JOURNAL OF LITERACY INNOVATION

RETHINKING LITERACY INSTRUCTION

JOURNAL OF LITERACY INNOVATION

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION
SEAN RUDAY, *JLI* FOUNDER AND EDITOR
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I am honored and excited to be writing the introductory letter to the second issue of the *Journal of Literacy Innovation*: honored by the wonderful reception *JLI* has received from the literacy community and excited to be providing educators with another outstanding issue of this journal.

The *Journal of Literacy Innovation* is a home for both imagination and utility, a place where inventive and creative scholars and educators share classroom-ready practices. I am thrilled to say that the five manuscripts in this issue of *JLI* fit the journal's objective perfectly.

The first piece in this issue, April Brannon's "Winning Poets: Reading and Writing Contemporary Poetry in the Classroom," makes an important case for the study of poetry in today's language arts classroom, describing engaging instructional practices that deepen students' poetic understandings and meet Common Core State Standards. Brannon articulates her excellent argument: "As teachers, it is our duty to read the standards not as curricular jail cells, but as opportunities to infuse students' learning with a joy for language. In short, we must take a broad perspective and create lessons that inspire."

The next article you'll encounter is Terry Husband's outstanding piece, "Designing Game-Based Learning Activities in a Literacy Methods Course." Husband describes findings and reflections from an action-research study that examined his experiences incorporating the concept of Game Based Learning (GBL) into two literacy methods courses. This manuscript clearly defines GBL, describes it benefits, and provides specific and concrete reasons why, in Husband's words, "GBL activities have the potential to equip pre-service teachers with an innovative means of addressing the changing needs of 21st century learners."

Continuing to the third piece in this issue, you'll find Cheryl Lain's "Reading Together One-on-One Means Caring and Learning," which skillfully and thoughtfully describes the importance of individualized instruction to the academic and personal development of today's students. Lain explains, "Schools can promote learning when they create opportunities for students and teachers to work together in ways that encourage mutual understanding, empathy, and friendship." This article does an outstanding job of providing theoretical and practical information, addressing the significance of tutoring as well as classroom-ready ideas and practices.

After that, you'll arrive at another article that does an exemplary job of merging theoretical ideas with practical suggestions, Laura Hill's "The Win-Win Situation in Writing Pedagogy:

Encouraging the Reluctant Writer through Productive Assessments and Tech Savvy Techniques." Hill advocates for a process-oriented approach to writing instruction that uses basic technological tools to ease unnecessary burdens on both teachers and students. She summarizes the piece's message perfectly: "Using technology during the writing process sets up a win-win situation; students use a tool which they enjoy using on a daily basis, and educators use a tool that will lighten the current overwhelming demands of teaching." One reason I find Hill's ideas especially valuable is the way they emphasize the purposeful use of technological tools.

This issue of *JLI* concludes with Jennifer Jackson Whitley's thought-provoking and important piece, "'These fragments I have shored against my ruins': Intertextuality in the Dialogical Secondary Classroom." Whitley's piece explores the theories of dialogism and intertextuality, artfully discussing these ideas and providing concrete suggestions for classroom practice. The piece advocates for the power of intertextuality by asserting that "if educators introduce it to their students, students will begin to find connections between texts on their own, as well as become empowered in relation to their education, giving them ownership of what they learn."

These authors' works merge theory and practice in innovative and useful ways, allowing this issue of *JLI* to make a meaningful contribution to the field of language arts instruction. I hope you will consider joining them by submitting your work for possible publication in future issues of the *Journal of Literacy Innovation.* The future of this journal holds a great deal of promise; I hope you will be a part of it! For more information on *JLI*, please visit www.journalofliteracyinnovation.weebly.com.

See you again in April 2017 for *JLI*'s next issue!

Sean

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WINNING POETS: READING AND WRITING CONTEMPORARY POETRY IN THE CLASSROOM
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Abstract

Arguing that poetry is an essential part of English language arts, the author describes how to implement a writing lesson based on a contemporary poem. She advocates for an approach that includes the close reading of a poem for craft, pre-writing exercises that draw on the model poem, and the creation and reading of student-written poems that reflect the model poem.

Winning Poets: Reading and Writing Contemporary Poetry in the Classroom

"I don't teach poetry. It isn't in the Common Core." I overheard a colleague say this about a month ago at a literacy workshop. I didn't know the teacher and didn't want to be rude by inserting myself into her conversation, but the fact of the matter is that poetry *is* in the reading standards of the Common Core. Granted, poetry is buried and listed as one of many possible genres for study, but it is there.

Now, a few weeks later, I am not so sure I did the right thing by keeping quiet at the workshop. In retrospect, I should have stood up for poetry—it is, after all, one of the oldest forms of human expression. In defending the teaching of poetry, I would have been defending students' access to creative expression, the artistry of language, and the plain joy of words. What kept me quiet, aside from good manners, is that while poetry is listed in the reading standards, it is not in the writing standards.   As expected, traditional academic genres such as the research essay and argumentative essay are there, but poetry is nowhere to be found.

Does that mean that there is no room for writing poetry under a Common Core curriculum? Certainly not. To be successful in any kind of narrative writing (which is included in the Common Core), students have to know how to create imagery, how to utilize figurative language, and how to establish appropriate mood and tone. Poetry is an ideal way to develop general writing skills such as these because to write poetry is to think about what language can do. A poet uses words to distill emotion and ideas, and s/he can't rely on clever plot twists or conventional narrative structures. Therefore, for any teacher who feels pressure to adhere strictly to the writing mandates of the Common Core, I argue that the writing of poetry is a means to develop the language skills that lead to sophisticated prose in Common Core mandated genres.   In other words, the tools of poetry can be a building block for other forms

of writing. In her article, "Why Teach Poetry?", Tara Seale (2015) argues a similar point, citing Andrew Simmon's claim that poetry writing leads to "precise, economical diction" (p.13).

All of that said, I want to be clear in what I am arguing. I think writing poetry is an essential part not just of the writing curriculum, but of *human existence,* and I see its marginal inclusion in the Common Core reading standards and notable absence from the writing standards as a tragedy. What the authors of the Common Core failed to realize when they left poetry out of the writing standards is that creativity and self- expression are part of what make us human and are therefore essential to a thoughtful and humane education. To me, the idea that a student could complete his or her secondary education without ever writing a poem is an assault on a humanistic education. It is, simply put, just very, very sad.

 Many educators seem to agree. The March 2015 issue of *English Journal* had a poetry theme, and in it, thoughtful teachers make the case for the inclusion of poetry in current classrooms. The authors argue that poetry allows students the opportunity to consider multiple perspectives, to develop emotional intelligence, and perhaps most importantly, to elicit passion in and from students (Seale 2015; Schraben 2015; Tanner 2015; Vaughn 2015; Xerri & Xerri Agius, 2015; Williams, 2015). These are worthy goals and essential to a holistic and personally meaningful education. Like those English teachers and many others, I believe that reading and writing poetry does, indeed, matter.

The XXX University's Winning Poets program shares this philosophy and was designed to bring award winning contemporary poetry to local schools through writing workshops in secondary classrooms. Recognizing that the writing of poetry is a valuable act, the program includes both a reading and writing lesson based on an award winning poet's work, and one of the underlying philosophies of the program is that students learn how to write poetry by studying strong model poems.   Many poets cite the study of other poets' work as key to their development as writers. For example, Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky (1998) states, "Art is best understood through careful attention to great examples" (p. 117). Teachers, too, know that model poems facilitate strong writing from students and rely on close readings that focus on craft to teach writing skills (Kennedy, 2015; Brannon, 2012; Dorfman & Cappelli, 2012; Statman, 2000; Heard, 1999; Glasser,1999).

What follows is a sixth grade lesson from the Winning Poets program, and while the methods described focus on Donald Hall's "Eating the Pig" (available online at http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/171761), the approach could be used to teach any type of quality poetry.

Hall is known for his use of plain language and for his use of ordinary things as subject matter, which makes his work relatable for young readers. "Eating the Pig" was chosen because of the strong use of imagery and because of the use of extended metaphor. The poem was also chosen because of its subject: food. Generally speaking, food writing--be it poetry or prose-- provides the opportunity to talk about many of the types of things that belong in an English

class, including what makes good writing. Educator Lynn Bloom (2008) makes this point eloquently when she says, "Food writing is evocative, full of human emotion, energy, sensory details, and sensuality" (p. 356).

It is worth noting that "Eating the Pig" is a difficult poem, one that gives sophisticated adult readers pause, and that difficulty is exactly why it is a useful poem for young readers to study. Since poetry allows for multiple entry points, individual students can have unique experiences with a shared class poem, and teachers can differentiate based on readers' sophistication. While the lesson was designed to challenge students and their analytical skills, another (just as important) goal was to allow students to delight in the language of the poem—in short, to allow for an aesthetic experience. Therefore, it was unnecessary to uncover every symbol, subtext, and possible point of interpretation of the poem, to, as Poet Laureate Billy Collins (1996) wrote, "torture a confession out of it."

With those thoughts in mind, the poem was abridged for classroom use and broken into three sections (Stanzas 1-3, 4-8, and 15-19). First, students listened to the first section. Reading slowly and expressively, I let lines like, "The eyeballs must be removed/or they will burst during roasting…" (lines 22-23) draw prolonged giggles. They wrote down key phrases that "stuck out" to them, but they were not allowed to read along with me.

Once I finished reading a section, students created what I call a flash drawing. A flash drawing is a very fast drawing that is completed in about two minutes. It isn't meant to be a work of art, and not much class time is spent on the actual creation of students' images. Students drew a picture of what they thought was the most important part from the reading and tried to capture as many details as possible.

Drawing in the English classroom certainly isn't anything new—for years, teachers have asked students to create literary visual art in order to foster engagement and to aid in comprehension and interpretation. However, I didn't want this exercise to turn into a low-level comprehension activity in which students simply parroted back what was written in visual form—the equivalent of a plot level reading quiz. My main goals in using the flash drawing technique were threefold. First, I wanted to develop listening skills (Common Core Standards SL 1.A, 1.B, 1.C) by creating an environment where the act of listening was key to successful completion of the task. Second, I wanted to put students' responses to a poem at the center of the lesson. Because students often feel that poetry is inaccessible or cryptic, their drawings offered a student-generated way into the poem that validated their interpretation and allowed for discussions that centered around points in the poem that appealed to them. Finally, the flash drawing technique served as a stepping stone to students' development of a poetic sensibility. Because students had to listen carefully to the language and because they couldn't look back on what they heard, their drawings reflected the most memorable (and arguably most effective) moments in the poem, thus making them sensitive to language.

Once the drawings were complete, I put several students' works up on the overhead, and we discussed what images the students included as we re-read the lines that coincided with the images. Then, we discussed *why* those lines were particularly effective. For example, in Jared's image of the pig (see Figure 1), he drew the pig's crossed out eyes.

Figure 1: Jared's Image of the Pig
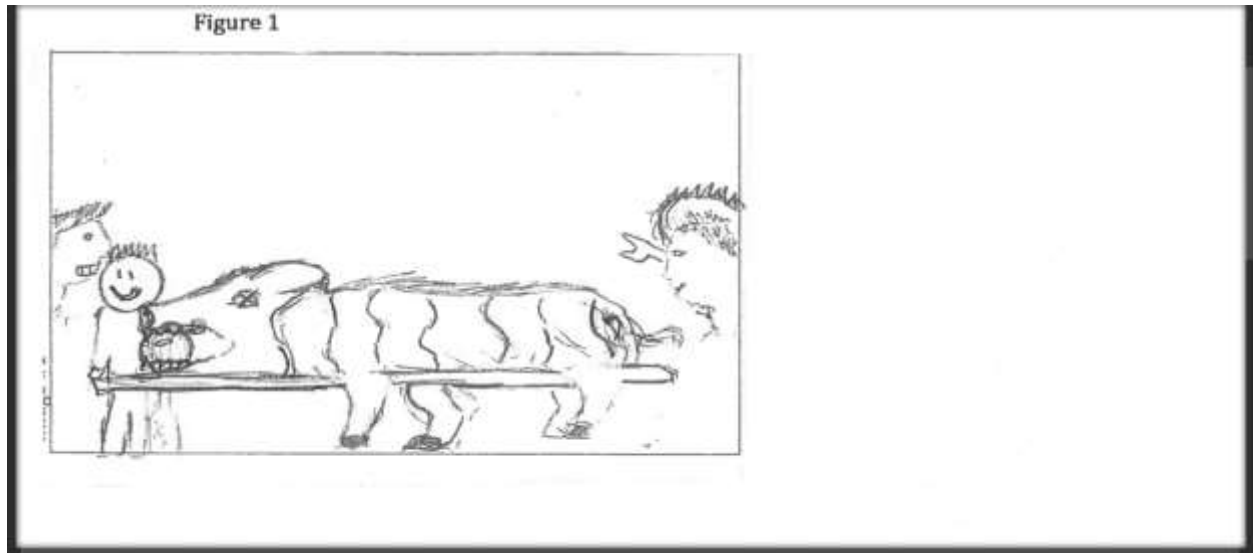
I then took a quick survey and found that every student in the class included the crossed out eyes in their drawing, and as a class, we decided that that passage was an instance of powerful writing. Jared re-read that section to the class:

> …Then I see his eyes,
>
> His eyes cramped shut, his no-eyes, his eyes like X's
>
> In a comic strip, where the character gets knocked out (18-20).

We talked about how the author first explained the eyes were shut, then *elaborated* on the eyes with two descriptive phrases. We talked about how the image was made of nouns, not adjectives, and how writers use specific imagery to create memorable work. Then we did a quick imitation of Hall's lines by first looking at a picture of an elephant's eye (an elephant is the XXX University's school mascot), and as a class, brainstormed our own descriptions using Hall's elaboration technique. Here are several student responses that were shared in class:

I see his eyes,

His eyes popped open,

basketball eyes,

eyes like full moons

eyes like pies

eyes like flowers in full bloom

Throughout our discussion, the focus was on craft—in other words, how the poem was put together—but we also discussed the theme and overriding ideas of the poem. Students noticed that the imagery swept across geological and historical boundaries, and because of a recent Greek mythology unit, they pointed out the allusion to Achilles and wondered if the various incantations of the pig ("the Stone Age pig, the Abraham/pig, the ocean pig, the Achilles pig" (92-93) were representative of moments in history.

Claudia suggested that this might be a poem about vegetarianism and how humans are connected to their food sources (a very sophisticated interpretation for a sixth grader!) while Christopher said that he thought the poem was about how all living creatures are connected. I made a point to validate multiple interpretations of the poem and to point out that it was possible that there were multiple meanings based on individual readings. While this was not a comparative lesson (the Common Core lists poetry as a genre to be compared to another genre or as a way to compare approaches to a topic), this was a lesson in close reading and addressed many—too many to list here—of the Common Core Reading Standards.

Once students had an understanding of the poem, we began to draft our own food poems. Because this was a sixth grade class and because one of the main goals of the Winning Poets program is to introduce students' to contemporary poets and poetry, we created an imitation of the opening stanza. Teacher scholar Jane Ellen Glasser (1990) argues that having students emulate the style of literary works fosters learning because they engage with a text from the "inside-out," and in so doing, develop a deeper understanding of both the text and of the craft of writing.

