventions. If students wanted to write about how difficult the project was, he said that was acceptable since he recognized it was a challenging task. He

also asked students to write their preface without any ‘to be’ verbs, which I discuss in the next section.

During our final interview, Mr. Harris admitted that he had “a lot of learning” to do to make the Anthology project more successful. He felt that he needed to incorporate a nonfiction unit into his curriculum and to have students read essays by authors from different geographical regions so that they would not have to scramble on their own to find texts. Mr. Harris sounded resigned when he said, “Unfortunately these guys were the guinea pigs.”

Writing Activities: “I want you to work it out on your own.”

Mr. Harris communicated during interviews and in class that he valued writing and wanted his students to become better writers. However, consistent with his approach to reading *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and the Anthology Project, he provided very little instruction, instead saying that he wanted students to make “discoveries” and improve their writing by completing the tasks he laid out.

During my observations, Mr. Harris had students engaged in an ongoing writing task called Telling Sentences. He stated that the goal of the Telling Sentences was for students to learn how show, not tell, in their writing through use of sensory details, literary devices, and descriptive words. Twice a week, he gave students a “telling” sentence (e.g. the food tastes good) that they had to transform into a “showing” sentence. They then brought their Telling Sentences to class, shared them with peers and then several students volunteered to share with the whole class for peer and teacher feedback. In tandem with this activity, he “outlawed” ‘to be’ verbs (am, is, are, was, be, was, wasn’t, been, were) in students’ Anthology prefaces, which he said was intended to force

students to write using more descriptive verbs and to vary their sentence structure. I admit to being confused throughout about the relationship between Telling Sentences and the ‘to be’ verbs – while Mr. Harris initially told students not to use ‘to be’ verbs in their Telling Sentences, when students shared them out loud with the class, many had used ‘to be’ verbs, but they were never corrected.

When Mr. Harris first introduced the Telling Sentences activity, he told his students that the reason why he was having them do the activity was because, “it was done to me. It’s a form of teaching abuse that I’m passing on.” When students responded with complaints, he said that it had really helped his writing. He went on to tell them that amateurs write plain sentences that tell the reader what to feel (e.g. *The food is good*), but that more sophisticated writers write descriptively and said he wanted them to think of the Telling Sentences as a “puzzle.” He then gave students a handout with a list of ten literary devices writers use to show rather than tell (e.g. hyperbole, assonance, consonance, take on a unique point of view, echo ending) and talked through several terms with the whole class. When a student in this class asked for him an example of transforming a telling sentence into a showing sentence, Mr. Harris refused, saying “I really want you to work this out on your own.” He then sent the students off to write independently. While students were working, I could hear many saying to peers that they were confused.

On the days that Telling Sentences were due, Mr. Harris spent a good portion of the class period having students share out, while he and the rest of the class provided feedback. What was curious was the huge range of Telling Sentences that students produced. Perhaps because Mr. Harris did not provide a model, it seemed acceptable for

students to write one short sentence while others wrote an entire page. The only additional instruction students received for the Telling Sentences Activity was in the form of brief feedback during this whole-class sharing time. For instance, a student read her transformation of the sentence, “The seniors think they are cool” out loud (which I did not capture in my field notes) and a short exchange followed about her use of a literary device:

Maya: I like how you said ‘half the seniors ain’t even graduating’

Mr. Harris: What do you call that?

Maya: Hyperbole

Mr. Harris: Right, exaggeration for effect.

This exchange was representative of the type of feedback Mr. Harris provided his students - he often named the literary device they were using but did not engage them in deeper discussion about how that impacted the writing.

Summary

Mr. Harris seemed to care about his students as readers and writers and tried, through the Anthology project and the Telling Sentences activity, to get them into text that resonated with their lives and to write expressively. His unstructured approach, however, left many students floundering, especially those who did not excel at reading and writing. It was as if Mr. Harris believed students possessed innate reading and writing abilities and it was a matter of giving them the confidence or the opportunity (or the push) they needed to uncover them.

Mariah – ELA

“Everything we do [in ELA] is irrelevant.”

Mariah’s frustration with ELA came through each time we discussed her teacher, the texts, and the activities. Whereas she was generally positive about school and what she was learning, when we discussed her ELA class, she took on a decidedly negative tone. Her comments centered on the following three areas: Mr. Harris’s lack of planning or instruction for the activities (e.g. “We don’t even do any real activities- just work on stuff”), the irrelevant nature of the content, and what she perceived as unfair grading. For instance, Mariah felt it was unfair that it took Mr. Harris weeks and sometimes months to return work, but would not allow students to revise their work for higher points. She also felt she had been graded unfairly on her Personal Anthology project, which I will discuss later in this section, as well on her *Macbeth* video project in the previous semester. Her *Macbeth* project group had gotten a C- on their video and Mr. Harris explained that her group had “bombed” because they had an untrustworthy group member who was supposed to bring the video camera but failed to follow through. They eventually found a camera but it recorded in analog, which meant that they couldn’t get their video off to turn in. Mr. Harris said that Mariah and another student had “complained and complained” and felt that they should have done a better job problem solving on their own. Mariah’s stance was that this was unfair since she had worked very hard on the project and since Mr. Harris had not supported them with the problem. This scenario resonated with Mr. Harris’s beliefs about teaching and learning - he wanted students to be autonomous and creative, whereas Mariah wanted guidance and instruction.

In contrast with Mr. Berkman and Ms. Meyer, Mr. Harris did not believe that Mariah was a particularly strong student. He acknowledged that she generally worked hard, participating in all class activities and might even manage to pull off an “A” from sheer effort, but then said that she was “not a brilliant student” because she struggled with reading and writing. Mr. Harris did not expound upon his statement about her reading difficulties, but he did say that he thought her struggles with writing were due to laziness -- that she had good ideas but did not take the time to plan out her writing. Mariah, in turn, felt that Mr. Harris had “an attitude” with her and did not feel like it was worth putting effort into assignments that she did not perceive as well planned or meaningful.

Mariah felt that she got the structured instruction she favored from the university teacher intern, Ms. Williams, who took the lead with *The Kite Runner* and *Fountain and Tomb* and then taught a poetry unit while Mr. Harris was out on medical leave. In contrast with Mr. Harris, who Mariah claimed would just say, “Here’s your assignment – go at it,” she said that Ms. Williams actually provided students with resources, facilitated whole-class discussions, and *showed* them what she wanted them to do. For example, when Ms. Williams led the poetry unit Mariah said that she modeled for students how to read and annotate a poem, sighing and saying, “It was so much better.” In these comments, Mariah differentiated between giving assignments and providing instructions and articulated that, for her, the latter was essential for her to learn in her ELA class.

Anchor Books: “They dragged on and on.”

Mariah was flabbergasted that, when we first met in April, they had only read three books thus far in the school year and it was an Honors class. Of the three books, Mariah she spoke most favorably of *The Kite Runner*, which she described as accessible

and “totally relevant.” *Fountain and Tomb*, she said was difficult to understand because it jumped from one place to another, but by far her least favorite text was *Macbeth*, which she felt was not a “good choice” because of its archaic language. Mariah understood that Mr. Harris wanted students to explore the themes of hubris and corruption, but said that “there must be” more contemporary and accessible texts that conveyed those same themes. In her opinion, struggling through Shakespeare did not help her gain useful skills, saying, “It’s cool to do Language Arts to get a grade, but I feel we should learn stuff that we can actually use and actually go in the real world and be able to do.” She struggled to see the connection between the texts and tasks in her ELS class and her life and future work.

Mariah’s Strategies to Comprehend *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*

Mariah struggled to read and understand *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, which she described as having a “disorganized” storyline. Though she was a fairly avid fiction reader, she did not feel prepared to read the book, saying that Garcia Marquez was “trying to be cool and switch up the time. But it just ended up making me lost. And I wasn’t interested because I was lost.” She said that talking with her peers during the group character web activity helped a little, but that it simply took too much effort to make sense of each page on her own. For instance, she was not sure whether the final scene of the book in which Santiago has been stabbed repeatedly and was walking around with his guts hanging out but not bleeding, was symbolic or “just weird.”

When Mariah read a segment from the text during our interview and tried to make sense of what she was reading, she enacted several strategies appropriate for reading fiction. Namely, she used what she knew about the story structure and paid close

attention to the narrator moving back and forth in time, trying to figure out what was happening in the present or past. She also made a number of inferences about what was not explicitly stated in the text by drawing both on her own prior knowledge and clues in the story. When she was unsure about what was happening, she said that she typically just kept reading because she was usually able to figure things out, indicating that she understood that fictional stories unfold over time. In the passage below, which she read fluently with no word errors, Mariah cued into clues that indicated the narrator was talking about the events leading up to the murder. She also made several inferences about the character Bayardo and drew on her prior knowledge of “Midas” to explain what it said about him.

Table 17. Mariah’s ELA Close Reading #1

Text	Mariah’s Response
<p>Bayardo San Roman, the man who had given back his bride, had turned up for the first time in August of the year before: six months before the wedding. He arrived on the weekly boat with some saddlebags decorated with silver that matched the buckle of his belt and the rings on his boots. He was around thirty years old, but they were well-concealed, because he had the waist of a novice bullfighter, golden eyes, and a skin slowly roasted by saltpetre. He arrived wearing a short jacket and very tight trousers, both of natural calfskin, and kid gloves of the same colour. Magdalena Oliver had been with him on the boat and couldn't take her eyes off him during the whole trip. "He looked like a fairy," she told me. "And it was a pity, because I could have buttered him and eaten him alive." She wasn't the only one who thought so, nor was she the last to realise that Bayardo San Roman was not a man to be known at first sight.</p> <p>My mother wrote to me at school toward the end of August and said in a casual postscript: "A very strange man has come." In the following letter she told me: "The strange man is called Bayardo San Roman, and everybody says he's</p>	<p>This part was the part I was talking about when it said he gave back his wife, who was Angela. And um, it's saying he still looks youthful even though he's dirty. And then, I don't know who Magdalena is, but it's like a random character I guess. It's saying that, "Bayardo was not a man to be known at first sight," so I'm guessing that's referring back to when he had first come to marry Angela - that he looked like... cuz everyone was calling him Midas, like he had the golden touch and he was good and he like unlimited resources so it's just saying he is not a man to be known at first sight.</p> <p>[pauses]</p> <p>I guess like he's deceiving. That's just what I guess. Looks can be deceiving. And then it says, 'A very strange man...'. So I'm guessing this is a paragraph where it starts going to the past. Cuz it says, "my mother wrote to me at school towards the end of the August and said in casual postscript a very</p>

<p>enchanted, but I haven't seen him." Nobody knew what he'd come for. Someone who couldn't resist the temptation of asking him, a little before the wedding, received the answer: "I've been going from town to town looking for someone to marry." It might have been true, but he would have answered anything else in the same way, because he had a way of speaking that served to conceal rather than to reveal.</p>	<p>strange man has come," so they didn't know who he was so I'm saying that it's going back. Then he's saying I'm going from town to town to find somebody to marry.</p>
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While Mariah was reading and then talking about what she read, she took her time, going back to the text, rereading and working through ideas. She said that when she first read Chapter 2, she was lost and that her small group (working on the character web) had talked together and figured out that Santiago was killed because he was charged with rape. She brought that knowledge with her during this reading of the passage and offered a prediction: "I'm guessing Angela is part of this whole rape thing. But I guess we'll see in the rest of the story."

Next Mariah read a segment from Chapter 3, which she was expected to complete at home that evening. I asked her to read the beginning of the chapter and then to talk out loud about what she had read. She was very confused about what was happening and tried to ground herself by drawing upon what Mr. Harris had told them about the story. She initially thought the killers had shot rather than stabbed Santiago, but then slowed down and reread the text several times to repair her comprehension breakdown.

Table 18. Mariah's Close Reading in ELA #2

Text	Mariah's Response
<p>"The lawyer stood by the thesis of homicide and legitimate defense of honor which was upheld by the court in good faith. And the twins declared at the end of the trial that they would have done it again a thousand times over for the same reason. It was they who</p>	<p>So, this is Santiago getting killed publicly, I think. And, um, yeah, I think it's Santiago getting killed because I remember Mr. Harris saying that somebody gets killed publicly and either people know about it and have something to do with it or –</p>

<p>gave a hint of the direction the defense would take as soon as they surrendered to their church a few minutes after the crime. They burst panting into the parish closely pursued by a group of roused up Arabs and they laid the knives with clean blades on Father Amadore's desk. Both were exhausted from the barbarious work of death and their clothes and arms were soaked and their faces smeared with sweat and still living blood. But the priest recalled their surrender as an act of great dignity.</p>	<p>there's a third one – or like heard about it. And so yeah, cuz that would make sense because in Chapter 2 the narrator was talking about how it was like 45 minutes until Santiago's death but you never know.</p> <p>I guess they shot him [reading over text] or.....Oh no no no they killed him with knives with and clean blades. Because it says, "they burst into the parish closely pursued by a group of roused up Arabs and they laid the knives with clean blades on Father Amadore's desk." So, [rereading quietly]...</p>
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Mariah was puzzled as to why the killers had clean blades, which she tried to explain by saying, "I guess they cleaned the blades after or maybe it is symbolism or something." I asked Mariah what she thought the sentence, "But the priest recalled their surrender as an act of great dignity," meant and she misunderstood who surrendered, thinking it was Santiago, not his killers. She reread the sentence several times and then said, "I just can't get it."

It was not surprising, after talking with Mariah about the book, that she did not like taking the CD quizzes. She felt they were an unfair 'reading check' because they required the reader to remember who said what and to whom, saying, "He chooses stuff like, 'The girl as yet a bit untamed seemed overwhelmed by the drive her glands.' How do I know who said that? I don't know what you are talking about." She said that when they took CD quizzes earlier in the school year for *Kite Runner* it was much better because the teacher intern had students discuss the text in literature circles and then facilitated whole class discussions, but with *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* it felt like students were on their own. Mariah wanted more teacher support to read and understand

the book. The amount of effort it took her to achieve even a mediocre understanding left her feeling disinterested and unmotivated.

“No one really read all these things -- we were trying to do it just for the grade.”

Mariah described the Personal Anthology project as “horrible, just horrible.” She felt the it was poorly organized and that even though the project was intended to span the entire school year, Mariah said that nothing happened between October and April and that they ended up “cramming everything in” at the end, which led to everyone feeling stressed out. The biggest issue, according to Mariah, was one of resources. Mr. Harris had not provided students with any support to find appropriate resources so Mariah explained that she relied on friends for some suggestions but also independently sought out the school librarian and asked her for assistance. The librarian compiled a list of authors from different countries for Mariah, which was helpful, but she said that so much time was simply spent searching there was not enough time to actually *read* everything, to find texts that reflected her personality or interests, or to compare how the texts from each region conveyed similar or different themes. In articulating these issues, Mariah demonstrated that she recognized both the potential and the shortcomings of the project.

