Really? That Counts? A Sociocultural Examination of Post-Secondary Literature Circles

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the qualitative portion of a larger mixed method intervention study that examined the effects of literature circles (peer-led small group discussion of an assigned reading) on the reading achievement of college students in developmental courses. An experimental design was used to measure the effectiveness of the researcher-developed intervention, and grounded theory was employed to analyze reading attitude, reading motivation, response to participation in a literature circle, and textual engagement. Thirty-seven college students in required reading courses participated in the five-week study. Quantitative analysis revealed that literature circle participants outperformed their control group counterparts on all measures of comprehension, and qualitative analysis revealed that literature circles increased depth of textual engagement and provided opportunities for discourse, collaboration, and social interaction. These findings, supported by a strong theoretical base, suggest that literature circles would be an effective addition to a post-secondary developmental reading curriculum.

> *"With book reports, I just think too much about it. I can't think of what to say, but when we talk about it [in literature circles] and hear other people's stories, it helps me bring out mine."*

The Context

"Really? That counts?"

When I meet with a group of literature circle participants for the first time, I give a short talk in which I list "all the things you can and should do" in a literature circle (defined for the purposes of this article as peer-led small group discussion of an assigned reading). Some of the things that I list might seem painfully obvious to someone already entrenched in mainstream academia: asking questions to clarify meaning, relating personally to the text, agreeing or disagreeing, and making connections with other texts. After my first semester as a reading instructor and literature circle facilitator at a public university in the southeastern United States, I experienced first-hand that even the most basic ways of connecting with books were, for various reasons, beyond the reach of the literature circle participants. This is not to say

that the participants were incapable of asking, connecting, disagreeing, and discussing. On the contrary, the developmental reading students were particularly adept at these skills—listening to them talk in the hallway before class was proof positive. However, these same students were struggling to achieve successful outcomes on class activities and assessments.

What happens when developmental students walk into the classroom, then? The answer is at the same time both simple and frustratingly complicated. Somewhere along the way, these students have been made to feel that their "ways of taking from" a text (Heath, 1982) are not given credence by the educational system. In other words, their inventories of skills and knowledge are not valued by the discourse of power (Foucault, 1972). When I tell literature circle participants that it is not only "okay" but actually very good to make a connection between the book and their own lives, students' responses range from confusion to disbelief. "Really? That counts?"

The ever-changing landscape of developmental education at the college level forces educators and administrators to make critical decisions regarding what should be taught in these courses, how it should be taught, and in what ways skills and knowledge should be measured. There is no time to be wasted in a developmental classroom; therefore, any activities and instructional strategies should be vetted through research—ideally, before implementation and certainly before inclusion in a mandated curriculum. While a common sense understanding of literacy suggests that peer-led small group discussion of an assigned reading (henceforth referred to as a literature circle) improves reading outcomes for developmental students at the college level, at the time of this inquiry, there were too few studies on the subject to constitute what would be considered a compelling research base.

An extensive database and hand search yielded five intervention/implementation studies on literature circles and their impact on post-secondary developmental reading students. Two descriptive articles (Dillon, 2007; Valeri-Gold & Commander, 2003) simply describe literature circle implementation and give instructions for how to use literature circles in the classroom. One unpublished dissertation (Byrd, 2002) employed a qualitative methodology and a self-identified "naturalistic" approach. Outcome measures included individual interviews, audio and video taped discussion sessions, focus group sessions, a final reflective essay, journal entries, and a concluding group session. According to Byrd (2002), literature circles offer cognitive, affective, and social benefits to developmental reading students. Students co-constructed meaning through connections with self, others, and texts. Finally, interaction patterns support the suggestion that adult learners need the opportunity to engage in "grand conversations" in order to better understand text and self.