With these thoughts in mind, I told students to think of a dish or a food. They had to know what some of the ingredients in the food were in order to choose it (in other words, no Cheetos, JellyBellys, Dr. Pepper, or anything that comes straight out of the bag). As they weighed their choices, they were to consider a food that had some sort of personal significance or meaning to them. Traditional family foods, foods that reminded them of an important event or favorite memory, or foods that they shared with important people were offered as suggestions. To inspire them, I told a story about how my mom used to make me grilled cheese sandwiches when I got home from kindergarten and how I loved to help butter the bread before she grilled it. I made the point that, to me, the sandwiches signified my mom's love.

Once students came up with a food—they received a worksheet with some guiding prompts (see Figure 2). First, they described the individual ingredients that made up their foods. To guide them, I modeled each part of the worksheet by following Fisher, Frey, and Lapp's (2008) advice for think alouds and made my thinking process explicit by taking them through the examples I provided.

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Figure 2: Guided Prompts

Name: _____

Eating the (INSERT YOUR FOOD HERE) Prewriting Work

Who do you eat this food with?

Where do you eat it?

Why is the food significant?

Using figurative language, describe what **individual ingredients** in your food look like. Use adjectives to give your descriptions color.
        Example: Bread with oil spots shaped like Africa
                    Cheese the color of circus signs and clearance sale tags
                   White bread the color of played-in snow

1._____

2._____

3._____

Think about what the **entire dish** looks like. Use similes to make comparisons and avoid using other foods as points of comparison.
         Example: My grilled cheese sandwich looks like tile in the shower
         like a notepad not yet written in
         like a lawn chair cushion

1._____

2._____

3._____

At this point, students were working with individual ingredients, not the entire dish, and I had them share ideas as they wrote. Frank described the crust of an apple pie as "a woven basket....a golden hill" and Jared described the meat in his cheeseburger as "a wheel on my old toy truck."   Hearing their classmates' ideas inspired students who were having trouble and allowed me to check that students understood the concept of metaphor.

Then, we described the entire dish in terms of similes and metaphors. Some of the responses were outrageous, and we laughed at the outlandish comparisons. For example, Emily described spaghetti as "snakes tangled up" and Nick called pizza a "smashed down heart." I asked students to look at the type of images that they created and to consider if those images created the mood and tone that they wanted.   Since Emily associated spaghetti with happy family dinners, she decided that snakes weren't appropriate for her poem and changed the line to "curly ribbon on birthday presents."   Angela liked the historical significance Hall gained by using imagery from various time periods and changed her description of stinky tofu from "sweaty shin guards" to "...papyrus, what the Egyptians used before people invented paper" to give her piece some historical weight.   Once everyone had a stockpile of images, we put them into a poem entitled, "Eating the [Insert Food Here]". Here is Emily's final draft:

Eating the Spaghetti

Mom, Dad, and my three sisters stand around the kitchen table.

We carry the spaghetti to the table.

I see its form at the center of the table,

Its noodles, the color of my faded teddy bear

Its sauce, red like my dog's tongue

Its cheese on top, a dusting of glitter from Christmas ornaments

Then I see its shape,

Like curly ribbon on birthday presents

Like sprinklers spinning water in the summer

Like puzzle pieces in a box.

We are here, eating the spaghetti together.

The next day we had a class reading. There was noticeable energy in the room, and while I will never know for certain what fueled the enthusiasm, I believe students were energized because they were proud of their work. They had a topic they knew and cared about, they thought about their word choices and revised to achieve their intention, making the end result a personal piece that drew from the expertise of a major poet. In other words, they used

language to express themselves in an authentic way. To me, this type of experience should be a major goal in any writing curriculum, but in terms of the Common Core, we directly addressed the following sixth grade writing standards:

W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.3.d: Use of precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events   (Common Core Standards, 2015).

It is important to note that standard W.3.d. is couched under the narrative writing strand. After writing this poem, students can (and will) use what they learned about concrete imagery, elaboration, and the creation of mood in a range of genres, including the Common Core mandated narrative.

As we consider what the purposes of secondary education are and where and how English studies intersects those aims, it is important to prioritize creative expression and the promotion of an aesthetic awareness of language. As teachers, it is our duty to read the standards not as curricular jail cells, but as opportunities to infuse students' learning with a joy for language. In short, we must take a broad perspective and create lessons that inspire.

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Designing Game-Based Learning Activities in a Literacy Methods Course

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Abstract

Teachers must develop new and innovative pedagogies to meet the needs and interests of today's 21ˢᵗ century learners. Game based learning (GBL) has been identified as one pedagogical approach to help teachers reach this goal. While studies suggest positive outcomes associated with GBL in K-12 contexts, little is known about designing GBL activities in teacher education contexts. The purpose of this study is to examine my experiences as I incorporate a GBL project into two existing literacy courses. Data analyses reveal four significant themes in and across the GBL activities the students involved in the courses created. Implications for teacher education practice and policy are presented.

Designing Game-Based Learning Activities in a Literacy Methods Course

Today's teachers must develop and implement new and innovative pedagogies to meet the diverse and ever-changing needs of 21st century learners (Prensky, 2003). Game-based learning (GBL) has emerged as a pedagogical tool to assist teachers in reaching this goal. Recent research suggests a range of positive outcomes associated with using GBL activities in K-12 classrooms (Gee, 2010; Prensky, 2003). Some of these outcomes include but are not limited to increased student engagement, deeper conceptual understanding, intrinsic motivation, and innovative thinking (Durga & Squire, 2011). Because much of this scholarship on GBL focuses primarily on students and teachers in K-12 contexts, little has been documented related to GBL in teacher education contexts. Even more so, no scholarship examines the experiences of teacher educators as they integrate concepts associated with GBL into their literacy methods courses.

Given the lack of scholarship concerning the connection between GBL and teacher education, the purpose of this paper is to share the findings/reflections from an action research study that examined my experiences while incorporating the concept of GBL into two literacy methods courses. The overarching research question that drives this action research study is: What types of GBL activities do my students design when I integrate a GBL project into my existing literacy courses? The secondary question is: What are students' reactions to the processes involved in designing a GBL project?

This study is significant for two important reasons. First, the findings from this study contribute directly gap to the theoretical scholarship related to how GBL might be integrated into similar types of teacher education courses. Next, the findings from this study also provide practical and specific examples of how pre-service teachers might design similar GBL activities in similar

literacy methods courses. Further, these examples serve as potential models for other teacher educators who endeavor to incorporate GBL in their methods courses.

Conceptual Framework

To establish a contextual background for this action research study, in the following section I provide an operational definition of GBL. Next, for clarification purposes, I outline four distinct types of GBL activities commonly used by teachers in K-12 classroom contexts. Finally, I present several benefits of using GBL in educational contexts.

Defining GBL

GBL involves three essential elements. The first element that comprises GBL is competition (Squire, 2006). Players are involved in some form of score-keeping and/or winning conditions that motivate them to engage in the activity over a sustained period of time. It is important to note that in many GBL activities the players are not necessarily competing against each other. Instead, a lot of GBL activities have players working as a team to overcome some common obstacle or opponent that is built into the game.

The second element that comprises GBL is engagement. GBL activities tend to foster a high degree of intrinsic motivation in and among the players involved (Gresalfi, Barab, Siyahhan, & Christensen, 2009). The players tend to be motivated by the challenge, curiosity, control, and fantasy characteristics embedded in the gaming experiences. Plainly put, many players don't want to stop playing once they get started.

The third essential element that comprises GBL is immediate feedback. GBL provides players with immediate feedback about their performance (Squire, 2006). In most GBL activities, players receive immediate points, rewards, and/or acknowledgments as they reach specified short and long-term goals. Conversely, players also receive immediate feedback when they do not reach specified short and long-term goals.

Types of GBL Activities

There are four types of GBL activities commonly used in K-12 educational settings. The first type of GBL learning activities that is commonly used in educational settings is board and card games. In many classrooms, teachers engage students in various types of board and card games to teach specific educational outcomes. One classic example of this type of GBL activity is when a teacher plays a card game that is similar to the game "Memory" to help students identify high frequency words or math facts. Further, the GBL activities within this category can be played individually and or collectively.

A second type of GBL activity that is commonly used in educational settings is cooperative learning games. This is when students compete in small groups and or teams to accomplish or fulfill specific educational goals and objectives. A classic example of this type of GBL activity is

when students play "Educational Jeopardy" to review important contents from a history unit. Further, GBL activities within this category cannot be played individually.

The third type of GBL activity that is commonly used in educational settings is improvisational games. This is when teachers engage students in temporary and impromptu learning games to help students acquire specific educational concepts and goals. A classic example of this type of GBL activity is when a teacher engages students in a role-playing experience to help identify various elements from a story.

The fourth type of GBL activity that is commonly used in educational settings is digital/video games. This involves learning games that are played while using personal computers, mobile devices, and or some specific game console. The GBL activities within this category can be played individually and or collaboratively. One classic example of a GBL activity within this category is Oregon Trail. Further, it is important to note that the GBL activities shared in the later portion of this paper fall within this category.

Benefits of GBL

Research suggests a myriad of benefits associated with implementing game-based learning activities in educational settings (Young, Slota, Cutter, Jalette, Mullin, Lai, Simeoni, Tran, & Yukhymenko, 2012; Squire, 2006). An exhaustive discussion of all of these benefits is beyond the scope and sequence of this paper. Nonetheless, in the subsequent section I shall highlight a few of the benefits of using GBL activities (versus more traditional learning activities) in the K-12 classroom. Accordingly, one benefit of using GBL activities is educational settings is engagement. Students tend to be more engaged in GBL activities than more traditional learning activities that rely heavily on rote memorization, worksheets, and or teacher-lead instructional methods (Squire, 2008).

A second benefit of GBL is that it has the potential to make learning more realistic (Squire, 2006). Many digital/video games place students in learning environments (on and off-line) that closely mirror the challenges, situations, and problem-solving scenarios that exist within the "real-world". Unlike more traditional instructional methods, many GBL activities provide students with an opportunity to make decisions while experimenting in an environment that is realistic and risk-free. For example, after learning about the basic concepts associated with supply, demand, and entrepreneurship, a student can experience these concepts in a more realistic fashion while engaging in an online video game that requires him or her to own and operate a small bakery.

A third benefit of GBL is that it provides students with opportunities to apply what they are learning (Watson, Mong, & Harris, 2011). Unlike more traditional instructional methods that focus on mere rote memorization of facts and events, GBL provides opportunities for student to apply what they are learning in a deeper and non-superficial manner. For example, instead of merely learning how to solve percentage story problems on worksheets in math, there are

many virtual environments that provide opportunities for students to apply these concepts while shopping for items at grocery store.

Methods

This study involves an action research design (Mills, 2003; Sagor, 2000). While multiple iterations of action research exist, this study draws specifically from Mill's (2003) notion of action research. Mills (2003) defines action research as a spiral and dialectic research process that involves: (a) identifying an area of focus, (b) developing and implementing a plan of action, (c) collecting data, (d) analyzing data, and (e) developing a new plan of action. Given the nature of the overarching research question that guides this study, I deemed an action research design to be highly appropriate.

Plan of Action

In keeping with the first step within Mill's (2003) action research framework, I identified GBL as the focus of this study. I altered three class sessions in two literacy methods courses to integrate information related to the definitions and typologies of GBL, potential benefits of GBL, and ways of designing GBL activities. During the first of these three class sessions, we examined and discussed notions and examples of GBL in educational contexts. In the second session, we defined and discussed the potential benefits of integrating GBL activities with students in K-12 contexts. During the third class session, we examined specific ways to design GBL activities that are appropriate for use with students in K-3 literacy classrooms. To give students an opportunity to better understand, practice, and apply the concepts and skills associated with GBL, I adapted one of the course assignments to require them to create an original GBL activity that could be implemented in a P-3 classroom. Essentially, students were required to work in pairs and create an original GBL activity that could be used to teach a specific literacy concept in either a whole-class or small group fashion. Students were instructed to construct their GBL activities using Power Point software. Students were required to present their GBL activities to the other students in the course during the final week of the course. Finally, students were asked to reflect on their design experiences on an open-ended survey.

Setting

This study took place at a mid-sized Doctoral university in the Midwest portion of the United States of America. The focus within the literacy courses, wherein the GBL activities were designed, is literacy assessment and instruction. The course is a required course for students pursuing an initial Early Childhood Education certification in this state. Two sections of the course were involved in this study. The first section of the course had 19 pre-service teacher education students and took place during the fall academic term. The second section of the course had 18 pre-service teacher education students and took place during the spring academic term. Both sections of the course transpired over a 16-week period of time. I was the instructor in both of the courses.

Data Sources and Collection

Data for this study were collected over a 9-month period of time beginning in mid-August and ending in early May. Data collection began one week prior to the first class session and continued one week beyond the end of the semester. Consistent with the action research design undergirding this study, four data collection sources were involved in this study. First, I used a teacher researcher journal (Lankshear & Knobel, 1994) to document observations and reflections from each of the three newly developed teaching sessions. Next, I developed and administered an open-ended qualitative survey (Fowler, 2009) to document students' (n=37) perceptions of the GBL activities they developed and the processes involved therein. Lastly, I collected the GBL activities and any other pertinent course-related materials (syllabi, rubrics, teaching Power Points, and handouts) and included them in the content analysis of this study.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed in two phases. I began by conducting a content analysis (Ball & Smith, 1999; Bell, 2001) of the visual content in the GBL activities. As such, I created a coding notebook with Microsoft Word and coded each GBL activity into this notebook. A total of five variables were included in this coding notebook. These variables include: instructional focus, grade level focus, assistance level, media types, and feedback format.

During the send phase of data analysis, I analyzed students' responses to the qualitative survey. I used a thematic analysis process (Boyatzis, 1998) to analyze the qualitative survey data.

I read through the data several times while participating in open- and closed-ended coding processes. After noting themes that emerged within the data, I developed broad analytic categories and sorted the data into these categories. Next, while closely attending to each survey question, I established assertions from the data that were supported by at least three warrants. Lastly, I selected exemplary quotations from the data to represent the themes related to each survey question.

Analysis of GBL Activities

Three themes emerged in and across the GBL activities the students created. The students in both courses designed GBL activities that provided opportunities for players to develop and or practice skills related to (a) phonemic awareness, (b) vocabulary, and (c) comprehension. In the subsequent sections, I shall discuss each of these themes in greater depth.

Designing GLB Activities to Support Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Several of the students in the two courses designed GBL activities that provided opportunities for players to develop and practice phonemic awareness skills. Essentially, these particular GBL activities provided a chance for players to practice identifying rhyming words and letter and sound relationships. One salient example of this particular type of GBL activity is evident in the GBL activity entitled, "Beginning Sounds" (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Excerpts from GBL activity entitled, "Beginning Sounds"

In this particular GBL activity, players are invited to identify the word that matched the focus letter. Players would then receive immediate feedback (positive or negative) concerning their choice. Once the player makes the correct choice, they are prompted with another question. This GBL activity continues in this fashion for the remainder of the game. Players are then prompted to repeat the game from the beginning at the end of the game.