Mariah and I walked through her Anthology and she talked about the excerpts that she had selected. See Appendix O for Mariah’s Personal Anthology Table of Contents. Even though she clearly understood the intended purpose and parameters of the project, she had only read approximately 30% of the texts that she included in her Anthology, which included all of the popular songs and poems, and several books: *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (900L), *Sold* by Patricia McCormick (820L), *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (840L), and *An Illustrated Autobiography* by Nelsen Mandela (1310L). Even

among these texts, she had actually read *Frankenstein* in the 8th grade and just “refreshed” herself by rereading portions of the story and had read *The Kite Runner* for class. The majority of excerpts she included were from texts that she had not read, including an excerpt from *When Rain Clouds Gather* by Bessie Head (1280L), which she included because she saw the word “zulu” in the text and it made her think of her family in New Orleans and a “zulu-fest” they always attended, so she said, “I printed it off.” To write about *Falling Leaves* by Adeline Yen Mah (960L) in her preface, she said she simply read the back of the book and then just opened to a random page and copied it. Mariah selected many of the texts just to “check it off” but also picked some because she had some background knowledge that allowed her to write about them in her preface without reading the text. For example, she including a chapter from a book about WWII titled “Hitler and the Third Reich” (1120L) and an excerpt from Gandhi’s autobiography (1170L), saying, “Like Hitler – I know a lot about Hitler and WWII from History class. And the one by Gandhi. We had watched a movie [about Gandhi] in Mr. Berkman’s class so it fulfilled the need.” She knew that she would be able to meet the project requirements without actually reading the texts.

Mariah included some challenging texts in her Anthology that I anticipated she likely would have struggled to read had she attempted to do so. For instance, she included an news article titled “Nigeria: Opposition Mounts Against U.S. Naming Militants ‘Terrorist’” which had a Lexile level of 1580L, well beyond the recommended level for high school seniors. To understand the piece, a reader would need background knowledge about foreign relations and terrorist organizations and a good grasp of formal language such as ‘entreaties’ and ‘designating’:

The U.S State Department is debating the wisdom of designating the Nigerian militant group Boko Haram a foreign terrorist organization despite entreaties from lawmakers and the Justice Department to do so. U.S. diplomats are giving serious consideration to the arguments of a group of academics who sent a letter to Secretary of State Hilary Clinton this week urging her department not to apply the terrorist label to the al Qaeda linked group.

Mariah glanced at the article and firmly stated, “No I definitely would not read that.” In fact, she did not read any of the new articles that she included in her anthology, which she found by typing phrases like “African news source” or “Asian news source” into Google. She wondered about the purpose of including the news articles, saying that particular aspect of the project felt like more like a World History task than an English Language Arts task since news articles are nonfiction. When I pressed her to elaborate on the differences between the two subjects, she had a difficult time, finally saying that English Language Arts is essentially the same as history, “but is just what people have written down about the history,” leaving me wondering about her knowledge of genre and of the disciplines.

As stated earlier, Mariah acknowledged that she wrote about texts in her preface that she had not read. Exactly *how* students were to write about their selected texts was left vague; other than looking at past Anthologies, they had no instruction or guidance and I never heard Mr. Harris did telling students to reference specific details or summarize their texts. For example, what Mariah wrote about the Hitler excerpt said nothing substantial about the actual text. In the chart below, I compared the beginning of the excerpt with the explanation she wrote in her preface:

Table 19. Mariah’s ELA Anthology Close Reading

Text	Excerpt from Anthology preface
In the summer of 1942, Hitler’s power was theoretically unassailable. On 2 August, old	In the European section, I’ve included four pieces that really have to value to me. One

<p>Hindenburg at last died. Hitler, without opposition, proclaimed himself president and subsequently also head of the armed forces, which had to swear an oath of personal loyalty to him. In 1944 he took the title “Leader” (<i>Fuhrer</i>) as an indication that he saw no difference between his positions as head of the Party and as head of the state. All of this was ratified by a plebiscite, conducted in circumstances that allowed a dissenting vote or at least an abstention. Out of the possible forty-five million, thirty-nine million voted and over 90 percent voted yes. Obvious reservations have to be made before any conclusion is drawn from such voting. But no one seriously doubted at the time that Hitler had attained a peak of popularity among the Germans that no statesman before him had known.</p>	<p>of these pieces is the excerpt from the book “<u>Hitler</u>” by Norman Stone. The reason this carries a lot of value for me is because I have a major interest in history, especially in World War II. The author has a way of making you more engaged, such that it’s hard to pull away from the book. The author gives chilling facts about Adolf Hitler and he tried to give as little bias as he possibly can.</p>
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Mariah could have written this explanation for any number of texts – she did not explain how the author presented an unbiased view or what made the writing engaging. Mariah understood from looking at past Personal Anthologies that she only needed to write a few sentences about each text, which she described as “BS,” to receive credit.

I met with Mariah just after she had turned in her Personal Anthology. She looked glum and said that she felt terrible about it, but not because of the excerpts she selected or her preface. She was distressed because she had a hard time with the binding machine, complaining that Mr. Harris did not teach them how to use it, and as a result her finished project looked sloppy. Mr. Harris confirmed that he was disappointed in her final product and said that she had been marked down for the cover and binding, which infuriated Mariah because she felt it “missed the whole point.”

While Mariah was not graded down in on her preface for content, she was marked down by Mr. Harris for using too many ‘to be’ verbs. For instance, in the five sentences above from her preface, she used three ‘to be’ verbs and had many more peppered throughout her preface. On the scoring rubric, students could get 20/20 points in the “Conventions” category if they used no ‘to be’ verbs, 17/20 for “a few,” 15/20 for “too many,” and 13/20 for “way too many.” Mariah scored herself 13/20 in that category, indicating that she recognized that she used “way too many” ‘to be’ verbs, but did not know how to fix the problem. What Mr. Harris perceived as laziness may have been her not knowing how to make the changes to her writing. In fact, when we discussed the ‘to be’ verbs, Mariah said that she felt that trying to cut them out of her writing had made her writing worse, not better. She felt like she was over-thinking everything she wrote and was left completely stymied, saying, “I don’t get how we’re supposed to talk about ourselves, but we’re not supposed to be able to use verbs that help describe.” She felt like Mr. Harris was telling students, rather than “teaching them” how to write.

Across all of the tasks in Honors ELA, Mariah felt unsupported and frustrated. She lamented about not learning anything that she felt would help her “in real life” and, even though she liked to read outside of school, she did not enjoy reading in the class. Additionally, she felt she had put a lot of effort into her Anthology project, even going so far as to take the initiative to find appropriate resources, but that her effort was not rewarded.

Jasmine – ELA

“Language Arts used to be easy for me.”

Jasmine talked wistfully about how much she used to enjoy Language Arts when she was in Middle School, saying that reading and writing used to be “easy” for her and that she had liked exploring her own experiences and ideas through literature. Of her current ELA class, she gave a mixed review: she appreciated the time that Mr. Harris had encouraged “deep thinking” by having students consider alternative endings to book and “imagine what things could be like in books if they were switched around,” but she was not happy by the profusion of what she termed “pointless things.” When I asked her to elaborate on the latter, she talked about the *Macbeth* video project and how unnecessary it was since Mr. Harris had already shown the class several film versions of the play, including the Roman Polanski version and a Japanese version with Shakespearian subtitles. Since she considered herself a “visual person,” she felt these videos had helped her better understand the original text. Creating videos, however, did not promote deeper learning for Jasmine. Instead, she saw it as an exercise in scheduling:

It teaches us like, ‘Okay, it’s really hard to edit and it’s really hard to film and it’s really hard to have the people all show up. It’s seven different people in a lot of different schedules. That’s the only thing I learned from that and that’s off subject. I feel like we do a lot of pointless stuff just to pass the time. I think he’s being lazy. That’s what I honestly think.

Jasmine used the word “lazy” several times to describe Mr. Harris. She sensed that he created tasks to fill time rather than to help students learn and, even though she initially said some things they did in the class were interesting, she could not name anything specific.

A Matter of Motivation?

From Mr. Harris’s perspective, Jasmine was “bored” by the everyday work of the classroom and more often than not appeared disengaged during class. During all of my

observations, she was either looking at her phone, talking with a peer, or if she was engaged in class activities she seemed tired. Like Ms. Meyer, Mr. Harris recognized that her primary interest lay in singing and performing, but he felt that it was up to her to “figure out some way to keep herself engaged because she is not liking the material.” He sensed that she became easily overwhelmed by the demands from her classes and would “throw up her hands” and stop putting in as much effort. He said that though she seemed especially stressed when the school musical went into final rehearsals and performances, she did not ask Mr. Harris for an extension on the Personal Anthology, even though she was aware several of her peers had done so. Mr. Harris wanted Jasmine to learn to advocate for herself and explained her lack of confidence as partially due to her being African American and his being a White teacher. He felt that “some students,” meaning students of color, perceived white teachers as “ineffable” and were uncomfortable asking for help or negotiating due dates. At the time we talked, Mr. Harris was considering offering Jasmine an extension, but he did not end up doing this.

In contrast with Ms. Meyer, who thought that Jasmine struggled with reading and writing, Mr. Harris did not attribute her struggles in his class to academic skills. In fact, he said that he would recommend her for AP English “if she wants to take the challenge,” but he anticipated that she did not. From Mr. Harris’s perspective, Jasmine lacked the interest and motivation to do well academically.

***Chronicle of a Death Foretold* – “It’s not clicking with me.”**

Like Mariah, Jasmine struggled to read and understand *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. Her response, unlike Mariah, was simply to avoid reading the book altogether. She missed class the day Mr. Harris handed out the novel and showed the film about Garcia Marquez (because her shorts were ‘too short’ and she was told to go home to

change clothes) and so said she had no idea what the book was about or anything about the author. When she got the book, she said that she tried to read the summary on the back before starting Chapter 1 because she like to know “what to expect,” but couldn’t because it was covered up with a scanner sticker. Jasmine’s actions indicated that she sensed having a summary of a book would help her get ready to read, but in this case her efforts failed.

Upon reading the first few pages, Jasmine said felt like it had “started in the middle of the story.” I asked Jasmine to explain what she meant and she said that she read and reread the beginning “like a hundred times” but could not understand what was happening or who was telling the story. She asked a friend for help and was given a partially accurate summary that she then relayed to me:

It’s about this rich dude and he has a mansion and has maids. So they cook and clean for him. And so he takes advantage of them, he’s really rude. Supposedly he takes advantage of like one of them and so one of the maid’s brother’s that got taken advantage of kills the dude and now there’s a trial.”

Jasmine collapsed the characters Santiago and Bayardo into one person and revealed an inaccurate understanding of Angela’s role in the story. Her summary made it sound like Santiago had definitely raped Angela, but whether that was true or false was a key question in the story. I asked her if she planned to continue reading the book and she said no, that she was just going to use Spark Notes, which she said, “will clear everything up for me.” She felt the plot summaries on Spark Notes were sufficient for her to understand the book, but she admitted that she did not do well on the CD quizzes.

During our interview, Jasmine read aloud from the beginning of the first chapter, a passage she said she had tried to read many times. She struggled to pronounce the name “Placido Linero” but otherwise read fluently with no word errors. She paused after the

first paragraph and talked about the passage, saying that “they” (the author?) were “setting the scene,” almost as if she were reading a play. She then stepped away from the passage and gave a moderately accurate summary statement of the story. Jasmine struggled with the last sentence, “Placido Linero, his mother, told me twenty-seven years later recalling the details of that distressing Monday,” because it jumped from present to past tense and because she could not figure out who was talking.

Table 20: Jasmine’s ELA Close Reading #1

Text	Jasmine’s Response
<p>On the day they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on. He dreamed he was going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling. And for an instant he was happy in his dream. But when he awoke he was completely splattered with bird shit. He was always dreaming about trees. Placido Linero, his mother, told me twenty-seven years later recalling the details of that distressing Monday.”</p>	<p>Basically yeah, that was the beginning. They are giving you a scene. That was the day of they were going to kill. She talking about the brothers – they were going to kill him. Because he is accused of taking one of the maid’s virginity and she talks her brothers into killing him.</p> <p>Right now, I think the person talking is one of the maids that she has. She was also friends with the girl that was supposedly raped. And she was around her family a lot. So I think it’s her. I have no idea. It’s really hard – it’s switching...</p>

Jasmine said that her strategy was to reread until she was convinced she “couldn’t get it” and then go to Spark Notes. She continued reading the passage and stopped to talk about what she understood, saying that she tried to visualize what she was reading, but struggled with words she that she did not understand, such as “revels” and “havoc.” However, Jasmine correctly inferred that the “omen” in the first sentence referred to Santiago’s upcoming murder.

Table 21: Jasmine’s ELA Close Reading #2

Text	Jasmine’s Response
<p>Nor did Santiago Nasar recognize the omen. He had slept little and poorly without getting undressed. He woke up with a headache and the</p>	<p>So I get that – it was a passage and I get that. I pictured it. But I still don’t know who</p>

sediment of copper stirrup on his palate. He interpreted a natural havoc of the wedding revels that had gone on until past midnight. Furthermore all the many people he ran into after leaving his house at five minutes past six until he was carved up like a pig an hour later remember him as being a little sleepy but in a good mood. And he remarked to all of them in a casual way that it was a very beautiful day. No one was certain if he was referring to the state of the weather. Many people coincided in recalling that it was a radiant morning with a sea breeze coming in through the banana groves, as was to be expected in a fine February of that period. But most agreed that the weather was funereal, with a cloudy, low sky and the thick smell of still waters, and that at the moment of the misfortune a thin drizzle was falling like the one Santiago Nasar had seen in his dream grove. I was recovering from the wedding revels in the apostolic lap of Maria Alejandrina Cervantes, and I only awakened with the clamour of the alarm bells, thinking they had turned them loose in honour of the bishop.

is talking. It's kind of hard. I still don't know who is talking. I pictured him walking out of his house. But I don't know what it means when it says, 'wedding revels that had gone on until after midnight.' I don't know what 'natural havoc' means. I think the omen is talking about the death—that he's going to be killed in a few hours. Like he did not recognize what's coming. [pause] I don't get the end.

The last sentence of this passage gave the reader a clue as to the narrator's identity, but Jasmine did not understand it and thus could not adjust her previous inference that the narrator must have been a female friend of the "maid." After reading this passage she asked me about the author's "ethnicity" and when I told her that he was from Columbia, she said, "So he is Columbian, so I'm guessing like, most of these phrases have to be within their country that we don't get in our country." Here, she attributed her reading difficulties to having a lack of background knowledge about Columbia and language specific to Columbian culture, demonstrating that she understood that such knowledge could have helped her read the novel. During our final interview, Mr. Harris said that Jasmine had "unfortunately" opted for a minor role in the *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* mock trial. He felt this was the type of activity that she should have been drawn to,

stating, “it’s too bad because she obviously had the performer in her but is not interested in the content.” He did not attribute her not wanting to participate to reading struggles.

“I hate reading books.”

Jasmine had mixed feelings about the Personal Anthology project. The first time we discussed the project, she was overwhelmed and did not understand the purpose of gathering texts from all over the world, since she thought the goal of the project was to find literature that she liked. She said, “the stuff I like is from the U.S.,” not seeing the reason to read “World Literature.” To her, it just felt “random” to look for articles from Central Asia or other places and she explained her process as fairly rote: she used a search engine like Google to find articles, poems, and songs and, once she found them, she simply printed them out “to get it done and to pass the time [in class].” Her College Bound leader stepped in during the final two weeks and helped her locate missing pieces. Unlike Mariah, Jasmine was not bothered that she did not read the majority (approximately 70%) of the texts, saying that she mostly just read the songs and poems. She said that she actually read parts of *I am Nujood: Age 10 and Divorced* by Nujood Ali (870L) and “a few pages of” *Culture Shock* by Gitanjali Kolanad (950L). Jasmine wrote about *My Invented Country* by Isabelle Allende (1270L) in her preface, but said she did not read it and even misspelled the title, writing it as *My Invited Country*. See Appendix P for Jasmine’s Personal Anthology Table of Contents.