Another dissertation (Kozak, 2008) used a self-described "mixed method action research" method which included an observational checklist, reflective journals, pre- and post-reading and speaking assessments, and pre- and post-self-assessments. While general "improvements" were cited in the findings chapter, no statistical tests or analysis were shared. Through the self-assessments, Kozak found that students' confidence in reading and speaking improved. The participants of this study were English Language Learners at an English Language School, which is nested under the University of New Brunswick. Technically, the participants in this study were not college developmental reading students, but given the lack of research in this area and the fact that many of these language school graduates are eventually admitted to the university and placed in developmental reading, the study was included.

The most promising study on literature circles and post-secondary reading students is a study described by its author as a quasi-experimental design with a qualitative component (Willingham, 2009). Outcome measures included the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (forms G & H), an attitude survey, and a qualitative questionnaire. While no significant difference was found between the treatment and control groups, the qualitative component of the study was beneficial. Through the attitude survey, Willingham found that students believe vocabulary instruction is important at the college level, and through the qualitative questionnaire, it was revealed that literature discussion groups enhance vocabulary acquisition. The design of Willingham's study serves as a model for this inquiry.

In summary, the qualitative body of work on literature circles is strong, but the research is not equally distributed across all age groups, leaving an opportunity to do more work with college students. There is a respectable body of work on literature circles and their benefits for pre-service teachers (i.e. education majors), but this is very different than using literature circles in college developmental reading courses.

This inquiry was conducted in direct response to the dearth of research, hoping to demonstrate that the collaborative nature and depth of discussion in literature circles can equip nontraditional students with skills that will help them not only with standardized tests, but also with the rest of their journey as college students and beyond, as lifelong readers and critical thinkers.

Purpose Statement

In the developmental classroom, literature circles offer a meaningful supplement to a traditional reading textbook, which often forms the only curriculum in these types of courses. In the language arts/English world, literature circles offer an alternative to the traditional instruction of a text, in which an entire classroom reads a novel and takes notes as the teacher shares his/her interpretation. While some discussion of the text might take place, students look to the teacher for the "right answers" with regard to the "true meaning" of the text. In the world of college reading instruction, literature circles offer an opportunity for small groups of peers to read and discuss a meaningful, high-interest book. It seems obvious that struggling college readers should have an opportunity to interact meaningfully with a book, but in order to defend this common sense assumption, I analyzed literature circles through both the quantitative and qualitative lenses. This article, however, focuses only on the qualitative methodology, data collection, data analysis, results, and discussion.

Theoretical Perspectives

As with almost any modern inquiry into educational practices, a theoretical and philosophical debt is owed to Dewey (1902). Particularly in the case of literature circle research, Dewey's theories ring true. Education is a social, interactive process, and the school should be a vehicle for social reform. Students should be empowered to take part in the learning process. The goal of education should not be hinged on a pre-determined set of skills, but instead 1) self-realization and 2) the ability to use academic skills to make the world a better place. In The Child and the Curriculum, Dewey argues that content must be presented in a way that allows the student to make connections between the new information and prior experiences, which deepens the connections with material taught in school.

Freire (1970) takes Dewey's (1902) argument a step farther in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, in which he looks at education through a Marxist lens. He labels the traditional pedagogy originally identified by Dewey as the "banking model" because it treats students like empty piggy banks, waiting to be filled with knowledge. Like Dewey,

Freire argues for learners to co-create knowledge. The act of learning is necessarily social and political. This empowering pedagogical approach is especially critical for developmental students, who tend to be marginalized both in society and by the institution.

If Dewey (1902) and Freire (1970) view learning as an act of democratic empowerment, then Vygotsky (1978) views learning as an act of social interaction. He describes the process of guided participation, during which creative thinkers interact with a knowledgeable person. Vygotsky gives accounts of guided participation in cultures around the world and suggests its use as a model for classroom instruction. Indeed, the theoretical underpinnings of literature circles mirror Vygotsky's original conception of guided participation and the zone of proximal development. Through guided participation, our social and cultural practices become internalized and determine the way we think and learn. The supportive yet minimalist role of the literature circle in this study utilizes the zone of proximal development in order to bolster the participants' confidence and independence as meaning-makers.