A second example of this category of GBL activity is evident in the GBL activity entitled "Rhyme Game." In this particular GBL activity, players are invited to identify the word and image that rhymes with a specified word. Much like the "Beginning Sounds" GBL activity, this GBL provides players with immediate feedback concerning their choices. Players are also given the option to repeat the game at the end of the game (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Excerpts from GBL activity entitled, "Rhyme Game"
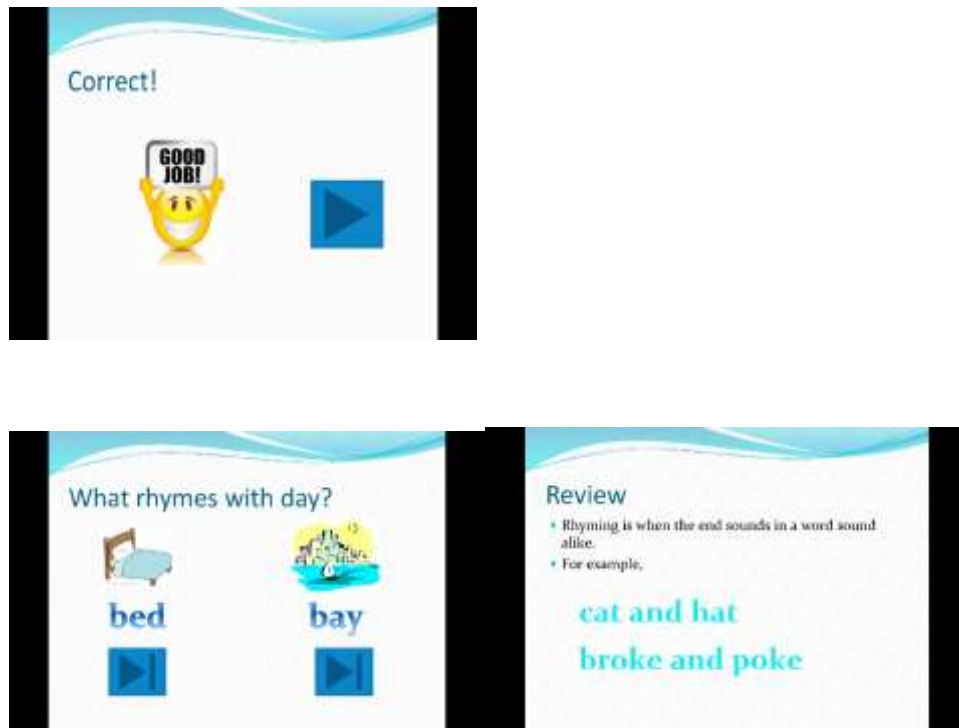
Designing GBL Activities to Support Vocabulary Instruction

The second type of GBL activities the students created relates to vocabulary concepts. Essentially, many students designed GBL activities that provided opportunities for players to develop and practice both simple and complex vocabulary skills. A salient example of this type of GBL activity is evident in the GBL activity entitled, "Synonym Roll". In this particular GBL activity, players are invited to identify the synonym of a specified word. Players receive immediate feedback related to the nature of their choices. Images are provided to support players in making the correct choices (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Excerpt from GBL activity entitled "Synonym Roll".

A similar example of this type of GBL activity is evident in the GBL entitled, "Job Vocabulary". In this particular GBL activity, players are invited to identify the image that corresponds with a specified definition. Players are given immediate feedback about their performance. Correct responses lead to a variety of positive consequences such as job transfers, raises, and promotions. Incorrect responses lead to a variety of negative consequences ranging from loss of pay to termination. Players also receive a "promotion" for successfully completed each of the questions in the game (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Excerpt from GBL activity entitled "Job Vocabulary".
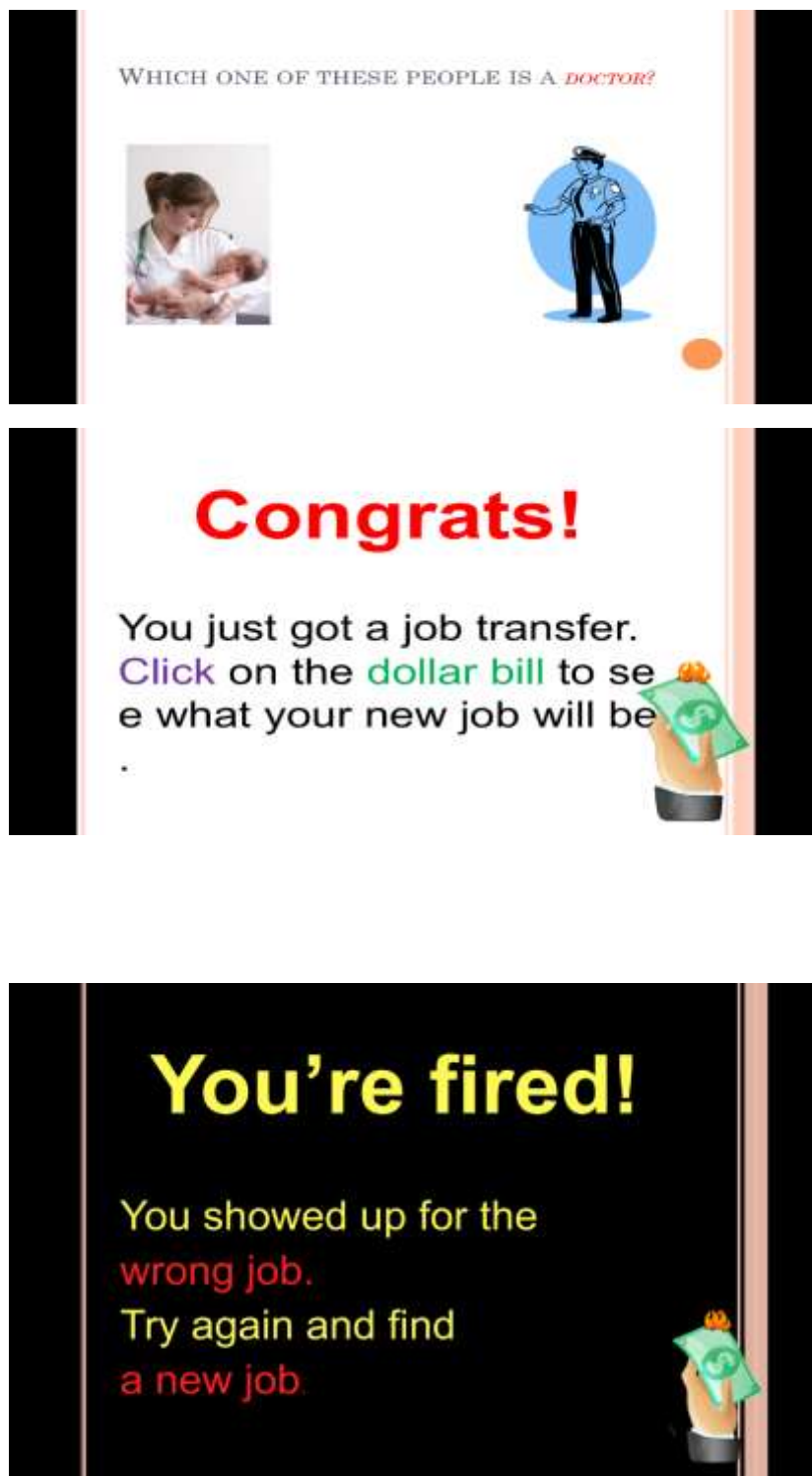
Designing GBL Activities to Support Comprehension Instruction

The third type of GBL activity that students designed provided opportunities for players to practice their comprehension skills. A salient example of this type of GBL activity is evident in the GBL activity entitled, "Comprehension Detective". In this particular GBL activity, players are invited to read a sentence and identify the missing word using the context clues that are available. Players receive immediate feedback related to their choices. This feedback is both verbal and visual in nature (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Excerpts from a GBL activity entitled, "Comprehension Detective".
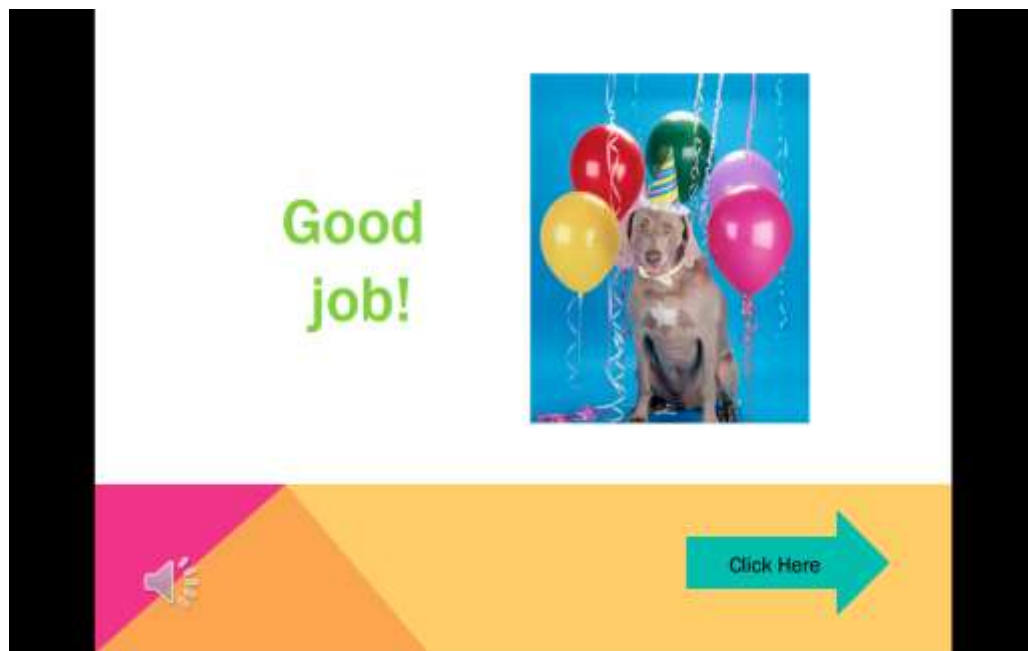
Analysis of Survey Data

Analyses of students' responses on the open-ended questionnaire revealed four notable themes related to: curriculum directed design choices, technical aspects of the design process, instructional value, and a variety practical uses. In the subsequent section, I discuss each of these themes in greater detail.

Curriculum Directed Design Choices

Survey data reveal that many of the students allowed the curriculum to directly shape the content they included in their GBL activities. For example, in response to a question on the survey related to how they came up with the content involved in the GBL activities, some students stated:

"We chose this because we saw a trend in Words Their Way with our 3rd grade students, who had difficulty differentiating between homophones" (Group 1, Response to Question 1).

"M and I decided to focus on vocabulary for our digital game. It would be a fun game for 2nd graders to practice their social studies vocabulary words. They would be practicing these words in other lessons and readings. We chose the Common Core Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.4a Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. Students would find the meaning of the vocabulary word from other texts. This game would test their ability to identify the meaning of the words. Our objective was to have the students practice the geography vocabulary words through a digital game" (Group 4, Response to Question 1).

We see here that many of the students began their design process by closely considering specific grade-level learning objectives and/or state standards. In this sense, they allowed these objectives and standards to serve as the foundation for their GBL activity. Interestingly, very little was stated about using players' interests as the foundation for their GBL activities.

Technical Aspects of the GBL Activities

Many of the students reported experiencing difficulties with some of the technical aspects of designing GBL activities. More specifically, several students reported that creating the "buttons" embedded in each of the GBL activities was the most difficult part of the design process. For instance, in response to a question on the survey concerning the most difficult aspects of the project, some students stated:

"We found this project to be easy to put together. At first we were unsure how to add in the buttons, but once we figured it out, we got it put together!" (Group 6, Response to Question 2)

"Making all the buttons was most difficult. It wasn't even that difficult, it was just making sure each button worked" (Group 2, Response to Question 2).

"The most difficult part of this project was just making sure the buttons were working correctly. Also, making sure that when you clicked something it led to the right slide and answer was also kind of confusing at times. I really do not feel anything took me a long time to complete or feel frustrated over" (Group 7, Response to Question 2).

We see here from these responses that many students struggled with making the "buttons" in their GBL activities operational. Over a period of time and sustained effort, the students were able to overcome this challenge.

Perceived Instructional Value

All of the students perceived the GBL activities they created to have a high degree of instructional value. For instance, in response to a question on the survey regarding the most beneficial aspect of the project, several students stated:

"This is something that we can use in our classrooms with a small group and large group" (Group 9, Response to Question 3)

"The most beneficial aspect to this project was definitely becoming familiar with all the aspects of PowerPoint. It was very helpful to actually make one of these interactive games so that when we have our own classroom or have to make one for teaching, we will know how to do it. The more practice we have with making these, the easier it will be for future use. We can also use this one we have created and either tweak it or use it in our future teaching. This PowerPoint will be a great model for the other ones, and now we know how to create one like it" (Group 12, Response to Question 3).

"The most beneficial part was learning how to make a game. We never knew how to make a button, and this assignment taught us how easy it was to make one" (Group 15, Response to Question 3).

We see in these examples that many students identified the fact that the GBL activities could be used in both whole class and small group instructional contexts as the most valuable feature of the activities. Yet and still, other students identified the fact that they learned more about designing GBL, in general, as the most beneficial aspects of the project.

Variety of Practical Uses

Students identified a variety of practical ways they might use GBL activities in their future classrooms. For example, in response to a survey question related to how they might use GBL activities in their future classrooms, students stated:

"In our future classrooms, we can use this type of learning game in many aspects. Games can be created ahead of time for students to practice during free time or centers on a variety of topics. These games can also be e-mailed out to parents for students to practice at home if they are struggling on a specific topic or just want more practice outside of the classroom. Something we thought could be interesting is for students to work in groups to create their own games like these. In a third grade classroom, if directions are made very clear on how to work everything in PowerPoint, students would be able to create their own digital learning game. As students are creating this game, they are practicing whatever skill they are developing the game for, just in a different way. Students could then exchange games and practice a variety of skills" (Group 12, Response to Question 4).

"In our classrooms our students have done worksheets to learn about antonyms and they have read books. Our PowerPoint game was very engaging and it was a fun way for them to get more practice with antonyms instead of using the typical matching worksheets. We would definitely create these games for our students to keep them engaged" (Group 15, Response to Question 4).

"We would use what we learned of creating a learning game to create and implement other learning games for our future students to engage in, and to supplement and differentiate for students in our future classrooms. These types of games can be beneficial to all students including special needs students and ELLs" (Group 4, Response to Question 4).

We see in the aforementioned examples that students identified different ways they plan to implement GBL activities in their future classrooms. Some students planned to use GBL activities as independent centers or stations wherein players can practice previously introduced skills and content. In addition, other students reported that GBL activities might be used as an alternative to more traditional worksheet-based learning experiences. Yet and still, other

students reported that they might use the GBL activities in their future classrooms as a means of differentiating instruction to better meet the needs of different types of learners.

Discussion

Implications

As I reflect on my experiences associated with incorporating GBL activities into my existing literacy methods courses, three important implications resonate in my mind. First, data from this study suggest the need for teacher educators, like me, to participate in robust and sustained professional development opportunities related to designing and integrating GBL activities in their courses. As this study transpired, I quickly realized that I had a very novice and limited understanding of how to design and incorporate GBL activities. Much of what I have come to know and understand about GBL learning has come from reading articles, books, and other materials. To date, I have not been fortunate enough to participate in any formal professional development in this area. As a result, I was only able to provide my students with a limited (at best) knowledge and understanding of these concepts. I believe that my students would have benefitted more from this project if I had more sophisticated and deeper level of proficiency with these concepts.

The second significant implication that emerged from this study regards GBL in digital environments. While designing GBL activities in non-digital environments may have served as a necessary first step in helping students develop a working understanding of these concepts, I also see the need for students to begin to think of ways to transport these activities to digital environments. Given the fact that most of the learners in K-12 classrooms are "digital natives" (Prensky, 2003), I believe it is important for pre-service teachers in courses like mine to consider how these types of GBL activities might transpire in online environments. By doing so, players will have an opportunity to benefit from the social interactions with other students. This will make the overall learning experience much richer and more meaningful.