When Jasmine and I talked about her project the week before it was due, she was noticeably stressed, saying she felt “Ugh!” She was particularly worried about finishing her preface and lamented, “I can’t write ... I have nothing to talk about that much and it’s talking about books, which I’m like, ‘I hate reading books.’” Jasmine’s preface was

enlightening; she spent the first few pages writing about her early childhood and her first experiences with books. She described going to the library with her mom when she was six years old and being totally enthralled with the illustrations in the books but not at all interested in reading. She wrote:

Never reading the words I just stared at the pictures and my mom began to question her parenting skills because I would just refuse to read that book. At six, I don't know why I didn't read it, until this day I still think maybe if I did read it, it would have thrown off the element of surprise.

Jasmine wrote that her “happy reader age” was age eleven, when she was allowed to read books like *Captain Underpants* and *Dumb Bunnies*. From there, she had had a harder time connecting with books and eventually stopped reading outside of school. Even though Jasmine looked back favorably upon her latter elementary and middle school years, it seemed that she always struggled with reading.

Despite anxiety about her preface, when Jasmine and I talked again the day before the project was due, she was positive and said, “It’s coming along really well.” She was focused on the logistics: copying all her excerpts, printing out her preface, completing her works cited, and binding her final product and said that she felt “confident” in the final product. In spite of not having “creative” art on her cover (she drew a rocket ship and several planets) she thought her excerpts and preface met the standards on the rubric. Mr. Harris said that he had not graded her project, but that it looked like she “came through in the end.” She carried out all parts of the project except for actually *reading* the texts she compiled and her comments indicated that she did not believe it was necessary to read them in order to do well on the task. This resonated with the way she approached other tasks in her ELA class. She was anxious when she actually had to read or write

something, but since many tasks did not require reading and writing, she felt like she was able to navigate the class fairly well.

Justin – ELA

“Why read? All the books are on Spark Notes.”

Like Mariah and Jasmine, Justin was critical of his ELA class. Since all of the assigned books were on Spark Notes, he saw no reason to “really read” them; he felt that if he read the summary on Spark Notes he would “know the book” well enough to meet the requirements of the class. Part of the problem, according to Justin, was that Mr. Harris assigned too much reading to do in tandem with other projects, like the *Macbeth* video project and the Personal Anthology Project; he felt there was no way he could have been reading the texts he was supposed to collect for his Anthology *and* keep up with the assigned novel.

As for the books, Justin had similar responses to Mariah and Jasmine. The only one he spoke favorably about was *The Kite Runner* because he felt it was written “like a traditional novel” and thus could follow it. He was adverse to the structural complexity of both *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, which I will discuss later in this section, and *Fountain and Tomb*, which he said “even Mr. Harris” had a hard time following the story. Justin did not like *Macbeth* because even though he claimed he could read it, he was annoyed because he “didn’t know” the language. Generally, it seemed that Justin did not see the purpose of reading texts that differed from traditional linear fiction or texts that posed particular language challenges. I was not clear whether he felt this way because he did not know *how* to successfully comprehend such texts or whether he was adverse

because he did not understand the broader purpose for reading varied and challenging texts.

Whereas Mariah talked favorably about the literature circles that Mr. Harris and Ms. Williams used earlier in the year, Justin sited it as his least favorite activity in the class. He seemed to feel like it was an unfair reading check; that Mr. Harris was deliberately putting students on the spot:

We have to sit in a circle and we'll talk about it and he [Mr. Harris] just sits there and have hawk eyes on us and watches if we participate. Even though we might have read the whole book, we have to say something and it's not just fair the people that are shy, they don't want to speak up and he just sits there and grades you in everything you say. It's annoying.

Mr. Harris's intention may have been for the literature circles to support students' understanding of the text, but Justin perceived the structured discussion as stressful for students who did not feel comfortable participating. Even though this comment made it sound like Justin was one of the shy students who did not want to talk in class, he actually did participate voluntarily during two of my observations: making a comment about another student's Telling Sentence and sharing his own Telling Sentence. The remainder of the classes I observed did not call for whole-class participation, and his participation in the individual and small group activities was varied. Some days, he seemed to avoid working entirely, spending most of the period roaming around the classroom or library talking with peers. At times, though, he did engage in the task at hand by taking out a piece of paper and writing, by reading during SSR, or by typing on the computer when they were in the lab. On one occasion, Justin expressed frustration at not being able to engage in his work: Mr. Harris took his class to the computer lab (which adjoined the library) and there was another class already in there. He suggested students

either find an open computer or find other work to do at a table in the library. Justin was unable to find an open computer and said to me, “There is no point being here if we can’t get on a computer. I have stuff to do!” On this occasion, he seemed distressed that he could not use class time to work on this Anthology.

Mr. Harris, on his end, felt that Justin was very capable academically, saying, “he is certainly intelligent enough to read and write at the level that is needed, but his focus isn’t there.” He described Justin as a kinesthetic and immature student; that he would “zone out” if he did not find an activity engaging. Whereas he perceived most of the College Bound students as avid readers, Mr. Harris said a few were not and Justin was one of them. According to Mr. Harris, Justin’s issue was that he couldn’t “sit still” long enough to focus on a book, but said that he had not figured out a way to get him to focus and read. Even so, he again alluded to Justin’s potential when he talked about the Socratic Seminar he considered holding on the final day of school to discuss students’ ideas about world literature. Justin, he said, was a student who might have interesting ideas and connections. Thus, from Mr. Harris’s perspective, Justin had untapped potential; he thought that he was *able* to read all the texts and do all the assignments independently; he just was not mature or focused enough to do so.

“If we read it together, at least the first time, it would make more sense.”

Justin felt that Mr. Harris had unreasonable expectations regarding *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. He said there was no way he could read over fifty pages in two days, especially since it was such a hard text and students were expected to read independently, saying, “If we had read it together [as a class], at least for the first time, it would have made more sense.” The video, he said, was not helpful since it was just about “how the

author was trying to confuse us” by telling a nonlinear story. He felt that knowing about the author’s writing style did not help him actually read the novel and confirmed that he was using Spark Notes for this book as well.

When he read a passage from *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* during our interview session he was able, like Mariah and Jasmine, to read the text fluently, making no word errors and reading with appropriate pace and expression. After reading the passage, Justin’s brief comments showed that he had a difficult time determining whether he was supposed to read for literal or inferential meaning.

Table 22. Justin’s ELA Close Reading

Text	Justin’s Response
<p>Furthermore: all the many people he ran into after leaving his house at five minutes past six and until he was carved up like a pig an hour later remembered him as being a little sleepy but in a good mood, and he remarked to all of them in a casual way that it was a very beautiful day. No one was certain if he was referring to the state of the weather. Many people coincided in recalling that it was a radiant morning with a sea breeze coming in through the banana groves, as was to be expected in a fine February of that period. But most agreed that the weather was funereal, with a cloudy, low sky and the thick smell of still waters, and that at the moment of the misfortune a thin drizzle was falling like the one Santiago Nasar had seen in his dream grove.</p>	<p>What does it mean, “referring to the state of the weather?” Like what are you talking about? Like I guess he was trying to describe the dream, but the dream- I don't get if it was his dream or it if something that is actually happening. I don't get it.</p>

He pushed the book away and said, “See what I mean?” Justin seemed frustrated at both not being able to understand the text and at having read it without support.

Personal Anthology Project

Justin was surprisingly “slightly” interested in the Personal Anthology project, which was more than he said of most of the tasks in his classes. During our interviews, he

was articulate about what he liked and did not like about the project. Of the latter, he was particularly frustrated by Mr. Harris's organization and use of time, feeling that he should have spaced the project out over the entire school year instead of waiting until a month before it was due to have students work on it. That meant that unless students had continued to work independently on their projects (which he had not) they had to gather the majority of the texts and write their prefaces in a very short time. Justin also complained that Mr. Harris kept taking the class to the library to search for texts or to use the computer but that no one used the time well.

Justin said that he had "randomly Googled" many of the twenty-five texts he compiled. He was the only one of the four students I interviewed to mention that he was frustrated with his Internet searching because the school filtered students' access and therefore he felt he could not search as extensively as he wished, especially for texts by foreign authors. He also said that while they could use actual books, their school library was also limited and so they had no choice but to rely on the Internet for most pieces. In addition to feeling like he was inhibited in his ability to search for texts, Justin did not see the purpose of finding texts from all over the world, saying that Mr. Harris was having them do that "just to make it harder."

Despite his challenges searching for texts, Justin seemed to invest more effort in his Personal Anthology than he did in all the other tasks we discussed. He was reflective in the first segment of his preface, writing about how he used to love reading as a child because he "had a hunger for learning." As long as books "piqued his interest" he really enjoyed reading, sometimes even reading all night or on the playground during recess. Over time, he said he grew "lazy" about reading and recently was having a hard time

focusing on a book when there was a Lakers game on television or a friend to talk to. It seemed very important to Justin, both as a young child and an adolescent reader, that books be interesting and understandable.

Justin claimed that he actually read about 50% of what he found, categorizing the texts by: “Works that made me happy,” “Works that made me sad,” “Works that made me angry,” and “Works that made me bored,” cleverly titling his Anthology “Quadpolar.” See Appendix Q for Justin’s Personal Anthology Table of Contents. He marked an “x” next to all the texts he read. All but one of the works that made him “happy” were popular American songs, but he also included in that category *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu (1550L), which he said was very “dense” but interesting enough to work through because he was “a connoisseur of a good battle.” Justin was animated when he told me that he was “pretty sure the government uses the book” to learn about war tactics. He read five of the nine articles and blog entries that he included in the “angry” category, reacting strongly towards texts that challenged his beliefs or that presented controversial perspectives about the U.S. or about race and culture. For example, he said he “got mad” when he read an quotation titled “The United State versus Australia,” which posited the U.S. as a colonial power stating, “American maintain their sense of being God’s own country with a manifest destiny to lead the world to freedom and democracy.” He felt the statement was disrespectful. He also included an excerpt from an African blogger who wrote a piece addressing the question, “Why do African American hate Africans?” Justin said he read the blog entry and the responses from readers and was interested in a particular response that said the issue was really the other way around, that Africans hate African Americans. Justin said he found this interesting because it directly related to

issues he was thinking about. Thus, to a certain extent, this project achieved Mr. Harris's intended goal, which was to reflect their interests, philosophies or ways of looking at the world. Justin was more interested in reading when he had some control over the texts and even took on a very challenging text because he found the subject matter interesting.

Despite having invested effort into gathering and reading some of the texts for his Anthology, Justin did not put the same effort into writing his preface or editing his Table of Contents, both of which were full of grammatical errors. He only enjoyed writing, he said, when it was free-form and he did not have to focus on writing in particular ways, such as not using any 'to be' verbs. He said he had gotten an "E" (failing grade) on every Telling Sentences assignment and was visibly frustrated that Mr. Harris "did not teach [students] how to write" without using 'to be' verbs. When Justin felt that instruction was warranted but not provided, he seemed unwilling to put effort into an assignment.

Mr. Harris had not graded Justin's Anthology when we met for our final interview, but he took a few minutes to glance through the Table of Contents and preface and then stated, "Well, he pulled it together. I'm pretty generous with my grading. He'll probably get a C." Mr. Harris actually seemed impressed that Justin even turned his Anthology in, saying that some of his other College Bound males had "given up."

Chapter 7

Findings: Within Case Analysis

In this chapter, I look within each case, identifying the factors that influenced the ways that Mariah, Jasmine, and Justin responded to and navigated the disciplinary literacy demands and expectations across their ELA, World History, and Ecology classes. I consider what facilitated their learning with and from text in each context and compare across contexts, bringing together the reader, task, text, and context.

Mariah

Something Amiss in ELA

Mariah was consistent in many ways as she navigated and responded to the literacy demands across her AP World History, Ecology, and ELA classes. In all three classes, she generally looked and sounded like an engaged and self-motivated learner by participating in all class activities and text-based tasks and by completing all of her work in a timely manner. A closer inspection of her responses to the three class contexts and to the texts and text-based, however, revealed a number of important differences. In both AP World History and Ecology, Mr. Berkman and Ms. Meyer perceived Mariah as a hard working student and one that was either genuinely interested in the material or at least who made an effort to connect to the content. In those two classes, Mariah was able to clearly articulate her teachers' expectations regarding texts; she followed teachers' instructions, understood what she was supposed to do and why, and even gave herself a purpose to read when one was lacking or unclear.

In comparison, while Mariah was diligent in completing all her assigned tasks in ELA, she felt unsuccessful in the class and was perceived by Mr. Harris as a “lazy” reader and writer. One of the reasons that Mariah struggled was because she felt the class lacked the broader purpose that had grounded her in World History and Ecology. Mr. Harris’s approach to teaching ELA and stance about developing autonomous readers and writers left her unsure about both what she was supposed to learn and how she was to engage in the text-based tasks successfully. He never specified what he wanted students to do while reading or take away from the text. The implicit expectation was that students should independently engage in deep reading, but the only guidance he gave was to suggest they read the book through twice, one for the plot and then again to analyze the characters and use of magical realism, though there was never any instruction as to how they might do the latter.

Mariah had a good sense of her learning needs and identified specific areas where she wanted more support and instruction from Mr. Harris. For instance, she recognized the places in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* where Garcia Marquez used magical realism, but said that she was unsure how to interpret the text since Mr. Harris had not provided guidance. Mariah felt that engaging in discussion about the text would have helped her better understand what she was reading, but during my observations there was no whole class discussion. Students talked to one another during several small group activities and Mariah pointed to these instances as the most helpful for her in terms of clearing up her confusion about the story. She also struggled to remove the ‘to be’ verbs from her Anthology preface and felt Mr. Harris had neither provided a compelling reason or adequate writing instruction. Mr. Harris, on his end, did not get close enough to Mariah’s

reading or writing work to identify her needs and thus interpreted her struggles as laziness.

What allowed Mariah to seem more successful in AP World History and Ecology? To begin, the reading tasks Mariah was asked to do in those two classes did not require careful or deep reading and she generally felt she was able to complete them successfully. She did not need to engage deeply with texts or to integrate concepts she learned in class with the text. Mariah approached her AP World History and Ecology texts and text-based tasks in very similar ways – by skimming and scanning for specific facts or quick answers to literal questions. The majority of the questions she had to answer for Ecology readings required recording factual information rather than complex answers (e.g. “How is coal recovered?”). When Ms. Meyer asked more multifaceted questions, as she did with the questions she embedded in the article “Rethinking the Meat Guzzler,” she heavily assisted students with the answers rather than having them read the text closely and think through the answers on their own or with peers. In AP World History, it was expected that students would record factual information as they took notes on the key terms and figures from each chapter. However, the end of chapter Big Picture Questions asked students to make connections to broader trends or consider the causes of events, but Mr. Berkman accepted incomplete or basic answers by grading students’ notebooks for task completion and not quality. Mariah often answered these the Big Picture Questions in vague and general ways that did not indicate she had read or engaged in higher-level thinking about the concepts or historical events.

Mariah’s approach to the text-based tasks in Ecology and AP World History was not discipline-specific and reflected the ways that Mr. Berkman and Ms. Meyer

implicated texts in content learning -- as either peripheral or completely separate from the core content. For Mr. Berkman the real conceptual thinking work happened during lectures when he pressed students to reason through causes of historical events or to make connections between the topics and their lives, but these discussions never implicated the text. During an interview, Mariah criticized the AP World History textbook for privileging an American perspective and not adequately representing different viewpoints as it covered historical events, a conclusion she came to without any direction from her teacher. She lamented that it would have been interesting to read about the events they covered from different perspectives. Unfortunately, Mariah missed the opportunity to explore this or to practice comparing viewpoints across multiple texts since Mr. Berkman did not use any texts other than the textbook and never discussed *how* to read as a student of history. Similarly, in Ecology, Ms. Meyer introduced students to the content in lectures and then sent students off into jigsaw reading groups to learn about a specific type of plant or form of energy. In these activities, students were tasked to present basic information to peers, but not to consider how what they learned deepened their understanding of the scientific concept. These jigsaw activities frustrated Mariah because she did not feel they were a good way to learn the content, especially when the texts were poorly matched to the tasks. In both of these classes, Mariah indicated that she felt there were missed opportunities to learn from text.

Despite the fact that her three teachers did not provide any reading instruction, Mariah enacted a range of reading comprehension strategies when she read from assigned texts during interviews. She demonstrated persistence with all her texts, spending approximately three times as long attempting to make sense of what she was reading than

either Justin or Jasmine. Mariah enacted a similar set of comprehension strategies when reading from her AP World History and Ecology texts, including using text structure to find key terms, identifying main ideas, using context clues to figure out unfamiliar words, and drawing on background knowledge to aid her in meaning making. When she struggled with a sentence or phrase she often went back and reread the text several times as she tried to work through her confusion. While all of these generic comprehension strategies could certainly help readers make sense of text, they did not necessarily support her gaining a strong understanding of what she was reading. Mariah's approach to these texts indicated that she did not have a sense of how to differentiate her approach for various types of nonfiction text or between science and history texts. Mariah seemed to lack domain knowledge, meaning she did not have a sense that there might be a specific way that scientists or historians engage with texts.

In comparison, Mariah approached her fiction text with a different set of strategies, indicating that she had more familiarity and experience with the genre. When she read from *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* during interviews, she made predications, tried to visualize the author's descriptions, made inferences using clues in the text and her own background knowledge, and made decisions about how to proceed based on her knowledge of the genre. For instance, she felt that it was acceptable to be slightly confused when reading fiction, explaining that in her experience, authors often clarify aspects of the plot as the story unfolds. As stated earlier, Mariah also honed in on places in the text where she thought the author was employing a literary device, but she was unsure as to how to interpret the text since she had received no guidance from Mr. Harris. Mariah likely enacted these genre-specific strategies because she had more experience

reading fiction than nonfiction texts. She reported having been an avid fiction reader since childhood and talked about swapping popular teen fiction with friends and said that she and her peers liked to talk about books. She also read more challenging books outside of school, like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Thus, Mariah had experience over time with increasingly sophisticated iterations of fiction, which likely helped her develop a deeper understanding of the genre and strategies that specifically supported fiction reading. Despite this experience and set of strategies, Mariah still had a difficult time successfully comprehending *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* because she did not have sufficient knowledge of the particular story structure or with literary analysis.

Summary

It was ironic that Mariah was perceived as a strong student in Ecology and AP World History but not in ELA given that she was a more experienced fiction reader. The combination of Mr. Harris's expectations, the challenging novel, and the lack of support left Mariah floundering. In her other two classes, she was not asked to read in a disciplinary or sophisticated manner and so was successful defaulting to the generic approaches and strategies that she already possessed. Given Mariah's motivation and skill base, it seems that she could have readily engaged more deeply with texts had her teachers made it integral to the content learning and had she been provided instruction and opportunities to discuss text.

Jasmine

For a Struggling Reader, the Class Didn't Matter

Jasmine responded to text-based tasks and engaged with texts in much the same way across her three classes – she “read” her assigned texts by looking for terms or facts

to answer questions or fill in blanks on worksheets, or if she didn't have anything to guide her reading, she read by "skimming," which she described as looking for familiar words. Jasmine was more often than not unclear about her teachers' purpose for reading tasks and never set a purpose for herself other than to get the assignment done. Why was it that she did not adjust her approach to texts or text-based tasks? For Jasmine, the root of the problem was that she was a struggling reader. She had mastered decoding and word analysis and thus was able to read all assigned texts fluently, but she did not comprehend her texts well enough or have sufficient domain or topic knowledge to make sense of what she was reading or to successfully navigate the text-based tasks on her own. Each of her teachers made it possible for Jasmine to mask her reading struggles by not reading, or if she did read, she was not held accountable for learning content from the text: Mr. Berkman assigned reading and worksheets, but then went over each question on the worksheet in class; in Ecology Jasmine always worked on text-based tasks with a group and thus could rely on their help to locate answers to questions in text; in ELA most students did not read the novel and Mr. Harris responded by loosening his grading system.

While Jasmine never read more closely beyond identifying basic facts and main ideas, she was slightly more amenable to reading her World History textbook than to any of the texts she was assigned in Ecology or ELA. To begin, she had only a single familiar text type to navigate in World History as opposed to a wide range of nonfiction texts in Ecology and fiction texts in ELA, all of which were varied in terms of structure and difficulty. Since her World History text-based assignments were also consistent in terms of type and complexity, she knew what she needed to get from the text to meet Mr.

Berkman's expectations – meaning she could attempt to read and fill in her worksheets with the disjointed knowledge she gained from the text, but if she did not read or wrote incorrect answers, she could always make adjustments during lectures. Additionally, Jasmine's World History textbook was the most traditional and accessible of all the texts she encountered. With highly structured sections and many reader supports, it was friendly for a reader like Jasmine who needed support figuring out what was important and how to focus her attention.

However, even with an accessible text and predictable tasks, Jasmine still had little stamina for reading her World History textbook closely, instead moving off the text and talking instead about something she took away from Mr. Berkman's lectures. When she read from her more challenging texts in Ecology and ELA, she gave up quickly without attempting to adjust her reading in any way. This was not surprising in her ELA novel since Mr. Harris did not provide students with any instruction or guidance on how to navigate the challenging plot structure or engage in effective literary analysis. In Ecology, however, Ms. Meyer did make some attempts to support students on their text-based tasks. During my observations, she always engaged students in pre-reading activities to build content knowledge and interest and always sent students into a reading task with either a graphic organizer or set of questions. She did not, however, go further to instruct on *how* to read the various texts, what students might do if they ran into difficulty, nor did she engage students in discussion about texts with the exception of the article on meat consumption that she read out loud to the class. Nothing her teachers did served to shape her reading and what she took away from texts; Jasmine was left to her own ineffective default strategies.

Ms. Meyer, the science teacher, was the only one of the three teachers who seemed aware of Jasmine's difficulties with reading and writing. Her awareness, however, did not result in scaffolding or differentiated instruction that addressed Jasmine's needs. Rather, Ms. Meyer adapted texts and tasks to make them easier for *all* students, allowing Jasmine to avoid having to read texts closely or to draw more than basic facts from texts. For instance, when she worked as part of a group, she opted to answer the easiest questions or worked alongside a classmate to locate answers in the text. Jasmine felt fairly confident in her performance in Ecology, likely because she met the expectations, which did not involve needing to engage deeply in her text-based tasks. Unaware of Jasmine's reading and writing difficulties, Mr. Harris and Mr. Berkman attributed her mediocre academic performance to a lack of focus and low self-confidence in her academic abilities.

Why did Ms. Meyer see Jasmine's difficulties and the other two teachers did not? During interviews, Ms. Meyer articulated that her teaching stance was to anticipate students' needs and interests and to make learning science relevant for them; she made the assumption her students selected Ecology instead of the more rigorous Marine Science course because they had difficulties reading or writing, were second language learners, or because they had a history of poor performance in school and thus had little confidence in their academic abilities. She felt that it was her responsibility to meet her students where they were, in terms of content knowledge, skills and disposition, and to help them gain confidence. As a result of these assumptions, Ms. Meyer paid close attention to her students' participation and performance on activities and text-based tasks and said that she worked hard to get to know them, both as students and as people,

readily calling parents or guardians if she noticed changes in behavior or felt a student just needed a nudge to get on top of his or her work. She knew which students were involved with gangs, which participated in sports or other extracurricular activities, and which had unstable home environments. Every week that I observed in her classroom, Ms. Meyer had her lunchtime and afterschool availability posted on the whiteboard so that students could get extra help or retake assessments. I was in her classroom on several of these occasions and I noticed that when students came to talk to her, she was caring yet direct, asking them where they felt they needed assistance and helping them make plans for completing assignments.

Ms. Meyer said that Jasmine often came in to talk about her anxiety over upcoming quizzes and tests, wanting to know exactly what was going to be covered and to get help preparing. During interviews, Jasmine demonstrated an awareness of her challenges, stating that that she needed her teachers to explain things very clearly for her to understand. Perhaps Ms. Meyer's openness to allowing students to share their worries and to seek out help was important for Jasmine in that it communicated to her that it was acceptable to need support. Ms. Meyer also noticed, by closely observing her students while they worked on text-based tasks, that it took Jasmine longer than most of her peers to read through a text or to find an answer to a question. She could not identify the specific nature of Jasmine's reading struggles, only that she seemed to read slowly and had a hard time finding important information in texts. Again, these observations did not result in specific scaffolding for Jasmine; rather Ms. Meyer's response to struggling students was to structure activities and adapt texts so they could engage with the content without being inhibited by difficulties with reading comprehension.

In her World History and ELA classes, Jasmine did not get the same message from her teachers that she did from Ms. Meyer. Mr. Berkman assumed that his Regular World History students had limited capacity to learn challenging content, but he did not believe that it was his responsibility to identify their particular learning challenges or differentiate instruction to meet their needs. He assigned reading, but then covered the content in class, communicating to students that they were not responsible for learning the content on their own. Mr. Harris had almost the opposite stance in that he communicated to students that they needed to work through challenging texts independently; that it was by struggling through a text they come to would appreciate it's value.

Summary

Lacking either the awareness or the pedagogical knowledge, nothing Jasmine's three teachers did caused her to change her approaches to text-based tasks or helped her develop her reading skills. For struggling readers like Jasmine, it seems particularly important to have classroom contexts in which it is acceptable to voice their challenges and teachers whose instruction takes into account students' needs. Unfortunately, Jasmine passed these classes and yet is no more prepared to read future challenging texts or meet sophisticated literacy demands in upcoming content area classes.

Justin

If you don't have to read, then why do it?

Like Jasmine, Justin responded to the literacy demands and expectation across AP World History, Ecology, and ELA classes by spending little time and effort on most of his reading tasks. Unlike Jasmine, who tried to work around tasks that were too difficult

for her, Justin evaded text-based tasks not because he necessarily lacked the skills or background knowledge, but rather because he could. All three of his teachers recognized that he employed “savvy” measures to avoid his text-based tasks and to meet requirements, but none of them did anything that caused him to change his approach.

One of the reasons that Justin said he did not invest effort in his reading tasks was that he was not compelled by the purposes his teachers set for reading. The purposes that his teachers set for text-based tasks across his three classes were not necessarily intended to motivate students to engage more deeply with the content or to give them meaningful reasons to read. Since Justin was not a student who was internally motivated to do his best on all his academic tasks, these purposes mattered. In fact, Ms. Meyer was the only one of the three teachers to articulate what she wanted students to glean from their readings, but that was always peripheral to the core content she delivered in lectures. Most reading tasks were simply assignments to be completed and since teachers were not expecting students to engage meaningfully with text, Justin could easily skim, draw on prior knowledge, or rely on web-based supports such as Spark Notes.

Another factor at play for Justin in looking at the way he responded to text-tasks was accountability and how his teachers monitored student engagement with performance on reading tasks. More so than either Mariah or Jasmine, Justin embraced their lax expectations and operated on the premise that his three teachers’ grading systems invited him to avoid having to really read any of his texts. Although each teacher had a different rationale for loosening the expectations – Mr. Berkman felt that avoiding work was part and parcel to being a teenager and thus gave students multiple opportunities and avenues to develop diligence; Ms. Meyer worried that she could not assess students on reading

comprehension when she had not taught them how to read in science; and Mr. Harris called himself as “generous grader,” boosting all grades at the end of each quarter – the end result was the same: to diminish the importance of reading closely or using text to learn. Without a compelling purpose to read and three teachers who adjusted points and grading scales so as to allow students to pass without reading, Justin was missing an incentive to read and make sense of dense texts.

What might have changed things for Justin? As I looked at Justin across his classes, I found several instances in which he responded differently to a teacher or a task. To begin, Justin’s interest in the AP World History material caused him to be more engaged and on task in that class than in his other two classes. He was encouraged, or at least allowed, to share his own ideas and connections to topics, even if they were only indirectly related to the content. He seemed to particularly enjoy Mr. Berkman’s focus on reasoning skills and on broader conceptual themes. Unfortunately, the engagement stopped there as Justin thought the text was boring and dense and Mr. Berkman did not support him in transferring his interest to the text or in considering how a reader might use texts to explore ideas or authentic questions. Since interest was important for Justin, it would have made sense for him to also engage with the content in Ecology as Ms. Meyer made a concerted effort to make the content relevant and interesting for students. However, contrasting the two classes, it seems that what really drew Justin to World History was the opportunity to grapple with big ideas like culture, religion, race, and war, especially as they related to his life. In Ecology, even though Ms. Meyer hoped students saw the connection between the topics and the broader goal of civic responsibility, they never wrestled with the concept or considered different perspectives. The reading tasks in

Ecology were generally fact-based and focused on topics that did not encourage the reader to think conceptually or make personal connections.

The only reading task that Justin approached differently during this study was his Anthology project in ELA, which was surprising since he expressed distain for the project as a whole and for Mr. Harris's lack of support and organization. What Justin responded to was the freedom to choose his own texts for his own purposes (aside from having to meet the regional criteria). Though Justin avoided reading many of the texts he selected, he actually selected and read a dense and challenging text (*The Art of War*) because he found it genuinely interesting. I do not know how much of the text he read, but he since he readily admitted to not reading many of the texts that he included in his Anthology and said that he did not select others because they were too dense, I felt he was being truthful when he said he read the book and did not use Spark Notes or another support resource. I also cannot speak to how well Justin was able to comprehend the text since he did not read from it during any of our interviews, but he was able to articulate several things he learned from the book that he found particularly interesting, indicating some level of understanding. Additionally, Justin included several pieces of nonfiction (news articles and blogs) in his Anthology that he said angered him. He was animated when he talked about the content, which dealt with race, religion and national identity, and made connections to his own life, but he had no opportunity to engage in those ideas in class with his teacher or peers.

Summary

When Justin was given the autonomy to select his own texts and to set his own purpose for reading, he invested more time and effort. Given his selections for his

Anthology project, he did not seem averse to reading challenging texts in general – only to reading them when he did not have a compelling purpose or was not interested in the content. Unfortunately, there were many missed opportunities in each of his classes to draw him into texts and tasks.

Chapter 8

Discussion

Overview

In Chapters 4-6, I examined the ways that Mariah, Jasmine, and Justin engaged in the literacy expectations and demands in their ELA, World History, and Ecology classes. I drew upon the RAND heuristic and its sociocultural perspective to focus my analysis on the relationship among each reader, text, and activity within the three content area contexts. Within each context, I analyzed the challenges of the texts, how literacy tasks and activities were implicated in content learning, and the teachers' instruction and stance on disciplinary literacy in their subjects. Then, in Chapter 7, I looked at each student across the three contexts, illuminating factors that influenced the ways each student responded to literacy demands.

In this chapter, I return to the purpose of the study and my research questions, considering how the experiences of Mariah, Jasmine, and Justin and their teachers add to what we know about disciplinary literacy in the secondary school content areas. Then I argue the educational importance of this study, raise questions, and discuss the study's limitations.

What Can We Learn From Students' Literacy Experiences Across Content Areas?