The third implication that emerged from this study concerns the theory to practice aspect of GBL. I believe the students in my courses would have benefited greatly being able to implement their GBL projects in real classrooms with real children. This begs the needs for teacher educators to create learning opportunities where pre-service teachers can experiment with GBL activities in authentic K-12 learning contexts. Perhaps, making GBL a requirement within a particular literacy methods course that has a clinical experience connected to it will help facilitate this goal.

Practical Applications

In addition to being used in higher education contexts, game based learning activities can be used in K-12 classrooms in three specific ways. First, GBL activities can be used by K-12 teachers to help students build background knowledge related to a new literacy concept or skill. For example, let's suppose that 2nd grade teacher is planning on teaching a guided reading lesson

related to "making inferences". This teacher might develop a GBL activity that instructs students to read small passages and use the visual images to infer what might happen next. After students have played this game a few times and practiced this skill, the teacher might then begin explaining the concept of making inferences related to traditional picture books. In this way, GBL can be used as the anticipatory set portion of the lesson.

GBL activities can also be used in K-12 classrooms to provide opportunities for students to practice literacy skills and concepts that were recently modeled by the teacher. For example, let's suppose a 5th grade teacher is teaching her students how to "identify the main idea" in a passage. After having modeled this skill with her students during a mini-lesson, the teacher might develop GBL activities for students to practice this skill in context. Perhaps, the teacher might develop 5 different activities and assign students to work in small groups to complete each activity. In this sense, GBL activities can be used as a form of shared practice.

K-12 teachers can also extend GBL activities to previously taught literacy skills and concepts. For example, let's suppose Mr. Brown is teaching his 5th grade students how to generate questions from a text. After teaching a unit related to question generation, Mr. Brown might extend this skill by directing his students to develop their very own GBL activities (based on question generation) to be implemented with their peers in small groups. In this sense, GBL activities can be used to create and construct additional knowledge related to a specific literacy skill or concept.

Conclusion

As suggested by the findings from this study, GBL activities have the potential to equip pre-service teachers with an innovative means of addressing the changing needs of 21st century learners. In order for these strategies to produce positive social and academic outcomes in and among the students they serve, teacher educators (who endeavor to incorporate GBL design and implementation strategies in their courses) should make three important foundational commitments. First, teacher educators should make a commitment toward continued learning in this area. Much like myself, many teachers educators have limited experience and expertise related to designing and implementing GBL activities in K-12 and or higher educational contexts. Even more so, very few colleges and universities offer faculty development opportunities to support the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to GBL. Hence, teacher educators interested in incorporating these practices in their teaching and learning processes must be willing to seek out independent and self-directly learning opportunities in this area.

The second commitment that teacher educators who are interested in incorporating GBL in their courses should make in order for this approach to produce positive outcomes regards experimentation. Plainly put, there is no recipe for an engaging and effective GBL activity. What makes for powerful GBL experience will inevitably vary from classroom to classroom, student to student, and moment to moment. Hence, teacher educators who endeavor to incorporate GBL

in their courses must be willing to experiment with a number of different approaches and practices until they discover what "works" best in their context at that particular moment in time. Essentially, teacher educators must be willing to try out and explore multiple approaches to GBL until they develop a repertoire of best practices in this area.

The final commitment that teacher educators who endeavor to incorporate GBL in their courses should make concerns failure. As mentioned previously, there is no direct formula for designing and implementing an engaging and effective GBL experience. It is likely that teacher educators will develop rudimentary insights into what "works" relative to designing and implementing GBL activities the more they participate in these types of teaching and learning experiences. Yet and still, teacher educators should be willing to risk failure and continue to try new approaches to GBL as a means of continuing their professional development in this area. Further, failure to take these three commitments into serious consideration is likely to make the processes of designing and implementing GBL activities quite arduous for both the teacher educators and students involved.

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READING TOGETHER ONE-ON-ONE MEANS CARING *AND* LEARNING
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Abstract

This article is a call to personalize schools. It is not new, but one teachers and teachers of teachers must revisit over and over, especially today when standardization is the norm. What is new is the implementation of one-on-one tutoring, a school environment inherently able to encourage relationships between the teacher and the student. These relationships promote engagement and academic improvement.

Reading Together One-On-One Means Caring *and* Learning

"There are forces working in the world as never before in the history of mankind for standardization, for the regimentation of us all," says Madeleine L'Engle, award-winning author. She calls standardization "making muffins of us, muffins, all like every other muffin in the muffin tin…." She warns that standardization creates a "limited universe, the drying, dissipating universe." L'Engle's words in her 1963 Newberry Award acceptance speech are prophetic for educators today (L'Engle, 1963).

This article is a call to personalize our schools. It is not a *new* message, but one teachers and teachers of teachers must revisit over and over, especially today when standardization is the norm. What *is* new is the use of one-on-one tutoring, a school environment that inherently encourages relationship-building as well as student competence. Schools can promote learning when they create opportunities for students and teachers to work together in ways that encourage mutual understanding, empathy and friendship.

Tony and Abrah Learn Someone Cares—And They Learn to Read

I met Toby when I was an instructional coach in his school. Toby was fourteen and in seventh grade. Tall and gangly, he slept away most of the school day. My first try to help him failed.

Toby's health teacher had invited me into her room to demonstrate an expository writing lesson. She wanted her students to read an article in *Health Today* about cliques in school and, using the facts in the article, write about cliques in *our* school. I talked a little and modeled some writing. Then kids began scribbling furiously--all but one dark-haired boy who put his head down on his desk and went to sleep.

I knelt beside his desk and tried to coax a response from him. It was difficult to get him to wipe the sleep from his eyes, let alone respond to my probing. After my gentlest coaxing, he finally shouted, "I don't write!" With that, he bolted from his desk and made a dash for the door. The principal found him walking past the cemetery, four blocks away. He admitted to her that he didn't know how to read or write.

The principal took action. She asked Joan, a retired first grade teacher trained in Reading Recovery, to tutor Toby. Joan's intensive training was important, but more important was her heart. Her face creased into a web of smile lines whenever she came near a kid. Joan worked with Toby daily for thirty minutes the last four months of school. Sitting shoulder to shoulder, Joan listened to Toby read and coached him as he labored over words and lines. The principal and Joan acted on their belief that doing something positive for Toby at school was a moral imperative.

At first during the daily tutorial, Toby edged away from Joan's proximity, scooting his stool sideways. But in just a few days, he didn't seem to notice that his shoulder brushed hers as their heads bent into the words on the page. By spring break, he unconsciously leaned into Joan, as if absorbing her strength and affirmation. Joan and Toby forged a trusting friendship.

Besides this friendship, something inside Toby's head clicked. For the first time in his school life, he began to read, albeit haltingly. Every week or two, he moved into a slightly more difficult text. With support, he read and understood the words *astronaut* and *stegosaurus*. His reading was arduous; sweat popped out on his upper lip as he labored. But he read. Less and less often, Toby repeated his old mantra: "It's no use; it's no use!"

Yes, Toby grew from pre-primer reading level to second grade because he spent intense learning time with his reading tutor. But there was more to his success. Toby persevered because he worked alongside someone who cared about him.

My belief about the importance of relationship-building in learning is corroborated in *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys* by Smith and Wilhelm (2002). These researchers studied 49 adolescent boys, who identified factors in school that discouraged them: "Again and again we heard the boys talk about what we came to regard as an implicit social contract that the boys felt teachers generally reneged upon." According to these potential drop-outs, this contract meant "the teacher should get to know me and care about me as an individual" (p. 99).

Individual attention is inherent in tutoring. In a one-on-one setting a teacher observes a Toby-type student with undivided attention, understands him, and helps him. The affective side of student learning was the focus of a 2014 Gallup Poll which asserts that positive relationships at school drive student engagement which in turn drives student achievement (p. 7).

Unfortunately, Gallup reports, the opportunities to build relationships in school "don't happen often enough or without a purposeful effort by school leaders to provide an environment in which students' strengths are celebrated and talented teachers work under conditions that promote engagement" (p. 18). In Toby's school, tutoring afforded Toby and his tutor the opportunity to develop a relationship so Toby could learn to read.

Boys like Toby—those with adolescent bodies and five-year-old reading abilities—are rare. Most struggling older readers are behind three or four grades, not seven. Often, they know

how to decode, but they don't know how to comprehend. These readers also deserve personal attention and the chance to learn to understand what they read.

For example, Abrah, a junior at an alternative high school, was perilously close to failing to comprehend before she graduated. Abrah's music teacher, Mr. Howard, wanted to help her—and Abrah was finally ready to learn. All her life she'd suffered abuse at the hands of a family member. Finally, he was out of the picture at home, so she could concentrate on learning at school. Before Howard and Abrah began reading together, the teacher asked her what kind of movies and books she liked. She answered that she liked mysteries. Howard wanted even more information to help Abrah. On the teacher bookshelf, he found an assessment (Johns, 2007) and administered it to her. His aim was to observe and learn, get to know her, and glean a general idea about her approximate reading level. According to the assessment, Abrah decoded at about the seventh or eighth grade. Armed with knowledge about Abrah—her interests and her reading level—Howard and his charge went to the library together to the mystery section, and she selected an Agatha Christie novel that matched both her interest and her capacity to read.

Every day, Abrah read to Howard and he watched, offering encouragement and tips based on his common sense, his personal experience as a reader, and the advice he sought from the building's reading specialist who recommended he read Kylene Beers' book, *When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do* (2003). After approximately three months of daily tutoring, Abrah blossomed.

During her senior year, she passed the entrance exam into the certified nursing assistant (CNA) program. At graduation, standing before an audience of classmates and parents, she addressed her band teacher and tutor, Mr. Howard. "You saved me," she said. "I won't ever forget you." She graduated from high school a reader, thanks in large part to one-on-one tutoring.

What greater gift can schools give students like Toby and Abrah than helping them learn to read?

A School District Full of Students Reads

This personal attention to students in a one-on-one setting can apply to an entire school district with remarkable results (*Billings Gaze*tte, 2012). The newly-elected state superintendent, my former principal, asked me to come to work as state instructional coach. One day while I sat in a meeting at the state department of education, my cell phone chirped. I went to the hall to answer. "What are you going to do to help us?" were the first words out of the caller's mouth. He was the district's instructional coach, and he was distraught. He had just received the results of the state assessment in reading. Only 18 percent of the third graders in his district were proficient. The district ranked last in the state. "It isn't fair," he said. "The vibrant kids I see every day in the hallway deserve better."

He questioned his district's highly-scripted and phonics-based reading program. The materials featured books with pictures that did not match the message in the text. The sentences, when put together in a paragraph, did not make sense either. During the lesson, the teacher chanted a ritualized speech, complete with a cadence and a long-handled red baton to keep order. The teachers were highly trained to deliver this program and did so with fidelity; however, they expressed concern that kids lost interest in reading and they didn't understand what they read.

Students could decode difficult words but were blank-faced when asked what the words meant. The program paid little attention to retelling, summarizing, inferring or visualizing, a few of the thinking strategies readers need to gain understanding and enjoy reading.

This district's progress monitoring assessment did not feature comprehension either. It focused solely on the students' ability to read quickly. Ironically, both the reading program and the fluency assessment were strongly encouraged by the state education department during an earlier era. Neither the school's reading program nor its progress-monitoring tool matched the state test required by the department of education. The focus of the state test was reading comprehension. The students and the teachers were caught between two top-down initiatives that contradicted each other. No wonder the students had the lowest scores in the state.

The board, school leaders, and, most importantly, teachers wanted to try one-on-one tutoring to boost their students' enthusiasm and comprehension. Fast forward to the end of the school year. According to the state assessment, third graders who had scored 18 percent proficient in reading improved to 58 percent proficient as fourth graders. This cohort improved 40 points in one year on the state test. Other grades improved as well. Fourth graders scored 47 percent proficient in reading; in fifth these kids grew to 61 percent. Fifth graders were 33 percent proficient and moved to 64 percent in sixth grade. Interestingly, the scores in math and science improved as well (Connor, 2012).

Parents remarked that they witnessed their kids enjoying leisure reading. One parent said that the reading life of his daughter changed dramatically. "Last year on our road trip she sat in the back of the car reading her book. She'd ask me, 'Daddy, can you tell me what this word means,' and I'd tell her. 'Can you tell me what this sentence means,' and I'd tell her. This went on and on. Questions like this got pretty annoying. Finally, I said, 'Honey, don't you know what you're reading?' My daughter closed the book and didn't read a word the rest of the trip.

"We took the same trip this year. She picked up all three *Hunger Game* books and read them front to back without asking us a single question. She understood them all."

Her parents noticed a difference, and so did the tutors. "I had taught before in a different school district," claimed Ron, one of the tutors, "but I never learned so much about reading until I worked closely with one student at a time." Ron and another tutor, both certified teachers who had not yet landed teaching jobs, were hired the next year as full-time teachers in the school. The tutors learned from observing their tutees and from visiting with one another.

Sometimes their questions drove them to read such professional books as *Strategies that Work* by Harvey and Goudvis (2000) or *When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do* by Beers.

The gift of attention from caring adults helped these students learn to read. However, one-on-one tutoring goes against the grain in many schools because, as the Gallup report claims, "the multilayered testing regime under which most teachers work today leaves them with far less time and latitude, making it challenging to tailor their instructional approach to individual students' needs" (p. 18).

Getting Ready

Just as teachers teach kids to write by having them write, teachers teach kids to read and comprehend by having them read text that is interesting to them and not too hard. The tutor supports the learner by offering teaching points and specific reinforcement. Together, the tutor and the student engage in the social interaction that brings a book to life. Kids practice and begin to grow, and both the tutor and the student enjoy their new-found relationship.

The philosophy underpinning tutoring comes from thinkers and researchers. *Reading Next* (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006) calls tutoring a key to achieving literacy growth. Allington, in his meta-analysis of reading research (2012), advises that one-on-one tutoring is the most powerful intervention in America.

Here are the steps prior to a successful tutorial. First, before beginning the actual lessons, the tutor should secure a private space in the school. She locates a small unused table and two chairs so she and the student can shoulder up and sit side by side. She gathers a few tools to support her work: a timer, post it notes, a small white board, marker and eraser, pencils, and two spiral notebooks.

Second, success hinges on the tutor's attention to the student. This attention is applied in two ways: by engaging in conversation to determine student's interests and by administering a simple assessment to determine her decoding and comprehending strengths and weaknesses. I offer two assessment tools for consideration: an informal one-on-one assessment (Johns, 2007) and a running record (Shea, 2006). These help the tutor gauge the reader's approximate ability level. The last thing the tutor wants is a book so difficult that the reader gets frustrated, confirming yet again that she cannot read. The nice thing about a pre-assessment is that after thirty or so lessons, the student can be re-assessed. The growth can be shared with interested people including the principal, other teachers, the team of tutors, the parents and, of course, the students.

Following an interview and an assessment, the key to success is book selection. The book needs to be one the student is interested in and can read. Allowing the reader choice in book selection is crucial, for as Alfie Kohn says, "Nothing contributes to a student's interest in…reading more than the opportunity to read books that he or she has chosen" (2010. p. 1).

Armed with information about the reader's interests and her approximate reading ability, the tutor and tutee might browse the library to try out various books. Or the tutor might bring three or four books to the tutoring station so the reader can select one. Growth in reading depends upon a book that the student can and wants to read (Allington, 2012).

Once the reader selects a book, the reading begins. Marie Clay believes that comprehension is the whole purpose of reading (1993). She says that readers manage myriad pieces of decoding information: phonics, vocabulary, format, sentence length—all kinds of cues—to hold on to the author's message. In other words, reading is a process of managing multiple cues from print in order to understand the message of the text (Clay).

The heart of the tutorial is reading, not practicing skills apart from the text. The bulk of the time together, then, is spent with the tutee reading the book, sometimes silently, but mostly aloud, the better to allow the tutor to observe, support and encourage the reader.

A Glimpse through the Window—How a Tutorial Flows

Faced with thirty minutes with a student, teachers need a protocol, or lesson plan, to utilize their time effectively. Instruction is woven into the lesson plan template seen in Table 1. The components of this lesson plan are:

- Fluency practice
- Word work
- Vocabulary growth
- Thinking strategy practice
- Reading
- Writing

Table 1: Sample Protocol for Daily Lessons

Build context 1 minute	"What do you think will happen to Mila today?"
Fluency	"How about reading the next few sentences out loud for me." Then the tutor rereads the same sentences, asking the tutee to mark in the text where the teacher pauses. The marks are slash (/) marks. "Okay. Let's now reread together noting the pauses."
Word work 2 minutes examining 2-3 words	"I found this word in today's reading." The teacher prints the word *regurgitation* on a white board. "It's called a multisyllabic word and has a suffix *–tion."* Teacher circles the suffix. "Here are a couple more words that fit the pattern." Teacher prints *simulation* and *aggravation* on the white board and the student circles the suffix. "You'll run into lots of *–tion* words today and in all your reading."
Vocabulary 2 minutes examining 2-3 words	"Have you ever heard the word *preposterous*? It's in the text today. Can you find the word *preposterous* in this paragraph?" Student scans and locates the word. Teacher reads the sentences containing the word and offers an informal definition. Teacher finds several vocabulary words in today's reading.
Thinking strategy .5 minute (Beers)	"The chapters today have lots of mental images. Let's work on visualizing today, you know, making a picture in the mind. We'll stop a few times to see what we are visualizing."
Reading 17-20 minutes	"OK, let's read on from where we left off." Tutor interrupts twice to practice visualizing. Tutor corrects at the word level only when meaning is disrupted.
Writing 5 minutes	"Have you ever felt so misunderstood like Mila?" Teacher and student write in their spiral notebooks. Share.

Each component is timed so the bulk of the time is spent reading. Each component is explained below.

Fluency

Each day the tutoring session begins by reading the book where the student left off the day before. In the lesson plan seen in Table 1 the tutor begins with fluency practice.

Tim Rasinski encourages teachers to improve students' fluency by rereading the same lines. "One of the best ways to improve fluency is through the repeated rereading of texts," says Rasinski (2003, p. 510). What better way to practice rereading than in the student-selected book?

The fluency component follows a repeated reading pattern. First the student reads a few sentences picking up where she left off the day before. Then the teacher repeats the same

passage, reading with appropriate phrasing and exaggerated expressiveness. Meanwhile, the student, using a pencil, makes slash marks in the text where the teacher pauses. Finally, the student rereads the same passage, attending to the slash marks. This technique helps the reader phrase sentences to promote comprehension. The student's rereading is always smoother.

The fluency portion of the lessons takes two minutes and, as Rasinski promises, rereading contributes to expressiveness, and expressiveness contributes to comprehension.

Word Work

After a bit of fluency practice complete with appropriate phrasing and meaningful vocal variety, the tutor moves the student's attention to word work.

The teacher selects a word or two from today's text. This word is selected because the student has faltered in the past when confronting this word type. For example, if the tutor notices that the reader habitually stumbles over multisyllabic words or hyphenated words at the end of lines, the tutor finds a word with that pattern in today's reading. The tutor prints the word on a small, hand-held white board or a blank piece of paper and manipulates the word, dividing it into syllables, circling the prefix or suffix, or demonstrating the use of the hyphen, etc. The tutor offers several similar words, demonstrating the same pattern. For example, if the student has trouble with multi-syllabic words and the word *machination* appears in the text, the tutor prints it on the white board and circles the suffix -*tion*. Then she adds several other words— *rumination*, *explanation*—circling the same suffix. The goal is to help the student decode the word, and words like it, now and in the future.

This portion of the tutorial also takes a few minutes. The idea is to practice one skill a day, accumulating a pile of skills, all woven into the reading of meaningful text.

Vocabulary Growth

Word work is one thing. Vocabulary growth is another. Vocabulary work is next in the daily lesson. To boost vocabulary development as well as the skill of skimming, the teacher locates a few vocabulary words in today's text that she thinks the student does not know. She turns to the page containing the first word, narrows the search by pointing to the paragraph containing the word, and asks the student to scan the paragraph containing the word. When the student locates the word, the tutor quickly reads the sentence containing the word and offers a common-sense definition in context.

Thinking Strategies

Taken together all the above skill work should take less than a third of the tutoring session. Most of the time is spent with the student reading aloud. While the student reads, the tutor occasionally takes a running record (Shea) to ascertain the student's success with the text—is it too hard, too easy or just right? How fluent is the reader reading? What word patterns trip

her? How much does she comprehend? In short, the running record helps the tutor understand the student so the tutor can accommodate the student as she learns.

During reading, the tutor points out and models with a think-aloud such comprehension strategies as visualizing, inferring, and synthesizing. The tutor might say, "This paragraph is full of description, so today will you think about making a mental picture of what you read? Folks call this visualizing." Lists and descriptions of reading strategies abound, including Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's thinking strategies based on Bloom's taxonomy (Author, 2003). The tutor is careful not to interrupt the student's reading more than once or twice to point out a thinking strategy.

Writing

Writing wraps up the tutorial. A student's writing affords a unique glimpse into the learner's mind, and writing together deepens the teacher-student relationship which, in turn, accelerates learning (Lain, 1998).

This writing is a five-minute journal jot prompted from the text. As Donald Graves says, it is very important for a student to bring her own life to school (1983). So, the tutor thinks of a prompt that ties to a similar experience or a similar feeling in her own life. For example, if the text narrates an event when a pet dies, the prompt is, "Tell about a time in your life when you lost something." The tutors sets a timer for three minutes to be alerted when to stop. The writing portion culminates with the tutor and the student sharing their pieces with one another, as time allows.

Time is up. The thirty minutes fly by. It is a lot to pack into a lesson, so tutors like to use a timer to stay on schedule.

What the Tutor Says to the Student Matters

Besides tips on organizing their tutorial time, teachers sometimes want ideas about how to maximize the potency of their responses to students.

To be effective in their response to students, teachers' choice of words must be "individualized, specific, and deserved" (Gallup, (2014), p. 18). In Peter Johnston's book, *Choice Words* (2004), he offers language that encourages the learner's agency, offering the student the best learning environment. For example, instead of saying, *good work*, which is very general, an effective teacher gives specific feedback saying, *when you came to the word* recalcitrant *in this passage, your eyes darted back along the sentence to figure out what the word means in context.* The teacher adds*, How did you know to do that?* Asking students such a question tells the student how capable a problem solver she is. Johnston claims that *noticing* what the student does and then *naming* the behavior help the learner gain a sense of competence. Feeling competent, rather than feeling like a failure, promotes learning.

Other teacher responses invite the learner to be more hopeful and self-confident. Instead of saying, *you are wrong,* a teacher gains more traction with the line, *that's a very interesting way to look at it.* Instead of saying, *I'm proud of you*, a teacher, attempting to shift ownership to the student, says, *I bet you're proud of yourself.* This more open and positive language helps the learner establish internal motivation and removes the teacher from center stage.

In the one-on-one setting, teachers become more aware of the implied messages in their responses to students. They learn to frame what they say so students feel in control of their learning and take charge of their learning behaviors. Positive feedback, when it is deserved and very specific, trumps negative comments every time.

An All-Call for Literacy Educators

This article is a call to personalize our schools. One environment that allows engagement, hence, student competence, is one-on-one tutoring for readers of any age. Schools can promote learning when they create opportunities for students and teachers to work together in ways that encourage mutual understanding, empathy and friendship. In spite of research that indicates the primacy of emotional engagement in the learning process, schools today, riding the wave of standardization, testing, and teacher-proof commercial curricula, are often more factory-like than ever. Innovation in literacy instruction today must be rooted in the knowledge that the "noncognitive measure most directly related to academic achievement is engagement based on relationships" (Gallup, p. 7). One-on-one tutoring puts this theory into practice.

Is this idea of tutoring kids in school a pipe dream? Research confirms that one-to-one tutoring is a powerful way to grow readers (What Works Clearinghouse). So what stands in the way of implementation? The perceived barriers are time and money. However, these barriers are based more on supposition than on fact. School schedules can be adjusted if the school or district is committed, as revealed by the examples in Toby's and Abrah's schools. Money can be diverted from purchasing expensive programs to paying a stipend to a retired teacher or an after-school teacher who wants to spend thirty minutes a day for three or four months with a student. As Allington claims, tutoring is far more effective than buying yet another program, one that often has kids doing busy work instead of reading.

What is the most important attribute of such a tutor? Someone imbued with the milk of human kindness, someone who really gets a kick out of kids. This warm-hearted person matches a student with an interesting library book, does more watching than yakking, and offers specific positive reinforcement and teaching points to kids long accustomed to being left out of the literacy club.

Reading together creates a warm community, a sense of togetherness, sorely needed as an antidote to disengagement in school and students' callous disregard of others so prevalent in schools today. The bonus is the academic boost kids get as they learn to read by reading with a caring adult.

I wish teachers and school personnel could be unleashed to work with students who need both attention and know-how. I wish all preservice programs could arm would-be teachers with a solid theoretical base about reading instruction applied in a one-on-one setting. It is during this intimate tutelage that a teacher can best observe a student and a student can best hear and learn. One-on-one tutoring fosters both bonding and growing—two bangs for the same buck.

Take Action!

What does a one-on-one reading lesson look like when applied to a whole class setting using the reading workshop approach?

1. Select a 250-word text appropriate to the unit. One example is Abraham Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*. Project the text for all students to see.

2. Fluency read: Students read text together aloud; teacher reads text with expression and phrasing. A student marks the pauses with a slash (/); students reread.

3. Word work: Teacher demonstrates a word that has a pattern applicable to other words. She writes the word on the white board, manipulates the word (i.e., circles the prefix), and adds two other words with the same prefix to demonstrate the word pattern.

4. Vocabulary: Teacher ask students to skim for several high-powered vocabulary words. Teacher reads the word in context and offers an on-the-fly definition.

5. Strategy lesson: The *Gettysburg Address* lends itself to a lesson on tone. The author uses elevated, formal words, associated with religion. Students note such words.

6. After the whole group minilesson, students work alone or in pairs on a longer text such as the *Liberty Speech* by Learned Hand which also has an elevated and formal tone with religious overtones. Students annotate in the margins and circle words that contribute to the tone.

7. The lesson culminates with a choral read, adapted from Katie Wood Ray in her book *Wondrous Words* (NCTE, 1999). Students are directed to circle their four favorite phrases. The teacher reads the whole text slowly, with emphasis. Students chime in aloud when the teacher comes to the words they circled.

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THE WIN-WIN SITUATION IN WRITING PEDAGOGY: ENCOURAGING THE RELUCTANT WRITER THROUGH PRODUCTIVE ASSESSMENTS AND TECH SAVVY TECHNIQUES

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Abstract

The author of this article proposes a simple, effective way to support quality writing among reluctant writers in an overburdened system that demands teachers do more with less. The answer lies in emphasizing the process over the product and utilizing basic technology that is readily available to all even in the poorest school districts. In this article, the author shows a step-by-step process of how such instruction would look in a typical classroom. The article also provides directions for designing a reusable electronic rubric that allows teachers a quick, effective method for assessment. Using technology during the writing process sets up a win-win situation; students use a tool which they enjoy using on a daily basis and educators use a tool that will lighten the current overwhelming demands of teaching.

The Win-Win Situation in Writing Pedagogy: Encouraging the Reluctant Writer through Productive Assessments and Tech Savvy Techniques

At the secondary level, teachers face the daunting task of encouraging quality writing from students whose negative attitudes about writing and school in general have been inadvertently reinforced since elementary school. In no way am I pointing the blame at elementary school or middle school teachers for such attitudes. These amazing teachers' positive influence on the lives of their students last a lifetime. So, how did that enthusiastic kindergartner eager to learn end up the jaded high school student eager just to get a seventy? The real blame should be leveled against a system and, for that matter, a society that values the end product over the process. Since an immediate overhaul of the education system is not likely to happen, what can teachers do to help the reluctant writer? The answer lies in educators rethinking their views about grades and using technology to help change the focus of the assessment from the end product to the process.

I am not sure when grades became the currency of the education system, but in many school districts, it has become an entrenched mind-set that few question. While taking undergraduate education classes, I learned that assessments, whatever format, help teachers determine if learning had occurred and if re-teaching were necessary. I learned and still firmly believe that teachers should provide ". . . authentic assessments, and . . . the feedback they offer becomes much more useful in the absence of letter or number ratings" (Kohn, 2011). I witnessed as a teacher, however, a system in which assessments took on the form of reward and punishment

instead of a means of assessing student learning. I could never understand why points should be taken off of a student's paper for misbehavior, and yet I saw this as common practice in many schools in which I taught. A brilliant, creative student could receive a mediocre grade simply because he/she had been noncompliant with rules that have nothing to do with the writing process itself. Grades should never be the whip that an educator uses to correct a child's behavior. Conversely, points should not be given for good behavior either. Have I ever given "bonus points" to my students for behaving the way I want? I have to admit that I have. I would do just about anything to get my reluctant writers to do a little bit more than the required. Unfortunately, such use of points to change behavior defeats the purpose of the grade—an assessment of what the student has learned and is capable of doing. Consequently, such actions by teachers give the message to the student that the ends justify the means. It matters not what skills or knowledge has been acquired; all that matters is making the grade. Thus, such assessment encourages the reluctant writer to aim for the lowest acceptable standard and reinforces his/her negative attitudes about writing.

My philosophical bent concerning grades, however, flies in the face of the system in which I work. I have always believed that in the grand scheme of things, tests and grades do not really count much for anything. After the state's high-stakes test (whatever it is called that year), I tell the students who did not pass that this failure does not reflect poorly on them. I try to be their cheerleader and encourage them to learn from their mistakes and try again.   I also tell my senior students that the SAT and ACT are just college entrance exams. After they get into college, nobody will care what they scored on these tests or what their high school class rank might have been. Despite appearances, my real intent is not to knock academic excellence but rather put academic excellence above grade point averages.

My outlook on grades is actually nothing very radical or new. My readings of William Glasser and his concept of quality schools have been my touchstone concerning grades. Glasser's basic concept of a quality school is one in which quality of work is stressed over quantity and that students are intrinsically motivated to continuously improve their academic work (Glasser, 1998). Furthermore, since grades are often inflated, meaningless indicators of how well a student is progressing, they should be abolished altogether (Glasser, 1998). In a quality school, students would not earn grades but would instead demonstrate correct execution of a skill and competence in the content area. When I told my students that I believed in schools without grades, they laughed and thought that a no-grade system would be fine by them. They stopped laughing, however, when I explained to them that actually a no-grade system would be much more demanding because they could no longer scoot by with a seventy.