The purpose of this study was to examine how secondary students navigate and respond to the range of literacy demands and experiences across their content area classes. Emerging research on disciplinary literacy and adolescent literacy makes a strong

case for engaging students in authentic literacy practices and making visible the ways of knowing and doing in the disciplines (Greenleaf et al., 2011; Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, which aim to “ensure students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school,” secondary teachers must, in some capacity, attend to literacy. The field has a growing understanding of the literacy practices of expert historians, scientists, and other disciplines but we have limited research about how those practices might manifest in content area classrooms and less about how they may impact student learning. Though I am interested in the potential of disciplinary literacy practices to benefit secondary students, my intention in this study was not to justify their infusion into science, ELA, and history teachers’ practice.

Thus, in this study I did not seek out teachers known for incorporating literacy as a regular component of their instruction or those who had received specific training aimed at infusing disciplinary literacy practices into content learning; rather I intended to examine the range of skills and practices of typical secondary teachers and their students to better understand what is happening “on-the ground” and to hypothesize possibilities to affect positive change. Similarly, I did not seek out particular types of students, either those who excelled or those who did particularly poorly with their academic work. Rather, I was interested in the experiences of average students, those who make up the vast majority of secondary students. More specifically, this was an effort to capture the experiences of the whole reader as he or she navigated multiple, typical subject-matter contexts, each with its particular set of texts and expectations. As students traveled

among their content areas, I was also interested in learning what content knowledge, approaches to literacy tasks, and literacy strategies they brought with them and, likewise, what knowledge or strategies their teachers encouraged them to bring.

More Similarities than Differences

Findings from this study indicate that, for Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine, the literacy demands and expectations in ELA, World History, and Ecology were more similar than different. This need not be detrimental—one could imagine how literacy practices that bridged content areas might positively support students' engagement with text; for example, common routines that encourage discussion of text or structures that support students' interaction with texts while reading. But that was not the case for the students in this study. In the next paragraphs, I elaborate on the ways that Mariah, Jasmine, and Justin's literacy experiences were similar and different across their content areas and discuss implications for the field.

Similarities

Content learning disconnected from texts. One of the key ways that Mariah, Jasmine, and Justin's literacy experiences were similar, both among one another and across their three classes, was that, for the period of time that I observed in the classrooms, text-based work was generally disconnected from rich content learning. The confluence of the design of text-based tasks (generally focusing on literal comprehension and identification of basic facts), teachers' low expectations for students to read in thoughtful ways, and lax grading effectively excused students from having to learn important content from texts. Both Mr. Berkman and Ms. Meyer delivered important content by way of lecture using facts they had distilled from the text. This resulted in

students separating content learning from reading tasks. The actions of these teachers are not unique; we know that secondary teachers often work around texts for a variety of reasons in an effort to cover a significant amount of content in a short time and with a huge range of learners (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995; Wade & Moje, 2000). What was alarming in this study was that this was not only the case for the World History and Ecology teachers, but also for the ELA teacher who did not provide any literacy instruction or support. This finding challenges the assumption that, at the very least, ELA teachers are providing some literacy instruction as they engage students in explicitly text-based content.

One of the ramifications of the disconnect between content and reading was that students generally brought only “situational interest” (specific to the particular assignment or individual topic) to reading assignments which were often superficial; students completed them for a grade rather than to deepen their content knowledge. Alexander et al. (1994) argued that never moving beyond situational interest negatively impacts students’ development of subject-matter learning and the ability to navigate through challenging tasks. However, it was the norm rather than the exception in this study for students to perform fairly basic text-based tasks across their content area classes; they were neither awarded nor encouraged to go deeper with the content or the text. For secondary students, especially those like Justin who seemed willing to invest effort to read a challenging text if he found the topic interesting, this raises concern about the long term impact this might have for him to engage with texts deeply or meaningfully.

Another issue confounding content learning from text relates to what it means to “know” about a topic as a disciplinary novice. Throughout this study, I discussed what students reported knowing about the content they studied and the opportunities they had (or did not have) to learn content from texts. Each student in this study claimed to “know” about various topics, but their knowledge, which they attributed to prior classes and life experiences, was most often a cursory understanding. They were not able to distinguish between having surface level knowledge and deep, multifaceted knowledge – it all counted as “knowing” a topic. This surfaces questions about what it means to “know” in a core content area: Do Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine believe a scant amount of knowledge equated to knowing a topic because they are novices and thus cannot understand what they do not yet know? Do teachers implicitly convey that having a few isolated facts equates knowing a topic? Since it is unrealistic to expect all students to develop what Alexander et al. (1994) refer to as long-term, individual interest in *all* the subjects they encounter in school, what can teachers do to heighten their students’ situational interest so they are motivated beyond task completion and turn to texts to further develop their content knowledge?

Default Strategies. The greatest cumulative impact the three teachers had on their students in this study was their implicit encouragement of the students’ default literacy practices. Though each teacher was committed to his or her students, almost nothing Ms. Meyer, Mr. Berkman, or Mr. Harris did resulted in the students changing the ways they approached texts or worked to make meaning from texts. The teachers did not provide any comprehension strategy instruction (generic or discipline-specific) or guidance as to how students ought to approach different types of texts, primarily because

they did not have the knowledge to do so. Nor did they encourage students to draw on prior literacy experiences, either in a specific content area or generally across content areas. Justin approached all his reading tasks in much the same way – he either avoided the task altogether or skimmed the text and then drew on resources or background knowledge to accomplish the task. All three of his teachers knew this happened and yet, for a variety of reasons, did nothing to change his approach. Each student enacted similar strategies when reading from their Ecology and World History texts, but none was very successful in moving beyond the gathering of basic facts. When they came across a text that clearly required a different approach, as they did in ELA, only Mariah purposefully adjusted her reading and the only reason she did so was because she had prior experiences reading fiction. Her default strategies for reading fiction, which included making predictions, drawing on her knowledge of the genre, and making inferences, though stronger than her peers, were not sufficient to successfully comprehend the novel on her own. Jasmine, who came to her reading tasks with very few effective reading strategies (rereading segments she did not understand and searching for basic plot details), seemed to suffer the most as a result of being left to her own devices. She had limited prior experiences or strategies to draw on to help her make sense of a novel with a nonlinear story line or the author’s use of magical realism. Jasmine is an interesting case because she does well enough in her content classes, by way of support from peers and others, not to be flagged for any kind of special intervention or support. She is likely representative of other “average” secondary students who go unnoticed because they satisfactorily meet the low level of demand teachers require from text-based assignments and yet actually have very limited literacy skills.

By not interrupting these default practices, the teachers effectively encouraged students to continue to engage with texts in the same ways on future reading tasks. When students did poorly with text-based tasks, their teachers attributed their struggles to a lack of motivation, interest, or effort—the problem belonged to the students, not the nature of the instruction or the design of the text-based tasks. De-emphasizing reading meant teachers didn't move students from basic comprehension to higher-level analysis; in Reisman's view this is “the difference between dis-enfranchisement and opportunity” (2012, p. 258). Without direction for effectively learning from texts, it seems likely that the three students in this study will continue to rely on their own default strategies, however ineffective they may be in helping them learn from text.

These findings encourage the field to consider the impact of this across a student's school day and illuminate the factors that contribute to students continuing to enact the same ineffective practices again and again to meet the literacy demands they face.

Differences

Findings from this study also show how students' literacy experiences differed across their content area classes and point to potential ways that teachers can support students to engage meaningfully with texts.

The Importance of Setting a Clear Purpose. Though each of the three students approached their text-based tasks in similar ways, Mariah, as a student more focused on doing well on her academic tasks than either Justin or Jasmine, invested more effort in her reading tasks when she had a clear understanding of the purpose, and less effort when she did not. She felt that in Ecology, Ms. Meyer generally clearly articulated what she

wanted students to get out of their text-based tasks and how the tasks related to broader content goals. For example, she provided rubrics and graphic organizers that helped students know what to focus on as they read and what they were expected to do with the information they learned from the texts. Mariah felt that the text-based tasks in Ecology were worth her time and she was consistent in her attempts to meet her teacher's expectations. It is important to note that Ms. Meyer did not ascribe discipline-specific purposes to the reading tasks (e.g. to interpret graphs); rather she simply gave students clear purposes and always aligned readings with specific tasks and outcomes. This contrasts with Mariah's experiences in ELA, where she did not feel Mr. Harris provided clear purposes for their reading tasks. She was unclear why she was reading (other than the fact that reading is part of ELA) and what she was to get out of her reading. As a result, she invested less effort in her ELA assignments and, when she struggled with the text, she was more willing to give up than she was in Ecology or AP World History. Thus, understanding the purpose for reading seems to be an important factor for sustaining some secondary students' motivation for reading. This is an interesting finding that would benefit from further study, especially in light of its generic rather than discipline-specific orientation.

Choice & Relevance. Across their three content area classes, students had to read the text assigned to them, with the exception of the Anthology Project in ELA. Having a choice seemed to matter most for Justin, who changed his reading behaviors when he had the ability to select his own texts; he sought out texts on topics with which he had long-term interest and that were relevant to the big ideas and issues he grappled with in everyday life. Researchers have documented the importance of choice for reading

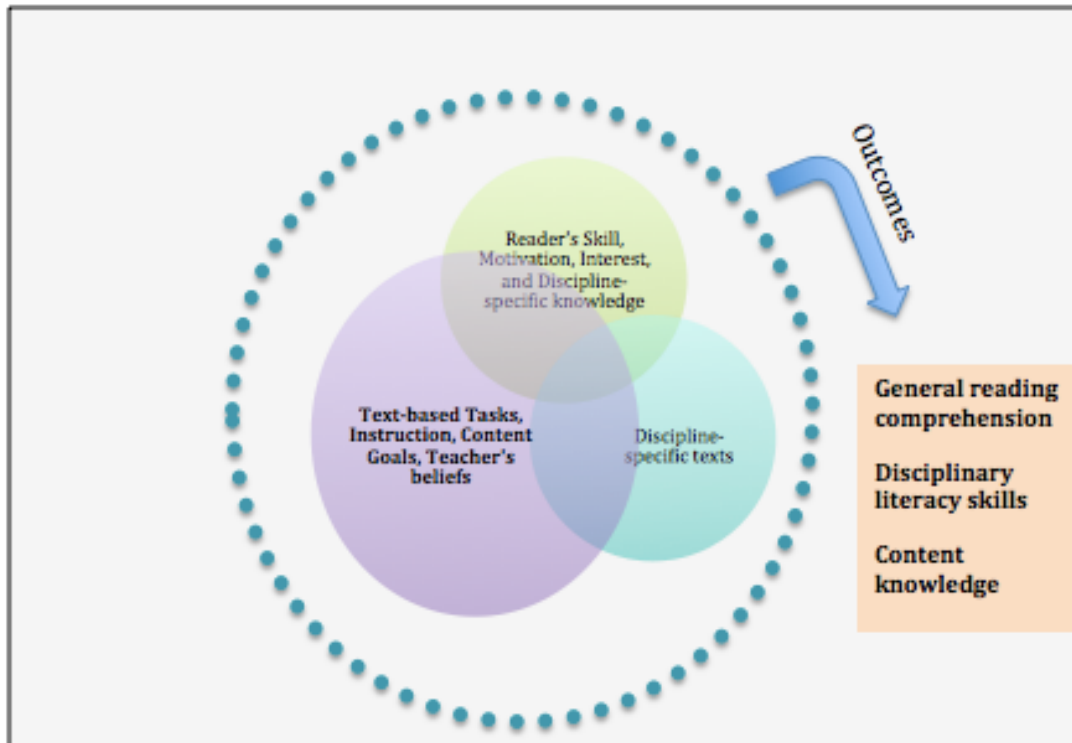
engagement (Wigfield et al., 2008) and the relationship between individual, long-term interest, subject matter knowledge and reading comprehension (Alexander et al., 1994), and this finding supports these lines of research. Justin's teachers did not understand why he chose not to invest effort in the majority of their academic tasks, despite having the skills to do so. Given the pressures that teachers face to cover specific content and to use district sanctioned texts, this finding would benefit from further study to better understand the how interest, engagement and reading interact in real classroom contexts.

Rethinking RAND & the Relationship between Reader, Text, Task, and Context

Despite the fact that a slew of reports have come out promoting secondary literacy and that literacy practices are at the core of the CCSS, neither the teachers nor the students in this study were engaged in the kinds of disciplinary practices promoted by these reports. With this in mind, I now look critically at the RAND heuristic as a tool for examining secondary content area literacy. Each of the teachers *used* texts as part of his or her instruction and assigned reading tasks, so on some level each believed students should be reading and learning something from texts. However, they did not *use* those texts in such a way as to make text-based tasks integral to content learning. The expectation was generally one of task completion, not deep disciplinary content learning, and as a result students read texts in superficial and literal ways, looking for basic information that matched questions or that they recorded on a worksheet or graphic organizer. While individual reader factors mattered in small ways, what seemed to matter the most across all three students and all three contexts was the impact that the design of the text-based task had for students' opportunities to learn content from text. Given these findings, I propose a modified model of the RAND heuristic; one that better captures the

importance of text-based tasks in secondary content areas and that more clearly defines the relationship between texts and content learning.

Figure 4. Rethinking RAND in the Secondary Content Areas



In this revised model, I place more weight on text-based tasks, instruction, content learning goals, and teachers' beliefs than on texts or readers. To be sure, I am not discounting the importance of the text or the reader in thinking about literacy, but findings from this study illuminate the ways in which, in secondary content area classes, the design of a text-based task, coupled with the teacher's expectations and outcomes, influenced how the students responded to those demands and the degree to which they learned content from texts. Therefore, I suggest that we can meet the outcomes (reading comprehension, content learning, and eventually the development of disciplinary literacy

skills) by supporting teachers to learn how to set clear purposes for reading and how to design text-based tasks that directly connect to content learning.

One of the unanticipated factors that heavily influenced the design of text-based tasks was each teacher's beliefs about literacy and about the relationship between their content area and the discipline from which it is derived. Given the wide disconnect between each teachers' conception of content area instruction and literacy, I argue that any effort to shift secondary teachers' instruction to incorporate disciplinary literacy practices must begin by addressing and acknowledging teachers' beliefs. It is not sufficient to identify the literacy practices that experts in the disciplines use and suggest content area teachers attempt to incorporate them into the classroom. Researchers and educators claim that the 'every teacher a teacher of reading' mantra failed because content area teachers did not see the purpose of incorporating *generic* literacy practices into their content area instruction. The findings from this study suggest that Mr. Berkman, and to some extent Ms. Meyer and Mr. Harris, may respond in a similar fashion to the suggestion to incorporate *discipline specific* literacy practices. These teachers are representative of many secondary teachers who according to Shanahan et al. (2011), "have tended to teach their subject with little consideration for the literacy dimensions of these subjects, even ignoring the fundamental role of literacy in the definition and development of the disciplines themselves" (2011, p. 395). Greenleaf et al. (2011) assert that content teachers need support navigating the "cognitive dissonance" that results when teachers try to bring together their preconceptions about teaching science with literacy practices specific to the discipline. While I fully support the assertions of Greenleaf et al. (2011), I argue that in order to get to the point where

teachers are ready to take on *disciplinary* literacy practices, that they also need support re-conceptualizing, in very general terms, the ways they use texts and design text-based tasks.