The crux of this problem is how to operate with a no-grade mentality in a system driven by grades. Advocating for educational reform and schools without grades is great, but even Glasser admits that ". . . grades may be too deep-seated a tradition to be eliminated" (Glasser, 1998). In reality, many school districts not only require a certain number of grades per grading period but also that the grades be routinely updated on the school's course management

system. It has been acknowledged that posting grades online is actually a ". . . significant step backward because it enhances the salience of those grades and therefore their destructive effects on learning" (Kohn, 2011). Now, not only do I have students quibbling over grades but well-meaning parents do as well. Honestly, I do appreciate parents who routinely access their child's grade, for I know such parents want to be an active part in their child's life. Though, I do find it disconcerting that I cannot remember any parent ever asking to see his/her child's writing portfolio (or that the parent was even aware that such a thing existed) and that many school districts do not encourage such alternative assessments but instead rely on the "one-size fits all" approach to grading. I take part of the blame for this, for each time a parent asked why his/her child scored a failing grade, I should have directed the parent to the child's writing portfolio.

I have come to realize that the best approach to a no-grade system in a traditional school setting concerns emphasizing the process not the product. Grades in and of themselves are not ". . . inherently wrong . . . what has rendered [the] present grading system so toxic is that letter grades, in the absence of additional information, are inaccurate and misleading" (Reeves, 2011*).* I have taught English classes at both the high school and college level. With both groups of students, I tried to give constant feedback during the writing process, whether through tutorials, through e-mails, or during a one-on-one writing conference session. I have found that my high school students tend to be more concerned about their immediate needs—making the score that they want and/or need to pass. Feedback from the instructor concerning academic progress does not usually rank highly in the mind of a teenager. Educators and policy makers reinforce this attitude with incentive programs that send mixed messages.   The "No Pass, No Play" rule for example, although a great motivator for high school students to pass their courses, actually lowers academic standards to a mediocre level. Don't get me wrong; I believe that students who are not passing probably should be spending their time in tutoring instead of participating in an extracurricular activity, but what this rule actually tells students is that a *C* is acceptable. Again, this goes against my basic philosophy that excellence in education concerns continued improvement, not just doing enough to satisfy a minimal standard. Educational policy makers also send the wrong message by implementing high stakes testing that actually "cause teachers to guide students to write formulaic essays, [that] usually . . .focus more on the generation of a product and less on the writing process" (Brimi, 2012). Teachers grudgingly accept this unfortunate mindset due to their overwhelming desire to help students be successful on a test that sometimes determines whether or not a student will graduate from high school.

The answer to this problem of mediocre standards lies in sending the right message to my students. I have learned that if I hold them accountable to every point in the writing process, that even the most reluctant writers will learn that if they honestly engage in the writing process that they will not face failure and that they will produce a product of which they can be proud.

Although I do teach the writing process to my students and have them engage in the process, I admit that in the past I have failed to effectively assess how well students complete each stage of the process. Consequently, many of my students deemed the process as unimportant since their teacher didn't place a "grade" on it. Of course, when a teacher has 150-170 students, this idea of checking each step of the process sounds impossible. However, with the increased use of technology in many schools across the nation, frequent checks during the writing process becomes more manageable. Yes, the digital divide still exists, but the gap between those with technology and those without closes more each day. The mindset of process over product coupled with embracing the use of technology in writing instruction can make a big difference in the quality of essays produced by students. Furthermore, the use of technology in the classroom becomes a "win-win" situation for teachers and students. Teachers have a powerful tool to lessen their work load and students use tools that many of them already enjoy using on a daily basis. Most of my students had on their person a device that not only could access information but could be used to communicate with me and each other. No longer would a booked computer lab or a booked library hinder writing or research; simply go to the internet on a smartphone and access the information that is needed. I also realized that students could send me a message if they had a question. I remember an ESL student who rarely spoke in class but would send me e-mails asking questions—technology became her way of a less threatening means of communication. As a matter of fact, this interaction inspired the topic of my dissertation concerning the use of asynchronous chat to lessen communication apprehension. The results of my study showed a significant correlation between the reduction of apprehension in communicating face-to-face after using asynchronous chat for several weeks (Author, 2011). Yes, the Smart Phone can be problematic, but it is a tool that, if used correctly, has great potential to reach the reluctant writer who may not, for whatever reason, feel comfortable asking for help during the class.

School districts try to support the use of technology in instruction and are held accountable for doing so. Unfortunately, the use of technology in classes across this nation tends to be quite uneven. Even in the poorest school districts, however, the digital divide need not hamper instruction. The following is a brief summary of writing instruction that relies on technology and emphasizes process over product. The entire process requires the most basic elements of technology to which most have access.

Prewriting

Writing teachers teach students to write as they write—this is simply a natural inclination. In *Write Like This*, Kelly Gallagher encourages teachers to model actual writing during the student writing process for ". . . the teacher is the best writer in the room" (2011).   He implies that this doesn't happen more often because of teacher inhibitions and fear of making a mistake thus revealing that the teacher is not "Superman or Wonder Woman" in the world of writing (Gallagher, 2011). I am more inclined to believe that modeling doesn't happen simply due to time constraints and over loaded classrooms. At one time in my career, I enjoyed having two

conference periods. One period was for planning and grading, and the other period was for parent/teacher conferences. I had at most 120 students, and I could give individual attention to each of my students. At the time, I would model writing on the chalkboard or the overhead projector knowing that I had plenty of time to allow my students to engage in their own journey through the writing process. I agree with the notion that ". . . students who are familiar with writers' lives and habits will be that much more effective in guiding themselves through the writing process" (Brame, 2011). Unfortunately, the current teaching environment has become nearly unendurable and forces educators to deviate from best practices in teaching such as modeling the writing process. Educators who constantly get the message that they should do more with less become discouraged and frustrated. During my last teaching assignment, for example, I had one planning period, 170 students, and 45 instructional days used for standardized testing. My classes averaged about 32 students with the largest class having 35 students. My suggestion of modeling writing and assessing students more often during the writing process, therefore, would become impossible with such a teaching situation. It isn't that teachers do not want to do what is right by their students, but it is that they simply cannot. The answer, of course, is not to lessen the rigor of the curriculum or worse yet grade only a final product. The answer lies in the use of technology to lighten the load. The benefits are twofold: My students and I are accomplishing more within the allotted time for instruction, and I am teaching students in a way in which I actually write.

In a more traditional mode, students did prewriting on their own or in groups, and the teacher would give a cursory glance over the student work as it was occurring. To accomplish this first step with my students, I need only my laptop and a projector; I open up a copy of the directions of the assignment in Word and analyze what is being asked (Purpose? Audience? Mode?). Next, as a whole class, we brainstorm on possible ideas for the essay. I type all student suggestions into a Word document and what is written is projected onto a screen. We all understand that this is brainstorming and that all suggestions are recorded. After class discussion, ideas are eliminated, and, in whole group discussion, students suggest several thesis statements. This first step usually takes one day. At this point on the first essay of the year, the assessment I make depends on student response—no grades are recorded, but I do make a judgment call on whether or not we should spend an additional day on prewriting. I next save the prewriting to the desktop in a file folder for each class period. If a student is absent, the prewriting can be easily sent to his/her e-mail account or can be printed out when he/she returns to school. I find this to be a wonderful, time-saving step that I didn't have before the easy access of computers in the school.

It is this increased use of technology in the classroom that makes composition instruction more effective. The above description involves a very basic level of technology (projector, laptop, Microsoft Word, e-mail).   More advanced forms of technology (such as the use of a Smart Board) are becoming more available and inexpensive and would produce even better results. During my last teaching assignment, the English department did not have Smart Boards or even a computer writing lab. The computers on campus had to be shared by all. A team of teachers

and I applied for and received money from the *Corpus Christi Education Foundation Grants for World Class Schools* (a local initiative designed to encourage innovative ideas in education) to purchase a portable interactive system through Mimio. This system functions in much the same way as a Smart board, except it is portable thus turning any dry erase board (or any flat surface) into a Smart board and allowing a team of teachers to share this wonderful product. Instead of using a projector and typing the prewriting in a word document, my students can actually use the graphic organizers that comes with the Mimio software to complete the brainstorming and planning stage of the prewriting process. Students can actually write ideas on the dry erase board, and I can save their ideas with the Mimio Catch that records all written information. This wonderful device costs about half the price of a traditional Smart Board.

Writing

At this point in the process for the first essay of the year, all students have the prewriting and planning that we did as a class. On the next writing assignment, I pick up the prewriting and planning that they did individually. They get a 100 if they did it or a 0 if they did not. I specify exactly what is acceptable and nothing less will be allowed. I usually get some flak from those students who aim for the 70. In the past, I have told students that I drop one grade during a grading period, so they usually decide that this is the grade that will be dropped. I no longer drop a grade involved in the writing process (this seems counterproductive to my desire to emphasize the writing process). I certainly do not want students to shut down before they begin writing, however, so I will allow them to come in for one-on-one tutoring to make up this missed assignment.

With their plan in hand, students start composing the first draft. Before starting to work on their rough draft, I have my students look over the rubric for what I consider to be an acceptable, high-quality essay. The first time they look at the rubric, I read through it entirely to make sure that we are all on the same page concerning the vocabulary that is used. Terms such as elaboration/commentary, examples/concrete details can cause confusion to some students. I send the rubric to students to save to their files in their home directory.

Next, I walk the students through setting up a word document according to MLA format. Some students are more technologically savvy than others, but I am finding that as the years go by, fewer and fewer students have difficulties setting up a Word document. I usually show them several sample essays (student essays from the previous years) as a model before they start composing the thesis paragraph and the body of the essay. I open up one of these sample essays and project it on a screen for all to see. As a class, we look at the strong elements in the essay and areas that need improvement. Students must send me a rough draft of their thesis paragraph by the end of the class period. Again, either they have all the elements of the thesis paragraph (100) or they do not (0). Of course, at this stage I am not checking grammar, usage, mechanics (the G.U.M errors), but I am solely looking at content. Does the student have an introduction (which I call an "occasion" and other teachers call the "hook" or the "attention-getter") and a clear thesis statement? Is there some indication of the structure of the essay in

the thesis paragraph (the controlling idea)? Again, they will be able to make up this grade if they come in for one-on-one tutoring. This will ensure that I know that they know how to write the thesis paragraph.   This process sounds like more work, but I have found that most students can complete the assignment in the allotted time, and those who cannot are having serious problems that would require one-on-one tutorial with me anyway. I spend less than a minute looking over the neatly typed paragraph which is much better than struggling to read an illegible handwritten first copy.

On day three, I have my students send me a final copy of their first draft. To ward off any cyber excuses, I always send back a generic statement that I was able to open their essay. I tell students that if they do not see a message from me stating that I have opened their essay, then they need to let me know. This puts the burden on individual students, thus making them more responsible for their own work. Of course, not all students are able to type the rest of their rough draft in one day. I am finding that more and more students are capable of composing on the computer, but, still I have some who feel more comfortable with a handwritten copy before they sit down in front of the computer. I tell students in advance that they know themselves, and if they need a hard copy in hand before they start typing, they should do so.

I next read through their rough drafts making corrections using the track changes options in the tool bar. I correct a few errors and tell students to look for whatever happens to be their particular G.U.M problem. I also catch the major errors in content that might ruin their essays and make suggestions for revision using the comment option in track changes. I next send the essay back to students with a brief message giving them some advice about how to improve the overall content of the essay. I have been really impressed with how much my students like the use of track changes. I first learned of the track changes option while working on my dissertation when my committee chair used track changes (located under the Review tab) to indicate suggestions for revision—I thought this to be a great idea and immediately started using it with my students. Again, technology is lightening the load (I can type much faster than I can write), and I am using a tool that writers actually use during the revision process. Furthermore, I am not tied to one location with a stack of papers in front of me—I can look at student writing at any time during the day and on weekends.

I usually hold on to my students' drafts and then send it back to them the next week. I explain to them that as most writers know, they will catch more of their grammatical errors if they let their essay get "cold" before they revise and edit it.   At this point, I pair students for revision and editing activity using the rubric I gave them, or I engage in a writing conference and meet briefly with each student to look at what has been accomplished and to provide feedback. A wonderful idea for collaboration that I have seen students use in other classes is Google Drive, a free file storage system that allows for, among many of its uses, the sharing of files. I have yet to try it out, but it looks like a promising tool in peer editing/revision.

Next, the students are allowed two more days in our computer lab to finish the final copy. I am leaning more and more to have all writing (even drafted essays) done in class. When I assess

the final product, I am confident that the student has gone through the entire process on his/her own and that it has not come from some other source.

Final Assessment

When I grade the final product, I again use the track changes option, and complete the rubric. The rubric I use is electronic and includes an EXCEL spreadsheet to calculate the final grade. Grades are something the system in which I work requires, and since I have graded every step of the writing process, I feel that this final assessment is a true analysis of what the student can actually do. In the appendix, I have attached step-by-step instructions for designing an electronic rubric (it cuts down on the use of paper, and it is neater than handwritten comments). I add one additional step: I run their writing through my *Writer's Workbench* software. This wonderful software gives each individual student an analysis of his/her writing based on a list of 33 areas such as sentence length, use of passive voice, fragments/run-ons readability level etc. (*Writer's Workbench*). I also send a copy of this print out to students to be included in their portfolio. In the past, I have had students print out a hard copy of the final product to be put into their writing portfolio. The portfolio had a record sheet on which students recorded the final assessment on each area of the rubric. My plans are to simply send students this checklist, so they can save it to an electronic portfolio. This electronic portfolio would simply be a file that students would save to their home directory. Before the end of each semester, I plan on having them send their electronic portfolio in a zip file so that I may review it for a final assessment of how they have progressed as writers. I will be able to access these files anywhere, and I will not have to take boxes of file folders home from work, again saving time and energy to engage in more productive instructional practices. Other ideas for online student portfolios exist, such as Dropbox, but I found for my particular purposes, the school's system was appropriate.

Grammar Instruction

Research shows that grammar instruction is most effective when using students' own writing. Therefore, I use sentence lifting activities with my students. I pull up either a whole essay (with the student's name blocked) or I type up a list of sentences pulled from students' writing, and I have the whole class make suggestions for revision. In the past I have used a laptop and a projector, but with the *Mimio Interactive System*, I can have students use the stylus and make corrections to the sentence that is projected on the dry erase board. I place the grammar activity both after the first draft has been written and after the final copy has been submitted. I do worry that I might inadvertently not emphasize some common errors, so I have designed a PowerPoint Presentation with all of the major G.U.M Errors that students make. I focus on one particular type of error with each sentence lifting activity.

The Essay Rewrite

Each grading period, I have students select one of their essays to rewrite. Yes, they can very simply accept all track changes, but I always make sure to embed comments within the text so

they have to actually make changes. For example, instead of simply deleting a comma in a comma splice error, I type in (CS). This ensures that students are actually learning from their errors. An alternative to this step would be to lock the track changes thus forcing the student to make the corrections to his/her documents. I have the students send me the revised copy with a copy of the rubric that I used to initially assess the essay, and I regrade the final copy.