Making the leap to disciplinary literacy may also be daunting for the teachers participating in this study, particularly Mr. Berkman and Mr. Harris, because they demonstrated having underdeveloped ideas about the relationship between their content area classes and the disciplines of history, science, or English. Each teacher wrestled, whether overtly or more subtly, with how to situate their content area class in the work of their disciplines. The teachers were not clear about how to characterize the work in their content areas and even less clear about how texts and learning from texts were implicated in that learning. Their use of texts suggests a misunderstanding of what is required of readers to learn content from text; they assigned reading but did not take the next step to support sense-making or integrate texts with core content. Hynd et al. (2004) argue that in order for teachers to incorporate disciplinary literacy instruction into their practice they need to develop of knowledge of the discipline, considering the ways of thinking, doing, and communicating that those in their disciplines do. These findings illuminate the need for the field to help teachers develop an understanding of the ways in which reading and writing work in the service of content learning and suggest that teachers will need support working through the “cognitive dissonance” they will inevitably encounter when they try to change the ways they use texts (Greenleaf et al., 2011).

Balancing Content Coverage and Using Texts for Learning. Much has been written about how texts increase in complexity as students move into secondary content areas and about the need to help secondary teachers effectively use texts for content

learning (Alexander et al., 1994; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 2005; Time to Act, 2010). In line with this research, the selection of texts in this study was another key factor influencing students' opportunity to learn content from text in this study. Even though the negative attributes of textbooks are well documented, they were a firmly fixed component of the history curriculum in this study. In their history class, students' experiences with their textbook likely mirrored that of students for decades – they read by hunting and pecking for isolated facts, a strategy in which they all seemed well versed. One of the driving factors behind the use of the textbook in the AP class (as content “coverage”) was Mr. Berkman's commitment to preparing students for the AP exam. Using just a single textbook, however, would not allow history students to engage in the kinds of disciplinary literacy practices, such as sourcing and corroboration, that researchers such as Wineburg (1991) and Shanahan et al. (2011) have found are used by experts in the discipline. In order for a teacher like Mr. Berkman to incorporate additional texts and to *use* the textbook differently, he or she would need support balancing the benefits of engaging in disciplinary literacy practices, which would require slowing down and interpreting and synthesizing across multiple texts, with the pressure to cover material for high-stakes tests and subsequent courses. Thus, when considering how the findings from studies that investigate the literacy practices of experts in the disciplines translate to secondary content areas, it is important to remember that teachers are pressured from the system to cover certain content, prepare students for high states assessments and, in many cases, to use particular texts, factors that make it challenging for them to significantly alter their practices. Furthermore, more research is needed to understand how the literacy practices of experts in the disciplines translate for novices, as

there may be a different balance for novices and experts between the content or the “what,” and disciplinary literacy, or the “why” and “how.” As Shanahan et al. (2011) found, disciplinary experts come to literacy tasks with a great deal of content knowledge and use that knowledge to make sense of the texts. Students, as content novices, come with significantly less knowledge and thus may not be able to enact strategies such as sourcing or contextualization in the same ways that experts do. Further research will help teachers and researchers bridge the chasm between the world of textbooks and content coverage and that of disciplinary literacy.

At first glance, it seemed that Mr. Harris was using texts that would allow his students to engage in the kinds of rich literary analysis encouraged by researchers and the CCSS. However, what was surprising is that he did not provide students with any direction as to how to conduct literary analysis and thus they struggled to comprehend the novel, and so the opportunity fell short. Mr. Harris also had students use the Internet to locate texts for their Anthologies, which proved highly problematic. Since teachers do not have control over the quality of information on the web, “readers and users must know how to evaluate sites and sources for relevance, reliability, level of complexity, impartiality, and completeness” (Goldman, 2012, p. 90). Mr. Harris had not provided students with any guidance save a handful of poetry websites and the result was that students struggled to identify texts on the web that they could read and were appropriate for the assignment and ended up wasting time searching that could have been spent reading.

An Issue of Readily Available Resources. Ms. Meyer’s selection and use of texts was equally problematic for students, but for different reasons. Her trials with texts

illuminate several important issues for secondary teachers and novice readers. While she had a sense that her students should be reading a range of materials, which researchers argue is necessary for students to be “scientifically literate” (Yore et al., 2010), she was not prepared to select texts that were necessarily a good match with her content goals, tasks, or students’ reading skills. Nor was she trained to know, once she found the texts, how to teach students to comprehend and evaluate what they were reading or to synthesize across multiple texts or to design appropriate tasks that required close reading. Ms. Meyer was aware of her knowledge gap, recognizing that she did not have good understanding of exactly what her students needed to effectively learn from the texts. The result for the students was that they encountered a wide range of texts, varying in type and complexity, but did not know how to approach the different types of texts in different ways. This finding is supported by the work of Valencia, Wixson, & Pearson (in press), who argue that more careful attention needs to be paid to how texts are *used* (the task). The authors critique the CCSS for isolating the text from the task, minimizing the importance of the text-task interaction. Thus, teachers like Ms. Meyer who attempt to move away from the textbook or district sanctioned novel may actually disadvantage their students if they do not know how to support their students’ reading across a range of diverse texts. Incorporating a variety of texts into content area curricula will likely become more commonplace in light of the push by the CCSS for students to be reading across multiple texts in their high school history and science classes and even in both fiction and nonfiction texts in their ELA classes. For all three teachers, that will prove a significant challenge; they all felt pressured to cover content and would need to redesign

and rethink their curriculum so as to allot time to reading texts that is currently spent in other ways.

Without a substantial bank of readily available resources, including both texts and appropriate tasks, I question the result of teachers abandoning their textbooks, as Ms. Meyer did, and heading off in search of other texts, especially since we know that they currently have, at best, meager resources at their disposal to guide disciplinary content and disciplinary literacy. Ms. Meyer's pattern of 'reinventing' her curriculum each year by searching for different texts and then trying to design new tasks for those texts left her exhausted and, since she did not have the knowledge or skills to support her students' reading, left her students floundering. Researchers and educators need to explore ways to help teachers both identify appropriate texts and make better use of the texts they have or are obligated to use.

Arguing Against the '55-minute' Student. Focusing on disciplinary literacy can make it difficult to see the benefit of understanding students' literacy experiences across content areas and has the potential to further compartmentalize secondary content areas. For the three teachers in this study, Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine were what I call "55-minute" students, meaning that their experiences before and after their class periods with regard to text engagement and literacy practices did not matter and were not considered as teachers designed text-based tasks or reflected on their students' abilities. While the students sometimes brought knowledge gained from class into another, it was never leveraged or encouraged. Students would likely have benefited had their teachers encouraged them to notice connections and differences between their content areas. In the same way that Greenleaf et al. (2001) designed their Reading Apprenticeship framework

to engage students in “academic literacy” across content areas, talking with students about the similarities and differences between the ways they engage with texts across different classes may help them develop an understanding of how various approaches to reading might support their comprehension. Likewise, each teacher would have benefited, I believe, from sharing with one another their perceptions of the three students as readers and from learning about the range of literacy tasks their students encounter throughout their school day. They would likely not only gain insight about each student’s reading skills, learning from and adding to one another’s impressions, but sharing such insights might also help them reflect on the different ways they want students to engage with texts in their own content areas. Disciplinary literacy instruction that focuses on the practices unique to the disciplines may discourage this kind of collaboration. One way of avoiding such compartmentalization may be to view secondary literacy as a series of interrelated literacy experiences across a day. If those literacy experiences leverage one another, the student will undoubtedly benefit. This approach is reflected in Greenleaf and colleagues’ Reading Apprenticeship program in which students learn general approaches or literacy routines shared across content areas and then, within those, more discipline-specific literacy strategies in each content area. The idea of engaging all teachers in general literacy practices reflects back to my earlier discussion of the modified RAND heuristic; we ought to begin by supporting all teachers to design text-based tasks that support readers and promote content learning rather than moving directly into discipline-specific practices.

Limitations and Considerations

There are a number of limitations that need to be considered along with my

findings and educational implications. To begin, as a qualitative study, the findings can serve to add to theory about disciplinary literacy and reading in the secondary content areas, but they do not generalize beyond the three students and their teachers. While I spent a good deal of time at Whitman High School and with each of the study participants, coming to know them all quite well, there were several limitations to my capacity as a solitary researcher. Since I wanted to conduct numerous observations each week in each content area and to interview students and their teachers weekly, I only had the capacity to follow four students to their ELA, World History, and Ecology classes. One reason for this was that I was unable to identify focal students who had the exact same class schedules and thus had to conduct observations in each content area across multiple periods in order to capture the experiences of each focal student. Therefore, I was not able to examine a broader range of students' experiences or other teachers in the school. In addition, working as a solitary researcher meant that I carried my own lenses and assumptions, which inevitably led me to focus on some factors but not others in the school context. I attempted to counter the lack of multiple perspectives by reviewing my themes and claims with colleagues and by engaging in open coding when I analyzed my data.

All four focal students were students of color and, as a white university researcher, I have to acknowledge that may have put me in a position of power. I tried to put students at ease and believe their willingness to chat freely with me about their school experiences and lives indicated that I developed a good rapport with each of them. However, I sensed that at least Jasmine at times told me what she wanted me to hear as she often responded quickly to my questions about her teachers or texts in a positive

manner and then, over the course of the interview, revealed more negative opinions. Additionally, Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine were all involved with the College Bound program at the school, which purportedly provided them with general academic support and after-school tutoring. I wonder if the College Bound program and the assistance that it provided students influenced the students' literacy performance.

Another consideration in this study was that I lacked knowledge about grading practices and literacy instruction in the school at large. Each of the teachers had loose expectations regarding text-based assignments and what they held students accountable to learning from texts. I do not know whether this was a school-wide phenomena or particular to these three teachers as I did not involve other teachers or administrators at the school in the study. If I replicated this same study with three other teachers in the same school or in another school or district, I might see students with different experiences.

My study focused on a 2-month window in the school year. While I talked with all participants about literacy related tasks and experiences from past quarters, I cannot account for students' prior literacy experiences or instruction aside from their reporting. This seems particularly relevant for the ELA class since both students and teachers alluded to different literacy routines and activities earlier in the school year. Since I only focused my observations and interviews on in-school literacy, I also cannot speak to how students' out of school literacies played a role in their academic experiences.

My study design also limited the degree to which I could reliably speak about each student's reading abilities. Since it was important for this study to examine the ways students engaged with their assigned texts, I was not able to prepare a consistent set of

explicit and implicit comprehension questions in advance. Thus, I asked each student different questions, depending upon the text segment he or she read.

Suggestions for Future Research

As discussed throughout this dissertation, this is an emerging line of research and one that warrants timely attention, especially as states and district adopt the CCSS. Findings from this study would benefit from further examination in several particular areas. To begin, the experiences and practices of the teachers and students in this study suggest that we need to look more closely at real classroom contexts in order to better understand the relationship between the reader, text, task, and context, especially in different district and school contexts. Researchers and educators suggesting that content area teachers take on disciplinary literacy practices must do so knowing how they interact with the practices currently embedded. If the chasm between reality and the field's recommendation is too wide and researchers are not able to provide teachers with pathways to change their practice, then they are unlikely to do so. More specifically, as suggested earlier in this chapter, further research is warranted to examine how teachers might redesign text-based tasks, given their existing resources and external pressures, such that students can be supported to learn content from texts. Questions may include: *Does setting a clear purpose for reading positively impact students' ability to learn content from text? How does the use of generic strategies and literacy routines compare with discipline-specific literacy practices?* Extending on that idea, I would also be interested in studying how resources support these text-based task efforts. While focused and intense professional development associated with approach such as Reading Apprenticeship yields promising results, it is not realistic for all teachers in all school

contexts. We need to explore other ways to support teachers in this work. Finally, I am interested in comparing typical school contexts, like the one I studied in this project, with cases in which strong literacy support, either generic or discipline-specific, is present. Such a comparison could serve to illuminate important ways that content area teachers can begin to incorporate literacy practices in the service of content learning.

Conclusion

This study builds on the work of researchers such as Moje, Greenleaf, Shanahan and Shanahan, Reisman, Heller, and others by capturing the literacy experiences of individual students as they navigated across multiple content area classes, an area currently lacking in research. As these researchers and others have articulated, the field is in the midst of defining and grappling with disciplinary literacy and what it means to learn from texts at the secondary level. Researchers and educators currently have little research to help them make decisions about how to incorporate disciplinary literacy practices into secondary content areas. This study intended to add to what we know about the range of skills and experiences of secondary students and their teachers so that students like Mariah, Justin, and Jasmine have opportunities to engage in the kinds of critical, interpretive reading that will help them not only meet the range of sophisticated literacy demands of the 21st century, but also to participate as active and engaged citizens.

As elaborated in the sections above, researchers need to wrestle more directly with the issue of disciplinary literacy in the context of real world content area classrooms before ascribing to the practices of disciplinary experts. The field is in agreement that secondary students need opportunities to engage with diverse texts in rich and meaningful ways and, to that end, we need research that investigates the impact of literacy

instruction, both general and discipline-specific, on students' ability to learn content from texts.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol A for Students

Purpose

The purpose of this interview is to develop report with students and to gain an initial understanding of:

- Students' thoughts about reading
- A description of texts and reading activities in students' content area classes
- Students' general interest in and thoughts about their content area classes

Interview Questions

Tell the student:

I'm going to be spending some time in your English, Social Studies, and Science classes over the next two months. I am interested in understanding what your school day is like, so I'm asking you and a couple other students in your classes to help me. It won't affect your grades at all.

1) To begin, how long have you attended this school? What do you think about your school?

Probe: What makes you say that?

2) Tell me about the classes you are taking right now.

Probes: How are they going for you? What are they like? What do you do in those classes? Which classes are your most favorite? What about your least favorite? What makes you say that?

3) I'm interested in your opinion about your English, Social Studies, and Science classes. Take a look at this scale. (Show scale). Mark an "X" above the statement that best describes how interested you are in each class.

a. I am interested in my English class...

Not at all	A little	Moderately	A lot
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b. I am interested in my Social Studies class...

Not at all	A little	Moderately	A lot
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c. I am interested in my Science class...

Not at all A little Moderately A lot

Probes: What makes you say that? What interests you? What does not interest you? Are there particular topics or activities you like or do not like?

4) I'm interested in getting to know you as a reader.

a. Mark an "X" above the statement that best describes how often you read in your current English class.

Never Sometimes Frequently All the time

b. Mark an "X" above the statement that best describes how often you read in your current Social Studies class.

Never Sometimes Frequently All the time

c. Mark an "X" above the statement that best describes how often you read in your current Science class.

Never Sometimes Frequently All the time

d. Mark an "X" above the statement that best describes how often you read on your own outside of school.

Never Sometimes Frequently All the time

Probes: Tell about the sorts of things you like to read. Is there anything in particular you do not like to read?

APPENDIX B: Interview Protocol B for Students

Purpose

The purpose of these reading interviews is to gather data that describe students':

- Perception of the purpose and intended outcomes of reading activities
- Perception of the text and its difficulty
- Interest in the specific topic
- Motivation to engage with the reading activity
- Ability to decode and comprehend the text
- Perception of the relevance between the text and learning in the class

There will be two parts to each interview: 1) Questions about the text, assignment, and topic and 2) Engagement with a small segment of text. I will ask students to bring their text(s) and related reading material with them to interviews.

Part 1: Questions about the text, assignment, and topic

I am going to be observing in your English, Social Studies, and Science classes over the next 6-7 weeks. At the end of each week, I would like your opinions about the classes. I'm curious about your thinking about the kinds of reading and writing you are doing in this class. Nothing that you say will affect your grades in any way.

I was in your class earlier this week while you were studying _____. Your teacher had you read this/assigned (chapter, article, etc.) either as class or homework. Before we talk about this text, I want to ask you a few questions about your class.

1) Mark an "X" above the statement that best describes your interest in the topic.