Why teaching the writing process has historically been a relatively new concept in American Schools is uncertain. Some maintain that perhaps there are less obvious but practical reasons as to why this fact is true.   In the developing early American society, "emphasis was not on creative individuality, but on obedience to the law. Reading and listening were the desired modes," not writing (Yancey, 2009). Regardless of the history of the development of writing pedagogy, I suspect the reason why the writing process is currently overlooked is due to a combination of an overburdened system and a culture that does not glamorize the hard work that goes into the success of any individual endeavor. Americans are, by nature, an extremely competitive society. We see the glamour of the television/movie stars, the rock stars and the athletes, and we vicariously glory in their achievements. We hold the notion that we too can achieve the American dream and reach our goals. But when the cost is laid out, many become faint of heart and reduce efforts to the lowest, socially acceptable standard. We do not see the sweat, tears, and sacrifices that our stars have to endure to reach their goals.   Consequently, we value the end goal over the sacrifice. This failing in American culture can only be remediated at the level of the home and the school. We need to change our emphasis from the end product (such as high stakes testing) to the process (how much have we grown as writers), before we can see any real success in our system. This necessary paradigm shift in education will encourage sound intellectual growth in a culture that glorifies the successful individual but fails to recognize the hard work involved in any successful endeavor.

Appendix—Designing an Electronic Rubric

I have never taken a computer class. I make this admission to show that using technology in assessment has become so simple that even someone like myself could easily design a working template of a rubric that can be used repeatedly. Below is the electronic rubric that I use with my students, and the steps I used to create it.   It has evolved over time and is the combination of many different rubrics I have seen over the years (SAT Timed writing rubrics, teacher generated rubrics etc.). As many writing instructors do, I give more emphasis on the content portion of the grade. Concerning grammar, I want to make it clear that I do not count every grammar error when I tally the grade—I find that this would be daunting for me and pointless to the student. For example, if a student used the past tense in a literary analysis, I would not count every tense error. If I did, the student would be incredibly discouraged, and I would spend precious time in an unproductive activity. I simply count the repeated error twice (so it is carries the same weight as a sentence level error) and indicate this repeated error so that the student can make corrections to the entire essay.

I embedded the rubric with an excel worksheet to expedite the grading process even more so. The rubric on the following page may be used, revised, copied as needed by any teacher.

How to design an electronic rubric:

1. Open a blank Word Document or open a rubric that has already been saved.

2. Go to *File* on the tool bar.

3. Scroll down to and select *Options*

4. Select *Customize Ribbon*

5. Make sure that the *Developer* option is selected (it is toward the middle in the second column of choices)

6. Go back to the document and go to the developer tab—this is where several different items that can be added to the word document can be found (date, check box content, Drop down list). To add a drop down list, one must be in the *Design Mode* and *Properties* needs to be selected.

7. Make sure that this document is locked so that students cannot change the rubric. This step involves creating a password so that the teacher can change the template when necessary.

Essay Type	1	2	3	4	5
Occasion	*absent *Off Topic ☐	*Mentions topic *does not flow into thesis statement ☐	*Introduces the topic *Does not flow into the thesis statement ☐	*Introduces topic *Flows into thesis statement ☐	*Catches the reader's attention *Introduces the topic *flows into the thesis statement ☐
Thesis Statement	No Clear opinion about the topic ☐	*expresses an opinion about the topic *No controlling idea ☐	*Expresses an opinion about the topic *Controlling idea is not clear ☐	*Expresses an opinion about the topic *controlling idea ☐	*Clearly expresses an opinion about the topic *Has a controlling idea ☐
Topic Sentence	Topic sentences are absent or are off topic ☐	*Few paragraphs have topic sentences *Topic sentences do not indicate all elements found in paragraph ☐	*Some paragraphs have topic sentences. *Topic sentences indicate most of the elements in paragraph ☐	*Each paragraph has topic sentence *Topic sentence indicates all elements in paragraph ☐	*Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence *Topic sentence indicates all elements found in the paragraph ☐
Examples (Evidence)	*No Clear Examples *Examples are off topic *Examples don't support the thesis statement ☐	*Has few examples that support the thesis statement *Examples are not introduced ☐	*Has some examples that support the thesis statement *Examples are not always introduced ☐	*Uses examples that support the thesis statement *Examples are introduced ☐	*Uses strong examples that support the thesis statement *Examples are properly introduced ☐
Elaboration	Elaboration lacking or off topic ☐	Elaboration rarely shows how the examples support the thesis statement ☐	Elaboration does not always show how the examples support the thesis statement ☐	Elaboration shows how the examples support the thesis statement ☐	*Insightful elaboration *Elaboration strongly shows how the examples supports the thesis statement ☐
Structure	*The Structure of essay rambles. *No clear structure *Not enough to grade ☐	*Reason for structure is not clear *The order of the essay is not indicated in thesis statement ☐	*Essay has structure *Structure not indicated in thesis paragraph ☐	*Reason for structure is apparent *Structure of essay is indicated in thesis paragraph ☐	*Reason for structure of essay is apparent *Structure supports overall meaning of essay *Structure of essay is indicated in thesis paragraph ☐
Concluding Paragraph	Not Present ☐	Concludes the essay but does not restate the thesis statement ☐	*Restates the thesis statement in a simple way *No final thought ☐	*Leaves the reader with a final thought *Restates the thesis statement ☐	*Leaves the reader with a final thought *Ties back into essay in someway *Uniquely restates the thesis
Sentence Length	*Choppy sentences *fragments and run-ons present ☐	*Little variety in sentence structure *Some fragments and run-ons ☐	Little variety in sentence structure ☐	Long and short sentences present ☐	*Sentence variety *Long sentences balanced with short sentences ☐
Maturity (Formal)	*Inappropriate use of slang *No insightful ideas *Some copying of idea ☐	*Inappropriate use of slang *No insightful idea ☐	*Some inappropriately used phrases *No unique turns of expressions ☐	*Insightful use of language *Use of templates present ☐	*Insightful use of language *Unique turns of expression *Use of templates present but unique ☐
Elements of essay type is evident (purpose)	Essay is not appropriate type (classificatory, how-to, persuasive, personal narrative etc.) ☐	Essay has a few of the characteristics of particular type of essay and purpose is not clear ☐	*Essay follows correct structure of essay but purpose is vague ☐	Structure and purpose of essay are clear ☐	*Correct structure of the essay is clearly evident *Purpose is clearly evident. ☐
Total (content)	+	+	+	+	(2) =
Total (G.U.M)					=
MLA Format& Process					=

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"THESE FRAGMENTS I HAVE SHORED AGAINST MY RUINS": INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE DIALOGICAL SECONDARY CLASSROOM

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Abstract

This article explores Mikhail M. Bakhtin's (1981) theories as expressed in *The Dialogic Imagination*. In it, one will find a synthesis of Bakhtin's ideologies surrounding texts, as well as a discussion of Kristeva's intertextuality, and Derrida's implication for future texts. Specifically, dialogism and intertextuality explore the interrelatedness of all texts: past, present, and future. Intertextuality can be used in the classroom; if educators introduce it to their students, students will begin to find connections between texts on their own, as well as become empowered in relation to their education, giving them ownership of what they learn. Teachers hold this power in lesson planning, finding historical and contemporary utterances that support each text they read. In doing so, they will improve their classroom dynamic and have fewer students asking, "Why are we reading this?" and more asking, "Who?" "What?" "When?" "Where?" and "How?" By removing the veil from intertextuality, teachers create unique classes full of utterances; ones students develop from their own cognitive reservoir.

"These fragments I have shored against my ruins": Intertextuality in the Dialogical Secondary Classroom

I remember the first time I read *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot. It was for a 20th Century British Poetry class at the University of Georgia. I was a soul-searching junior writing poetry in a Moleskine journal between classes. I was going to be a writer. I remember this poem because it spoke to me. I had to read it twice because the first time, I was so enamored by the language that I didn't pay attention to the content. As I read, the words danced together on the page, and reminded me why I changed my major from biochemistry and molecular biology to English. Getting lost in literature is what I loved. It was not until my class lecture, though, that the poem changed my life. My professor identified one possible reason why Eliot quoted so many other works and authors in his poem. In a way, Eliot was saying that no text is new. Instead, each one is a response to other works. This idea does not mean that texts cannot be unique; no, they are merely a continuation of a conversation that begins with the first book one reads. I remember leaving class with "how" questions consuming my mind. Once I got home, I was in a state of literary catharsis that confirmed I was doing right by my heart in changing my major. I felt enlightened.

The theme of textual interconnection continued throughout my undergraduate degree and into my graduate programs. As I read and responded to literature, it became more apparent just

how connected things were. Theorists from my modern American literature courses blended with those from educational psychology; difficult poetic themes became more universal. I found myself remembering utterances from lectures long past, and discerning these connections: what do they mean; what does "the conversation" entail? Is Eliot right; are we merely reformulating ideas that have already been formed—am I merely a piece of a puzzle that will never be finished? Do we write to support language, to shore it against its ruin? Unanswered questions flooded my mind; and while I loved the quest, I was spinning a web of textual connectivity that seemed like it had no end. That is, of course, until I encountered Mikhail M. Bakhtin, and discovered that it, indeed, would never end. However, this time, I was okay with that idea.

Just as I connected with T. S. Eliot and *The Waste Land*, a similar enlightenment happened the first time I encountered Bakhtin's (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination*. In it, among other things, Bakhtin addresses the thousands of questions circulating my mind. Through a review of the novel, dialogism, and context, Bakhtin supports the very ideas raised in Eliot's poem, but on a practical level: everything is understood in relation to its history and context. My mind was blown—of course everything is connected; how else can we learn, but to read and respond to that reading? Reviewing Bakhtin's work reminded me of my twenty-one-year-old self reading Eliot. This time, though, I was no longer a wide-eyed junior. However, I never lost that self—she still speaks to me each time I encounter Eliot in my own classroom, with my own students. Reading Bakhtin, I am reminded of that passion, yet questions still linger: can educators inspire similar, aesthetic responses (Rosenblatt, 1982) in their secondary school students? Can teachers use dialogism to their benefit? If everything really is connected, can anything be unique? Are we writers at all, or merely readers who respond?

Seeking answers in Bakhtin's theories, I found that dialogism, or the idea that language is social and ever-changing and therefore texts are affected by both past and future contexts, addresses students' age-long question that plagues teachers each year: "Why are we doing this?" That one question—why?—is the reason. If we can get students to question texts in effective ways, then they begin to develop understanding through response, illuminating the purpose of education. I cherished my time in college because of the connection I felt with the literature I read. I did not need to search for meaning, I constructed it through a close reading of texts, allowing so much to resonate with my working memory. I developed context. The key to my impassioned response to *The Waste Land* was not merely in its literary value; it was in my personal, and its historical, context where an aesthetic, emotional response was born. The same fervor can happen for all students. Each time we embark on a journey inside an English classroom, we are continuing the literary conversation, creating context, building intertextuality and generating responses that continue the dialogic process. Bakhtin's dialogism (the idea that texts are altered both by their past and future contexts) offers many implications for the secondary school classroom, and when English teachers invoke him in their classes, students benefit from diverse, aesthetic responses to the texts they read.

In order to build a successful secondary English classroom, and inspire response in students, teachers should consider context and its place within their lessons. If everything exists and is indeed part of a larger whole, teachers should not ignore this gift, and build their lessons around dialogic theories, alluding to and presenting connections from each generation of literature. If curriculum is built dialogically, students can obtain the right schemas in order to come to their own deduction of texts, instead of resulting to unitary deductions devised by an author's style, intentions or societal norms. Using Bakhtin's theories in a classroom in tandem with fervid teaching can create a space that stimulates stronger, independent learners who respond dialogically to literature, thus continuing the intertextual conversation by coming to their own unique understandings. However, this process can only be accomplished if educators allow it. To build a dialogical classroom, students should become involved in the literary conversation in our classes while we inspire response through creative means. If we present enough information about each text encountered in a classroom, students will more easily understand interwoven meanings or contextual allusions. Once students have the tools to work with, response will come naturally, and understanding will erupt through creative conversation (Fecho, 2011; Fecho, Falter, & Hong, 2015; Whitley, 2015). In this paper, I will discuss how theory has informed my practice, allowing me to move my classroom toward a dialogical space in order to build lessons that trouble how we learn and what it means to teach.

Bakhtin, Kristeva, and Derrida's Textuality

Bakhtin (1981) defined dialogism as "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia" (p. 426). Meaning, everything is understood "as a part of a greater whole—there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (p. 426). Texts, thus, are built upon other texts. One encounters heteroglossia, or "the base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance," (p. 428) the first time s/he encounters another human, whether in person or through his or her writing. Therefore, we cannot escape it. T. S. Eliot deliberately quoted many other writers in his poems, but every writer does just that, or something similar to it, whether intentionally or not. The presence of the past exists in every utterance, every writing, and cannot be forgotten (Bakhtin, 1981; Eliot, 2004; Shusterman, 1988; Takacs, 1989; Tobin, 1983). Each person has inspiration, and invokes it with every stroke of a pen. How does this idea relate to the classroom? For starters, it forces teachers and students alike to focus on literary context instead of merely reading a text. It encourages readers to place a text in its context while simultaneously creating a new context founded in the reader's personal schemas.

Context leads readers to conversation and understanding. Humans learn from each other both in person and through reading and responding to the pages of a text. Bakhtin (1981) asserted that discourse lives, as it were, beyond itself, in a living impulse toward the object; if we detach ourselves completely from this impulse all we have left is the naked corpse of the word, from

which we can learn nothing at all about the social situation or the fate of a given word in life (p. 292).

Therefore, one must interact with each text he or she reads, determining its social situation in order to come to a clear understanding. Interaction occurs not only in reading the text, but building the context, understanding the text's place in history, as situated both when it was written and when it was read. Interaction could look like writing and responding to the text, creating a new context in which to build knowledge and learning. However, one cannot simply dive in, the presence of the past must be revealed.

Appropriate context, inspired by a dialogical classroom, leads to meaning-making, and according to Michael Holquist (2002), "the meaning of whatever is observed is shaped by the place from which it is perceived" (p. 21). Specifically, dialogism asserts that meaning is contingent upon "a result of the relation between two bodies occupying simultaneous but different space" (p. 21). Context plays a role in shaping one's perception—not altering one's view, but giving a stance from which to view. Dialogism encompasses textual connection across history, but it is also connects a text to self. In fact, "there is an intimate connection between the project of language and the project of selfhood: they both exist in order to mean" (Holquist, 2002, p. 23). If a text is built from language, and language exists to create meaning through communication, then dialogism is a basis of understanding. Meaning, though, cannot exist without context; yet, context cannot exist without reading, writing, and creative thought. A text has multiple modalities: a novel, poem, or essay, sure, but in a classroom, a text can be verbal, a discussion, or interactive through the use of technology. Therefore, understanding also comes in different forms. By combining the two forces of context, effective meaning is formed. If one sees his or herself in a text, or, if one can make connections between texts read, personal meanings arise from each interaction, building utterances that allow students to learn intertextually (Jones, 2008; Whitley, 2015).

No matter the text observed in a classroom, the past and present contexts of it are always in continuous play. Words are not unique in and of themselves—they have existed for centuries. What one does with words, in reference to linguistics, creates additional utterances from old texts. Bakhtin's (1981) dialogism asserts that texts are all related and understood by their relationships to other texts. Dialogism does not end with a text, though; everything is related because everything has a name, and therefore carries with it a schema and preconceived conception and/or context. According to Todorov (1984), "Not only have words always already been used and carry within themselves the traces of preceding usage, but 'things' themselves have been touched, at least in one of their previous states, by other discourses that one cannot fail to encounter" (p. 63). Because Bakhtin's theory of dialogism applies encouragingly to the secondary school classroom, it should not be left out of pedagogical conversation. In fact, if teachers unveil this concept in their classes, students are more likely to create individual meaning from texts, building critical thinking skills in the process. This practice does not have to

be done blatantly, but can be done through modes of meaning-making; finding connections and incorporating texts into their context.