How interested are you in learning about _____?

Not at all Slightly Moderately Very

Probe: Tell me why you picked that.

2) Mark an "X" above the statement that best describes how much you knew about the topic.

How much did you know about _____ before reading this text?

Nothing A little A moderate amount A lot

Probe: Tell me why you picked that.

3) Tell me why you think your teacher had you read this. What do you think your teacher wanted you to get out of it? What did you actually get out of it?

Probe: Be honest, did you actually read this? If not, why not? Would you recommend this for students in this class next year? Why or why not?

4) How are you going to use the information you learned from this text?

Probe: What did you/will you do with it in class?

Part 2: Engage with a small chunk of text:

I will have students to do this if they actually read the text prior to the interview. If possible, I will have previously selected a section of the text of 100 words or more to focus on during the interview. If I cannot prepare in advance, I will work with the student to select a passage from the assignment. I will ask students to read aloud to ascertain fluency and then silently for the remainder of the section and then to talk about what they get out of it in relation to the entire text and to the activities I observed in the class.

Tell the student:

Let's focus for a few minutes on this section of the text together. (Direct student to designated section). I'd like you to read the paragraph(s) out loud. Then, I want to talk to you about what you read.

After the student reads the passage out loud, say:

Tell me what you got from this passage.

Probes: What do you think it means when it says _____. When I was observing in class, I noticed your teacher referenced the (insert relevant text/reference) – what connections can you make between that and this part of the text?

APPENDIX C: Interview Protocol A for Teachers

Purpose

The purpose of this interview is to gain an initial understanding of each teacher's:

- Content learning goals
- Rationale for text selection
- Reading activities related to content learning

The following interview questions will guide the interviews with the English, Social Studies, and Science teachers:

- 1) Tell me a little about yourself as a teacher.

Probes: How long have you been teaching? How about at this school? Why did you decide to become a _____ teacher?

- 2) I will be observing in your class for the next several months. Tell me about your current/next unit of study. What are your content goals for that unit?

- 3) What texts, both print and digital, do you plan to use?

Probes: How did you decide to use those and not others for instruction? Tell me about how those work for you and the students. What do you hope students learn from reading the texts? How do you think your students will do with those texts? What makes you say that?

- 4) Tell me about the assignments you typically give in your class. How much reading and writing do you expect?

- 5) I will be working with (*names of students*) in this study. Can you tell me how you think each will do in this unit/next unit? What makes you say that?

APPENDIX D: Interview Protocol B for Teachers

Purpose

The purpose of these interviews will be to gather data that describe the teachers' thinking about text selection and the relationship between content learning, texts, and text-based tasks.

The following interview questions will guide the interviews with the English, Social Studies, and Science teachers.

1) I've observed in your X period class last week while you've been studying _____. What were you hoping the kids would learn from these classes?

Probe: How are you thinking the lessons went this week?

2) I'd like to talk about one particular reading assignment/activity: _____. Tell me about this assignment/activity and your thinking behind it.

Probes: What were your goals for your students? What specifically did you hope they got out of this chapter/article?

3) I saw you use [*name specific*] texts during this period of time. Tell me how you selected those texts.

Probes: What do you like/not like about each text? How do you think your students did with the text?

4) I worked with [*name students*] in this study. How do you think each of them did with this assignment?

Probes: Specifically, what do you think they got out of it or what do you think they missed with this text and assignment?

APPENDIX E: Data Analysis Codes

Each data source (student interviews, teacher interviews, field notes, artifacts) was coded first using the general codes. Then, sub-codes were developed within each data source and compared across data sources.

S= student interview; T= teacher interview; F= field notes; A= data derived from artifacts

General Codes	Nested sub-codes	Fine grain analysis codes
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S - use of strategies during Think Alouds S- reporting of strategy use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PK (prior knowledge) M (metacognitive) RR (rereads) V (visualizes) P (predicts) CC (uses context clues for unfamiliar vocab) Sk (skims to answer questions) M (identifies main idea) A (aware of compr. Breakdown) POV (recognizes point of view) LitAnal (recognizes need for literary analysis) T-S (text to self connection) Asks T for help
	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach HW Avoids/dislikes Easy Vocab inhibits comp Need more instruction Expectations Outside of school Prior experiences Note taking
	T/F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before reading support During reading support After reading support Perceptions of Relates to content learning Expectations
	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time in class Independent Group Read aloud
Writing	T/F/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations Rationale
	S/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations Challenging Helpful Lack (of instruction)
Activities/Tasks	S/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete for grade Resources

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance • Value • Inhibits learning • Promotes learning • Purpose (understanding of) • Did not do • External resources
	T/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale • Design • Outcomes
	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S participation – question • S participation – comment/answer • S participation - connection • Ss on task • Ss off task • T set up • Group • Individual • Tools
Content	S/F/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PK – discipline • PK – domain • PK – specific topic • Connects to big ideas • Limited understanding • Misunderstanding • Personal connection • Challenging • Understanding of • Relevant • Not relevant
	T/F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction • Lecture • Goals • Discipline • Texts • AP exam
Texts	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges • Affordances • Attn to structure/features • Connects to other texts • Value • Note-taking
	T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Rationale • Use of • Challenges • Affordances • Note-taking
	F/Artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types • Web • Film

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Resources
Interest	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity/task • Discipline • Not • Specific topic • Outside of school
Perceptions/beliefs	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Student teachers • Discipline • Academic ability • Grading Fair • Grading Unfair • School context
	T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Discipline • Literacy in content area • Content instruction • Teaching stance
Travel - any content or strategies that students bring from one context to another (S)		

APPENDIX F: DBQ Scoring Guidelines

5/8/12

AP[®] WORLD HISTORY 2006 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1—Document-Based Question

BASIC CORE (competence) (Historical skills and knowledge required to show competence.)	0–7 Points
1. Has acceptable thesis.	1 Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis cannot be split and must be located in either the introductory paragraph or the conclusion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It may be a number of contiguous sentences. ○ It cannot simply repeat the question. • The thesis must address the social <u>and</u> economic effects of the global flow of silver as indicated in the documents. 	
2. Understands the basic meaning of documents. (May misinterpret one document.)	1 Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are <u>eight</u> documents. Students must address <u>all</u> documents in the essay and demonstrate understanding of the basic meaning of at least <u>seven</u> documents. Listing the documents separately or listing the documents as part of a group does sufficiently demonstrate an understanding of basic meaning. 	
3. Supports thesis with appropriate evidence from all or all but one document.	2 Points
For 2 points:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence must be drawn from seven or eight documents <u>and</u> be connected to the thesis. 	
For 1 point:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence must be drawn from six documents <u>and</u> must be connected to the thesis. 	
4. Analyzes point of view in at least two documents.	1 Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must correctly <u>analyze</u> point of view in at least <u>two</u> documents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Point of view explains why this particular person might have this particular opinion OR what particular feature informs the author's point of view. ○ Students must move beyond mere description of that individual by considering and explaining the tone, the characteristics of the author, the intended audience and/or how the intended outcome may have influenced the author's opinion. <p>Mere attribution is not sufficient. Attribution is copying or repeating the information from the source line of the document.</p>	
5. Analyzes documents by grouping them in two or three ways, depending on the question.	1 Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must explicitly group the documents in at least <u>two</u> ways. 	
6. Identifies and explains the need for one type of appropriate additional document or source.	1 Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must identify an appropriate additional document or source and explain how the document or source will contribute to an analysis of the effects of the silver trade. 	

APPENDIX G: AP World History Notebook Criteria

Name: _____ **Period:** _____

Notebook check:	Pts	Earned
Identifiers	10	<input type="text"/>
Enumeration: pages numbered	20	<input type="text"/>
Table of Contents (TOC)	30	<input type="text"/>
Class Notes (Noted by title in TOC)		
At least 20 days of notes	200	<input type="text"/>
Chapter Notes (Identified in TOC)		
<input type="text"/> 19	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 20	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 21	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 22	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 23	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 24	10	<input type="text"/>
Chapter BP Questions (Identified in TOC)		
<input type="text"/> 19	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 20	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 21	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 22	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 23	10	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> 24	10	<input type="text"/>
Total Possible Points	380	<input type="text"/>

Bonus Log

Appendix H: Mariah's Participation in AP World History

Type of comment/question	Total #	Example	Classroom interchange	Related textbook passage
Asking for clarification of a term or concept	6	#1	Mr. Berkman: Our question today is <i>What obstacles impeded the economic development of 3rd world countries?</i> Mariah: "What does impede mean?"	Mr. Berkman's question came directly from Big Picture Question in the textbook, but was not used in the body of the text. That Mariah did not know the word 'impede' means she likely did not understand the question.
		#2	Mr. Berkman: The emergence of technology. What you have in your hand is more powerful than the 360 IBM that was top of the line in the 1960s. Which private company created the Internet? S: Was it the government? Mr. Berkman: That's right, no private company did. The Internet was created by the government. MB: Whose government?	The only mention of the Internet in Chapter 24 was: "Technology also contributed to the acceleration of economic globalization. Containerized shipping, huge oil tankers, and air express services dramatically lowered transportation costs, while fiber optic cables and later the Internet provided the communication infrastructure for global economic interaction" (Strayer, p. 725).
Content knowledge answer or question	9	#1	Mr. Berkman: Guevara was an Argentinean doctor – trained as a physician. Joins Castro. Given a government post and quits that post to foment revolution in South American. The powers against him are large and strong and our CIA finds him in Bolivia and executes him. The mystique of Che Guevara still persists today. Mariah: Why did the US kill him and not Castro?	"By the late 1960s, the icon of this third world-ideology was Che Guevara, the Argentine-born revolutionary who had embraced the Cuban Revolution and subsequently attempted to replicate its experience of liberation through guerilla warfare in parts of African and Latin America. Various aspects of his life story – his fervent anti-imperialism, which was cast as a global struggle; his self sacrificing lifestyle; his death in 1967 at the hands of the Bolivian military – made him a heroic figure to third-world revolutionaries as well as to Western radicals, who were disgusted with the complacency and materialism of their own societies" (Strayer, p. 735)
		#2	Mr. Berkman: It's called justice and sometimes it looks like the only people who will deliver justice are the communists. It is extremely attractive especially to people who are oppressed. Mariah: Isn't that was communism does? Mr. Berkman: Yes, what is it that you know about power? Mariah: Corrupts. They'll become corrupt. Mr. Berkman: Look what happened to Stalin.	There was nothing about Stalin in Chapter 24. Mr. Berkman was reviewing a practice DBQ essay on China's Cultural Revolution. Some students confused it with Russia and was reviewing content covered previously during this interchange. Nowhere in the text does it mention how Stalin died.

			<p>Mariah: How did he die?</p> <p>Mariah: Good question. The autopsy results are questionable. It doesn't matter, the bastard is dead. [Some laughing, some gasps] That's just how I felt how about it [laughs] I was 8 years old when he died and I remember how happy my mother my was.</p>	
Responses not directly related to history content, but another subject or personal connection	4	#1	<p>[Responding to a question about how humans impact the environment]</p> <p>Mariah: "Whaling."</p>	The text did not mention whaling as an impact on the environment. The portion that discussed environmental impacts on animals was in relation to diminished habitats.
			<p>Mr. Berkman: So feminism as a political movement had some roots in the French Revolution. A woman named Mary Wallstonecraft. She authored a declaration of rights for women along with [could not hear]. You might know Mary Wallstonecraft's famous daughter – Mary Shelley. [pause] Who wrote Frankenstein?</p> <p>Mariah: Mary Shelley</p>	The only mention of France in the section on feminism referred to Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 publication of <i>The Second Sex</i> and how in the 1970s French women staged a Mother's Day parade under the slogan , "Celebrated one day- exploited all year."
		#2	<p>Mr. Berkman: It's called justice and sometimes it looks like the only people who will deliver justice are the communists. It is extremely attractive especially to people who are oppressed.</p> <p>Mariah: Isn't that was communism does?</p> <p>Mr. Berkman: Yes, what is it that you know about power?</p> <p>Mariah: Corrupts. They'll become corrupt.</p> <p>Mr. Berkman: Look what happened to Stalin.</p> <p>Mariah: How did he die?</p> <p>Mariah: How did he die?</p> <p>Mr. Berkman: Good question. The autopsy results are questionable. It doesn't matter, the bastard is dead. [Some laughing, some gasps] That's just how I felt how about it [laughs] I was 8 years old when he died and I remember how happy my mother my was.</p>	There was nothing about Stalin in Chapter 24. Mr. Berkman was reviewing a practice DBQ essay on China's Cultural Revolution. Some students confused it with Russia and was reviewing content covered previously during this interchange. Nowhere in the text does it mention how Stalin died.

Responses not directly related to history content, but another subject or personal connection	4	#1	[Responding to a question about how humans impact the environment] Mariah: "Whaling."	The text did not mention whaling as an impact on the environment. The portion that discussed environmental impacts on animals was in relation to diminished habitats.
			Mr. Berkman: So feminism as a political movement had some roots in the French Revolution. A woman named Mary Wallstonecraft. She authored a declaration of rights for women along with [could not hear]. You might know Mary Wallstonecraft's famous daughter – Mary Shelley. [pause] Who wrote Frankenstein? Mariah: Mary Shelley	The only mention of France in the section on feminism referred to Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 publication of <i>The Second Sex</i> and how in the 1970s French women staged a Mother's Day parade under the slogan , "Celebrated one day- exploited all year."

APPENDIX I: Justin's Participation in AP World History

Type of comment/question	Total #	Example	Classroom interchange	Related textbook passage
Asking for clarification of a term or concept	2	#1	<p>Mr. Berkman: The Mexican revolution of 1810 was a revolution against despotic government.</p> <p>Justin: Can you define despotic?</p> <p>Mr. Berkman: A government rule by terror, by whim for caprice. Here is the thing about despots – once the despot loses his grip on society, there will be rebellion.</p>	Mr. Berkman was reviewing a free-response question on a practice AP exam. This was not related to the current textbook chapter, but they had previously learned about the Mexican Revolution.
		#2	<p>[Mr. Berkman handed out parent permission slips for students to watch R-rated films in class (<i>Saving Private Ryan</i> and <i>Elizabeth</i>).]</p> <p>Mr. Berkman: I don't want this to be an imposition.</p> <p>Justin: What does imposition mean?</p> <p>Mr. Berkman: To impose.</p>	This is not related to the text. Justin asked a question about a word Mr. Berkman used in relation to permission slips.
Content knowledge answer or question	3	#1	<p>Mr. Berkman: So we have a cultural revolution happening in the 60s. We have the phenomena of Che Guevara. He is a romantic revolutionary figure. He is Argentinean. He is a trained physician. He joins Fidel Castro and goes to South America to foment revolution. The CIA chases him down and has him shot.</p> <p>Justin: What did he fight for?</p>	<p>Related segment from the textbook, which Justin had not read:</p> <p>“By the late 1960s, the icon of this third world-ideology was Che Guevara, the Argentine-born revolutionary who had embraced the Cuban Revolution and subsequently attempted to replicate its experience of liberation through guerilla warfare in parts of African and Latin America. Various aspects of his life story – his fervent anti-imperialism, which was cast as a global struggle; his self-sacrificing lifestyle; his death in 1967 at the hands of the Bolivian military – made him a heroic figure to third-world revolutionaries as well as to Western radicals, who were disgusted with the complacency and materialism of their own societies” (Strayer, p. 735)</p>
		#2	<p>Mr. Berkman: Things are worse in other places of the world. If you are a girl who goes to school in Afghanistan, your odds of being shot by the Taliban are high. In Saudi Arabia if you walk down the street with a man who is not a relative, you will be picked up and beat.</p> <p>Justin: Why can't you lie?</p>	There are approximately 6 pages in Chapter 24 devoted to religious fundamentalism and more specifically Islam. The text focuses on global causes and responses, but does not discuss the type of incident in Mr. Berkman's comments.

Responses not directly related to history content, but another subject or personal connection	1	#1	<p>[Responding to a segment about the Vietnam War]</p> <p>Mr. Berkman: [The counter-culture movement] was a rejection in response to the war in Vietnam. It was also a rejection of the middle class bourgeois values that had take over after WWII. We had lost the ability to have a moral and ethnical base. Young people would look at the ambitions and value soft our parents and poo-poo it. We would have felt it was the result of a corrupt system. It mixes with the counter culture movement and the antiwar movement. The antiwar movement came out of the fact that young men were eligible for the draft. You could be drafted, trained for 6 weeks, and then sent to Vietnam to kill other people.</p> <p>KG: Is that what <i>Rambo</i> is based off of?</p>	<p>Related segment from the textbook:</p> <p>“Within the United States as well, global exercise of American power generated controversy. The Vietnam War, for example, divided the United States more sharply than at any time since the Civil War. It alienated the United States from many of its traditional allies. The war in Vietnam provided a platform for a growing number of critics, both at home and abroad, who had come to resent the American cultural and economic dominance in the post-1945 world. It stimulated a new sense of activism among students in the nation’s colleges and universities. Finally, the Vietnam War gave rise to charges that the cold war had undermined American democracy by promoting an overly powerful, “imperial’ presidency, by creating a culture of secrecy and an obsession with national security and by limiting political debate in the country” (Strayer, p. 734).</p>
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APPENDIX J: Jasmine's Participation in Regular World History

Type of comment/question	Total #	Example	Classroom interchange	Related textbook passage
Asking for clarification of a term or concept	2	#1	[Referencing the <i>Mission</i> worksheet] Jasmine: On this paper, the first question - is the time period 1715 or 1750?	Though the textbook briefly mentioned Jesuits and missionaries, this discussion is not directly connected to the textbook. Rather, it is a discussion of the film <i>The Mission</i> , which is about a Spanish Jesuits missionary in 18 th century South America.
		#2	[Responding to a lecture segment on the bourgeoisie and the Estates General in France] Jasmine: I don't understand how the Bourgeoisie fit in with the clergy, nobility or peasants.	From the textbook: "About 97 percent of the people belonged to the Third Estate. The three groups that made up this estate differed greatly in their economic conditions. The first group- the bourgeoisie, or middle class – we bankers, factory owners, merchants, professionals, and skills artisans. Often, they were well educated and believed strongly in Enlightenment ideals of liberty and equality..." (<i>Modern World History</i> , p. 217). There is also a graphic in the textbook that details the composition of the First, Second, and Third Estates.
Content knowledge answer or question	4	#1	Mr. Berkman: The soldiers join Napoleon. He marches into Paris and the new king hightails it out of town. The French people rally around him. Jasmine: Basically his whole ruling was just luck.	The segment of text directly related to this exchange is: "In October 1795, fate handed the young officer a change for glory. When royalist rebels marched on the National Convention, a government official told Napoleon to defend the delegates. Napoleon and his gunners greeted the thousands of royalists with a cannonade. Within minutes, the attackers fled in panic and confusion. Napoleon Bonaparte became the hero of the hour and was hailed throughout Paris as the savior of the French republic" (<i>Modern World History</i> , p. 229).
		#2	Mr. Berkman: So we have Austria, Great Britain, who else was there? Who did Napoleon invade in 1812 that caused him so much trouble? Jasmine: Russia	Jasmine had learned this content from reading her textbook assignment. From the textbook: "Napoleon's most disastrous mistake of all came in 1812. Even though Alexander I had become Napoleon's ally, the Russian czar refused to stop selling grain to Brain. In addition, the French and Russian rulers suspected each other of having competing designs on Poland. Because of this breakdown in their alliance, Napoleon decided to invade Russia. In June, 1812, Napoleon and his Grand Army of more than 420,000 soldiers marched into Russia..." (<i>Modern World History</i> , p. 235).

Responses not directly related to history content, but another subject or personal connection	2	#1	Mr. Berkman: There might be one or two Catholics in the room? Are you Jesuit? If not what's the difference? Jasmine: I just have a guess. They like taking care of the people?	Thought the textbook briefly mentioned Jesuits and missionaries, this discussion is not directly connected to the textbook. Rather, it is a discussion about the film <i>The Mission</i> , which is about a Spanish Jesuits missionary in 18 th century South America.
		#2	[Jasmine asked Mr. Berkman a question about why Japanese wear flip-flops after watching a film depicting people in traditional Japanese dress.]	There is no mention in the textbook about traditional Japanese dress.

APPENDIX K: Ecology Texts & Tasks

Task Title	Text	Text Features & Modifications	Goal	Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
Meat Consumption	“Rethinking the Meat Guzzler” by Mark Bittman from <i>The New York Times</i> (1200L)	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -News article heading -Quotations <p>Modifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teacher embedded questions 	Understand the environmental impact of eating meat	-“1 minute interview” activity on meat consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teacher read text out loud to whole class -Students followed along -Teacher stopped after each paragraph to discuss the text and ask students embedded questions -Students took notes on embedded questions -Teacher showed “The Meatrix” 	-Students took article home to complete the questions
Invasive species	Two page document for different invasive species (e.g. English Ivy) (960L)	<p>Features:</p> <p>Five headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native to? • How did it get to the U.S? • Where does it grow? • Characteristics and impacts? • How is it being managed/eliminated? <p>-Bulleted facts under each heading</p> <p>Modifications:</p> <p>Modified from connected prose to bullet points</p>	Understand the environmental impact of invasive species	-Lecture and PowerPoint on native and nonnative species	-Students read documents and took notes on chart	-Students shared data with classmates so that everyone had the entire chart completed
Final Exam	Article 1: “Largest U.S. Dam	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bolted subheadings 	Provide context for exam questions.	N/A	Students read independently and	N/A

	<p>Removal to Restore Salmon Run” ~1300 words</p> <p>Article 2: “Climate change: Arctic passage 400 parts per million milestone.” ~1100 words.</p>	<p>-Text broken into chunks by 1-5 questions</p> <p>Modifications: Teacher modified articles to provide context for questions, but not answers.</p>			answer exam questions	
Virtual data collection for Lowry Park	<p>Earth Core website (http://www.earthcore.org/). Page for Lowry Park. <i>No Lexile available.</i></p>	<p>Features: -Term definitions -Interactive map -Tables of data about species</p> <p>Modifications: No modifications</p>	Simulate the data collection of field Ecologists	<p>-Lecture and PowerPoint on methods Ecologists use to determine the health of a forest -Demonstration of how to navigate the website</p>	<p>-Students followed steps on task sheet -Recorded % on chart for each plant species</p>	-Students turned charts in for a grade
Global Climate Change project (Penguins, Caribbean, Human Health)	<p>Reading packet contained: -Project overview (2 p.) -Excel graphing (1 p.) -Research fact sheets (6-7 p.) (1240L)</p>	<p>Features: -Heading & subheadings -Bulleted lists broken out under the steps -Sample graphic of final poster -Bolted terms (e.g. examine, explain)</p> <p>Modifications: -Project overview created by teacher -Research data sheets shortened</p>	Reinforce knowledge of feedback loops by analyzing how the data contained feedback loops	<p>-Lecture on global climate change and feedback loops -Demonstration of how to create a graph using Excel</p>	<p>-Students worked in small groups to read packet, graph data, identify trends, list possible explanations -Groups create mini posters</p>	<p>-Gallery walk of mini-posters -Students took notes on posters</p>
Energy project	Reading packets from NEED on a renewable or nonrenewable type	<p>Features: -Headings & subheadings</p>	Understand what makes something a renewable or	<p>-Lecture and Powerpoint on energy -Pair activity to create a</p>	<p>-Small groups read and created mini posters -answering 4 questions:</p>	<p>-Gallery walk of mini posters -Students took notes</p>

	<p>of energy (e.g. Coal, Hydropower, Uranium) <i>(990L)</i></p>	<p>-Graphics -Tables</p> <p>Modifications: No modifications</p>	<p>nonrenewable resource</p>	<p>visual representation of 1 form of energy -Reviewed task with students</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the type of energy and how it is recovered 2. Where is the energy stores and for what purpose? 3. What/who uses this type of energy and for what purpose? 4. Advantage/disadvantages? 	<p>on posters for upcoming quiz</p>
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APPENDIX L: Mariah's Participation in Ecology

Type of comment/question	Total #	Example	Classroom/Small Group interchange	Related to content or text
Asking for clarification of a term, concept, or activity	4 class discussion/ active participation in small group	#1	<p>[Mariah, Jasmine, and Antoine were working at computer. Mariah was leading the group. Jasmine was tired because of play rehearsal.]</p> <p>Jasmine: We have to all write down the definitions? Mariah: Ms. Meyer- can you help? Do we write down all these? Ms. Meyer: For #5? No, I just want you to summarize. Did it come from one habitat or more than one?</p>	<p>Mariah was working with Jasmine and another students on the invasive/noninvasive species simulation on the computer. They had already had a lecture on the content and were collecting data using the website.</p>
		#2	<p>Mariah: Do you have the rubric? [looks over rubric] [To teacher] So to exceeds standard you have to additional information? Can you go on Discovery Channel? Ms. Meyer: Yes, you can.</p>	<p>Students were working in small group on their Global Climate Change project. They had already read their packets, graphed their data, and were in the process of typing up their explanations.</p>
Content knowledge answer or question	17 class discussion/ active participation in small group	#1	<p>Mariah: when you see heat waves, is that kinetic energy? Ms. Meyer: What you are seeing is the heat moving the particles in the air. You can't see the heat itself.</p>	<p>Ms. Meyer was lecturing on potential and kinetic energy. The follow definitions were on the screen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential energy - stored chemical energy and the energy of position (gravitational). You haven't utilized all the energy you've eaten from your food today. Glycogen is the way we store energy in our bodies. • Kinetic - electrical, radiant, thermal, motion, sound
		#3	<p>Ms. Meyer: Canopy cover is the amount of sky that's covered by leaves, such that the light wouldn't get through. Is the % of canopy greater than 25%. Here in the Pacific Northwest, we say the forest should have greater than 25% in order for the forest to be healthy. Mariah: how do you determine canopy cover? Ms. Meyer: Let's talk about it. This is how you measure canopy cover....</p>	<p>Ms. Meyer was lecturing on the topic. Students did not read a text in conjunction with this lecture – they looked at PowerPoint slides and images of canopy coverage.</p>

		#5	<p>Ms. Meyer: Let's do this warm-up. I'm asking you to put these three categories in order from the most energy us in the US to the least. I reside in my home – that is a residence. Commercial is a business. Please do take just a few moments to do this. It is totally your opinion – I don't expect you to know this.</p> <p>[Ss work]</p> <p>What did you say?</p> <p>Niema: I said transportation</p> <p>Mariah: I said industrial first because we burn a lot of coal and use a lot fossil fuels</p>	<p>This was a pre-reading activity to review energy and set students up to read about different types of renewable and nonrenewable energy.</p>
Responses not directly related to history content, but another subject or personal connection		0		

APPENDIX M: Jasmine's Participation in Ecology

Type of comment/question	Total #	Example	Classroom/Small Group interchange	Related to content or text
Asking for clarification of a term, concept, or activity	active participation in small group	#1	<p>Jasmine: We have to all write down the definitions?</p> <p>Mariah: Ms. Meyer- can you help? Do we write down all these?</p> <p>Ms. Meyer: For #5? No, I just want you to summarize. Did it come from one habitat or more than one?</p>	Students were working on the invasive/noninvasive species simulation on the computer. They had already had a lecture on the content and were collecting data using the website. Jasmine said she was tired because of play rehearsal.
Content knowledge answer or question	1 class discussion/ active participation in small group	#1	<p>Mariah: Ok so on these things we have to write how these are all related. So like the sea ice is related to decrease in population.</p> <p>Antoine: are we going to do it in this format?</p> <p>Mariah: We don't have to.</p> <p>Jasmine: We have to explanations for each graph.</p> <p>Antoine: Why it is the way it is.</p> <p>Jasmine: [reading from notes] So the reason why it is decreasing is ultraviolet radiation.</p>	Students were working in small group on their Global Climate Change project. They had already read their packets, graphed their data, and were in the process of typing up their explanations.
		#2	<p>Mariah: It's not healthy if more than 50% is covered with an invasive.</p> <p>Ms. Meyer: Good, an invasive is not supposed to be there. You got it but we're going to take a cut deeper. Jasmine?</p> <p>Jasmine: It's the start of it spreading.</p> <p>Ms. Meyer: Ok, but who cares if it is all covered by English ivy?</p>	

APPENDIX N: Anthology Preface Scoring Rubric

Personal Anthology Preface Rubric (Self/Teacher Evaluation)

(100 pts. total – 20 per category below)

Name: [Redacted]

Teacher: [Redacted]

Title: Life the life you love

Date turned in: 6/1/12

Criteria	Achievement / Point Distribution				Points
	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-20	
Discuss finding the literature, assembling it, and what you learned while making the Anthology	Few if any reflections about how you put the assignment together, little about your struggles and discoveries.	Some mention of your process, and likes and dislikes as a reader. Not enough, though.	Several insightful reflections about the discoveries/difficulties you had with the project.	You seamlessly threaded throughout your history as a reader, weaving a sense of discovery throughout the preface.	20
Mention all 25 titles with in-depth explanations of 13 titles at least	Roughly half of the titles mentioned; somewhat shallow and/or unconvincing explanations for why you chose each item. Repetitive/unimaginative	17-20 titles mentioned; some explored in depth with interesting explanations and self-exploration, some shallow/unconvincing	21-24 titles mentioned; mostly thoughtful and convincing. The reasons given reveal much about you and your interests.	All 25 titles mentioned; some epiphanies - a powerful case for the literature that reveals yourself and the way you view the world.	20
Voice - the writing reflects your personality	The writing has a generic quality – could have been written by anyone. Boring.	Parts of the writing show your real self, but others descend into dull generic writing	Mostly accomplished, interesting writing that only you could write.	Full of verve and attitude, your writing entices the reader to explore your anthology and get to know you.	20
Organization: Introduction, Body Paragraphs, Conclusion	Random order, mostly listing off the work and giving a reason without connections. Little or no Intro/Conclusion.	You have an intro, body, and conclusion with logical flow, but other parts seem random and list like.	Your preface holds together for the most part, and flows logically. Strong Intro/Conclusion	An original and compelling sense of organization that draws the reader through your Preface. Excellent Intro/Conclusion	20
Conventions: Paragraphing, Proper Citations, Active Verbs (few "to be" verbs)	Many grammar/spelling mistakes; you forgot to underline titles of longer works or put shorter ones in quotation marks. Huge paragraphs with few thoughtful breaks. You "to be" way too much.	Some mistakes with conventions and problems with proper citation of titles. Some logical paragraphing. Too many "to be" verbs	Mostly correctly spelled, and without grammar mistakes and properly cited, thoughtful paragraphing. A few "unnecessary" "to be" verbs.	Excellent grasp of conventions, logical paragraphing, spelling and grammar error-free. You use active verbs, avoiding most if not all the "to be" verbs.	18
				Total---->	98/100

Circle the descriptors above that apply to the preface. Put numbers in boxes on the right.

Comments:

[Handwritten initials]

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