Riding on the back of Bakhtin's dialogism, Julia Kristeva presented ideas of intertextuality in her essay, *Word, Dialogue and Novel*. In this piece, she defined intertextuality as "a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double" (Kristeva, 1986, p. 85). One cannot think of intertextuality as a mere referencing of other texts; instead, it is an inherent connection between readers and writers—both work together inherently, without push to do so. Specifically, there is not a single text existing that does not, in part, contain traces of other texts within itself (Eliot, 2004; Holquist, 2002; Lesic-Thomas, 2005). For instance, "utterances lead to thoughts and other utterances that lead to citations, and the conversation continues" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 46). Kristeva's use of "conversation" here is dialogical, but her focus is not on the repetition of ideas in context; instead, she, like Eliot, treats intertextuality as a contextual process that leads to meaning-making (Kristeva, 1980; 2010).

While both Bakhtin and Kristeva presented ideas on the interconnectivity of texts, they do not hold parallel beliefs. For instance, Bakhtin (1981) focused on the importance of language in connection with heteroglossia; understanding through the multiplicity of linguistics. Additionally, in dialogism, "literature is seen as an activity that plays an important role in defining relations between individuals and society" (Holquist, 2002, p. 86). However, Kristeva (1980) argued that "the text is a productivity" (p. 36). Meaning it "can be better approached through logical categories rather than linguistic ones; and…that it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (p. 36). Their differences lie within their application of dialogism. Bakhtin's theory refines the importance of context, while Kristeva placed focus on the connectivity of the works themselves.

However different, dialogism and intertextuality work together to build—and build upon—context for a secondary school classroom. Employing the notion that texts relate to each other, teachers can guide students to create understanding based on synthesis. Essential to intertextuality is the acknowledgement of utterances. According to Pam Morris (2005), "every utterance actively responds to other utterances and equally shapes itself in anticipation of an addressee's response" (p. 61). Morris elaborated upon Bakhtin's ideas: "In effect, every utterance is about other utterances." Therefore, discourse is not a singular event. Instead, it is a continuous set of stairs, ever-building upon another to continue a conversation begun long ago. It does not matter the subject; all words are responses. Moreover, Bakhtin (1981) argued, "Every utterance participates in the 'unitary language' (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces)" (p. 272, parentheses in the original). Specifically, "no living word relates to its object in

a singular way: between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme" (p. 276). Therefore, no text we read, no piece we write is brand new. It is new-*ish*, but is mostly a response to our social context, a continuation of what we have read and studied in our lifetime. Fresh ideas may sprout from others' responses, but we never create from "the top of our head"; instead, we continue others' thoughts in combination with our own. We build upon the literary and theoretical canons together, working through social collaboration.

In addressing intertextuality, one cannot discuss Bakhtin and Kristeva without referencing Jacques Derrida. According to Mariela Vargova (2007), "Derrida considers any moment of refounding as a new interpretation and any instance of constitutional interpretation as a new beginning, he nevertheless stresses the role of repetition, conservation and redemption in constitutional judgment" (p. 416). Derrida took the idea of dialogism and built upon it, asserting that each response is a new beginning, therefore creating yet another social context for readers. Furthermore, every act of response—writing, reading, speaking—is a continuation of another's work, but it is also unique to the author in that it allows his or her interpretation to become visible. According to Derrida (1978), "Imagination is the freedom that reveals itself only in its works. These works do not exist within nature, but neither do they inhabit a world other than ours" (p. 7). In relation to dialogism, Derrida revealed the obvious nature of intertextuality, but lent focus to linguistics, writing and spoken word. He opened the door for creative imagination and its role in understanding.

Vargova (2007) continued Derrida's conversation, describing his intertextual constitution as interpretative dialogue in two ways: "First, his constitution represents a dialogue between the moment of founding and future reinterpretations; it is thus an intricate interpretative interchange between the past and the future," and secondly, "Derrida offers an idea of legal and constitutional judgment as an open process, one characterized by both undecidability and ongoing deliberation" (p. 428). Derrida is focused on the future of text, not the past—on the evolution of it (Derrida, 1978; 2007). Our students' reactions to these texts are precisely one faction of that evolution. In addition, Derrida's contribution to dialogism can be found in his 1978 piece, *Writing and Difference*: "Everything begins with reproduction. Always already: repositories of a meaning which was never present, whose signified presence is always reconstituted by deferral, *nachträglich,* belatedly, supplementary" (p. 211, emphasis in original text). Instead of "intertextuality," he refers to "reproduction," similar to Eliot's (2004) ideas of making the past renewed in present writing.

Bakhtin, Kristeva, and Derrida illuminated qualities of intertextuality. While each argument differs in defining the author and reader's roles in a text, these theorists believe language is social, and therefore connected. Language, whether spoken or written, is intertwined with both the author's past and current social context. If this notion is true, teachers can use dialogism and intertextuality to their benefit in their classroom. If curriculum is built around its past and

current social context, teachers can assert similar notions and inspire students to synthesize the information they read through literary texts, both contemporary and classical. If utterances are products of previous utterances, and precursors to future ones, then students' responses create additional utterances from which to build upon. This web of responses allows any classroom, standards-based or eccentric, to become creatively unique. Maybe the ideas that sprout from lecture are not wholly new, but the conversations held will improve dialogue among students as well as give them ownership of the works they read. Once students know to identify intertextuality, reading will become proactive as well as interactive, instead of merely forced by the teacher. Just as T. S. Eliot brought his muses to light for his readers, teachers can identify similarities between texts for their students.

Implications for Practice: Creating Awareness

While theory seems a daunting task to discuss with on-level middle and high school students, part of creating awareness in the classroom is by telling students why each lesson is formed, allowing them to become part of lesson planning in a dialogical way. One way to build intertextual awareness is to inform students of the theories that support it. Maybe a teenager will not fully grasp heteroglossia, but s/he can understand why we look at literature through the lens of its historical and/or present context. If we prepare our students' minds by giving them a context from which to read, we can do fewer lectures about novels and more discussions delving into them. Answers exist—despite the blank faces sometimes looking back at us—we just have to give students a chance to construct them. If we do not create spaces for students to build schemas in the backs of their minds, they will not have a basis for inquiry. According to Bakhtin (1981), dialogue can be both internal (between two different selves, past and present) and external (between different people). Therefore, to create both internal and external dialogue in students, we must make their utterances heard by revealing utterances to them.

One way to make dialogism known to students is through pop culture. Specifically, Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* would not exist without Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and other tragic love stories. *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins could not exist without Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* and other dystopian novels. The hardest part about getting students to care about or understand literature is not merely introducing classical novels. Instead, if we find something that piques their interest while introducing intertextuality as the basis of analysis, students will find connections on their own—that, and they'll find themselves enjoying the novels they once called "boring." According to Patricia A. Duff (2003), "Intertextuality involving pop culture…is a powerful resource for the display of teachers' and students' social and cultural identities and affiliations and also a potential source of consternation for those who do not have insider knowledge of the pop culture texts under discussion" (p. 233). Perhaps, if we make connections to more easily-relevant texts in our classes, students will come to their understanding faster and more clearly than without pop culture references. This process

includes reading young adult literature—either alone or as supplement to canonized novels, or watching clips from popular television shows or movies to support an argument in a text. There are so many ways to incorporate contemporary texts in a room, and students benefit from these connections, as they respond aesthetically to things that emotionally involve them (Fecho, Falter, & Hong, 2015; Jones, 2008; Whitley, 2015; 2016).

Duff (2003) continued her discussion, claiming that students' "pop culture expertise may also give [them] a sense of power and authority" in the classroom (p. 234). If we have the chance to give students ownership of their textual responses, why not let it happen? Why not pair an article on #BlackLivesMatter with King's (1963) *Letter from Birmingham Jail* and have students discuss intertextual examples? Better still, students can self-select texts they believe relate to one another and explain the connections they make. While pop culture is a valuable source to secondary curriculum, it must be used wisely. Clearly, if contemporary references are used, they, too, must be presented in context. Intertextuality relates to all texts, not just classical pieces. One cannot build an intertextual basis for *The Waste Land* without discussing *Tristan und Isolde, Hamlet* or Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal.* Furthermore, one should not introduce a new text to his or her classroom without giving students background knowledge on that piece, and contemporary pieces that respond to it. By creating a reservoir of knowledge within our students, they will become lifelong learners who achieve individual understanding based on dialogism and intertextuality, as these utterances will continue to arise even after class is done. We cannot merely read novels and expect students to determine themes, symbols, and allusions if they have no receptacle to construct ideas from. We cannot expect students to relate to texts that do not represent, in some way, who they are. Curriculum could benefit from Bakhtin's ideas, implementing them in order to weave a web of allusions from past works, allowing our students to learn and grow (Fecho, 2011).

One way, specifically, that I have incorporated popular culture into my classroom in order to spark intertextual lessons and conversations is through the use of music. Dialogical classrooms are built upon meaningful relationships between students, teachers, and the texts they read. However, it can only be meaningful if it comes from everyone, and not just the teacher. When I taught both high and middle school students, I always assigned an essay on the first day or during the first week. I know, I was mean; however, I tried to make it more of an introduction between myself and them—between my likes and theirs—and not just about collecting initial data on their writing strengths and growths. The question changed, but it was usually something like: What are the three songs that mean most to you right now and why? After introducing the assignment, I would play parts of my three songs for the class (at least one or two of them changed every year due to context) and talk about why I chose them. Last year, it was "Glory" by Common and John Legend, "Shake it Off" by Taylor Swift, and "Goodbye Sky Harbor" by Jimmy Eat World.

After listening to excerpts from the songs together and discussing what they meant to me, I would have students free write about the songs they liked, and then the floor would be opened to them. These conversations were never perfect—there was always at least one student who hated music, but could write about something else (video games, cars, movies, vacation spots, etc.), or another student who wanted to discuss a nonconventional song in detail, inciting laughter and wide eyes from his or her peers—but, there were other students who showed a deep connection to music, whether it was because of their powerful message (like "Glory"), or whether it was because the song was silly and reminded them to not let others' opinions get to them (like "Shake it Off"), or whether, still, the song reminded them of the person they loved most in the world (like "Goodbye Sky Harbor" reminds me of my husband). It may not seem like much, but this assignment—and others like it—opened the door to intertextual dialogue on the first day of class and, for me at least, it set the precedence that my students matter, and that the things they read and like to talk about matter, and that those things have a place in our classroom. We were able to bring what we talked about during these lessons into later conversations about other texts we read, such as *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Bronx Masquerade*, *A Letter from Birmingham Jail*, and many more texts. Moreover, we were able to talk about what influenced these texts and how they influence us—continuing the intertextual exchange for the rest of our time together.

The quality intertextuality adds to the classroom grows ever more valuable when measured alongside the skills students learn from a dialogical atmosphere. When students ask "Why are we doing this?" or "How is this going to help me in my future career?" we cannot simply say, "We have to do it because it's in the standards" (Whitley, 2014). We have to involve students in these difficult conversations in order to give them ownership of their education. If students ask these questions, they create teachable moments that allow intertextuality and dialogism to shine. After all, intertextuality is not merely about texts relating to and borrowing from one another. The larger picture is in "the conversation." This conversation refers to a life outside of the classroom—to the dialogue students will carry with them once they graduate and merge into adulthood, to their careers and future children. The learning that results from a dialogical atmosphere sticks.

When teachers demonstrate the importance of intertextuality and dialogism in their lessons, students may begin to see a larger picture, appreciating texts on a new, more aesthetic level. After all, according to discourse analysis, "Meaning is not manifested in words, but is realized as a function of their internal and external relations" (Widdowson, 2004, p. 77). Once students learn how to use context effectively, they will be able to apply this concept to situations outside the classroom. Dialogism merges into everyday life, carrying the weight of words along with it. Kristeva (1980) claimed, "As capitalist society is being economically and politically choked to death, discourse is wearing thin and heading for collapse at a more rapid rate than ever before" (p. 92). With advances in technology, this idea rings even more true; students are too often losing themselves in social media, not books. We need to rekindle students' love for learning in

our classes. This action can be done through the use of intertextuality and highlighting similarities between Meyer's Edward and Shakespeare's Romeo—through Tupac and e e Cummings—through Mildred Taylor and #BlackLivesMatter. Students will care if we give them reasons to, if they can learn how to make connections from texts to what they care about—from words to life.

Conclusion

As I write, I am reminded of an exchange I had with one of my eighth grade students last year that left me feeling defeated. I was handing out a cycle test—a practice standards-based exam. Every teacher at my school had to give a cycle test every other week in preparation for our state's high stakes end-of-course standardized test—no exceptions. We were also supposed to retest during the other weeks. Most of my students, then, were testing in every class at least once a week—on top of another hour they were forced to spend on a computer-based test preparation program each week, too. As I handed this student a copy of the test, he dramatically rolled his eyes and said, "Gah—this is SO STUPID! I *hate* school and these dumb tests!" My immediate reaction was to turn quickly to him and say something like, "Excuse me? You need to remember who you're talking to and try that again!" After a moment, though, I looked at him and silently agreed, shaking my head and shrugging. I wanted to stop everything and talk about why he was right, how his words of frustration also sang in my heart, and how every Wednesday when I had to test or retest, I lost a bit of my teacher soul, just like he lost a bit of his student one. I got it—I got him in that moment, but with that test in my hand, we could never see eye to eye.

Instead of dialogically addressing his frustration—*our* frustration—I acknowledged it by putting the test on his desk and blaming the system for our failure. That day sticks out in my mind because I had the opportunity to engage in a dialogical conversation about standardization and the history of power and bias that feeds high stakes testing. I didn't, though, which brings me to my final point: theory is just that—an idea, a proposition, a foundation of principles. When in the heat of teaching, when facing those delicate moments, when provided the opportunity to dialogue with our students and hold intertextual conversations, we are not necessarily going to invoke Bakhtin and hold a perfect classroom discussion. We are people. We are real, and we make mistakes. Our students may not immediately understand our intentions, they may not know how to speak dialogically, and they may not want to engage in this work. However, it is my hope that this paper offers a reminder of the possibilities of dialogue and what can happen when we invite it into our classrooms.

Bakhtin and his predecessors have provided us educators with implications for dialogism and intertextuality. One cannot deny that every text is influenced by another text, either implicitly or explicitly. Words build upon other words, utterances come from past utterances and probe future ones. If language is so interrelated, we should make its connections known to our

students. If we give our students background knowledge to what they read, and practice finding connections between texts and pop culture—or, say, texts and activist culture—they will learn to address and utilize heteroglossia on their own. Maybe then, when a student calls out my actions when handed a practice standardized test, we can hold a thoughtful conversation about our world using the words we have read about in class. This process may be difficult at first, but will eventually, *hopefully*, encourage aesthetic, emotional responses within our students, especially if we can find contemporary texts and ideas to relate each work to, allowing a sense of empowerment or ownership in these students' hearts. If they can come to intertextual realizations on their own, they might just have similar responses to my twenty-one-year-old self. They may not be as impassioned as I was when I read Eliot, but any kind of learned ownership instills a response that is worth remembering.

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