Perhaps no other theorist is better suited to rationalize the implementation of literature circles than Bakhtin (1981), for his view is that thought, language, and thus texts, exist in dialogue. In other words, language is a social phenomenon that exists as it is used by people to address one another. When the language is used to create a text, it retains its dialogic identity and function. Taken to a theoretical extreme, texts carry out "conversations" with each other. In other words, intertextuality is ever present, which is why "other books" earned a spot on the Star Connections graphic organizer (see Appendix B). Every word that has been spoken or written exists in response to things that have been said and in anticipation of things that will be said in response. We do not speak, write, or live in a cultural vacuum; thus, texts are incapable of neutrality. Every word is bound to the context

in which it exists: this is the cornerstone of sociocultural theory.

Bakhtin's (1981) theory of polyglossia—the hybridity of language—supports the argument that the concept of a "standard English" or "correct English" is a social construct. There is no "pure" language, which is something to be celebrated. Every text is a chorus of different registers, language use, dialect, and borrowed vocabulary—Bakhtin's heteroglossia. According to these principles, literature circles could and should be a place for language hybridity, contact, and meaning-making.

The emergence of literature circles and book clubs in school settings over the last thirty years is just one of the many manifestations of the philosophical shift from a banking, or transmission, model of learning to one where education is social and dialogic. Literature circle proponents draw on many theories that inform educational philosophy, the nature of the reader/text, how we gain knowledge (epistemology), and sociocultural context. One such theory is transactional theory (Rosenblatt, 1969). The act of reading involves a transaction between the reader and the text; this transaction produces meaning, which is said to exist within that reader-text interaction (as opposed to fixed, innate within the text). Each reader brings individual background knowledge, beliefs, and context to the reading event. As a result, any given text has as many different meanings as there are readers. Rosenblatt's work led directly to reader-response theory, in which the reader, an active agent, completes the meaning of a text through engagement and interpretation (Fish, 1967).

Heath (1982) suggests that the ways in which people "take from books" (i.e., engage with a text) is informed by culture, and that there is a mainstream "way of taking" that is rewarded in the classroom. Students who exist outside this mainstream are less likely to succeed in school. While they are interacting with texts as much and as meaningfully as their mainstream counterparts, their approach

is not recognized as valid, and thus, it is not rewarded. Heath (1989) studied the language ideologies of "the other" and how they stand in contrast with transmission ideology. Students outside of the "mainstream" learning and communication patterns have talents from which the entire classroom could benefit, such as community interaction and the oral interpretation of written materials in a social context. Much can be learned from non-mainstream language ideologies (both oral and written), and literature circle discussions could be facilitated in a manner that welcomes simultaneous and overlapping talk, latching (adding onto another's utterance), and repetition (repeating own or other's utterance for emphasis) (Heath, 1989).

Students walk into the classroom with "funds of knowledge" they have gained from their families and communities (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Whether or not these "funds" are valued by those in power depends on which language (or language ideology) exists in the mainstream. Communities are made up of individuals with varying amounts of power and agency (Pratt, 1987). As a result, students form their language in the larger context of the dominant group/ideology. In the seminal work, Other People's Children, Delpit (1995) illustrates how the issue of language legitimacy is politicized and viewed as a problem of access to power. In the educational system, it is a problem of access to the strategies needed to succeed in mainstream academia. Within the scope of Delpit's philosophy of education, literature circle facilitators have the opportunity to guide students to make important connections between home culture and the knowledge acquired in school. Per her pedagogical approach, teachers should be vigilant and self-critical in the ongoing effort to eliminate the bias against "otherness." Delpit's work paved the way for teacher-authors such as Christopher Emdin (2009) and his theory of "Reality Pedagogy," in which teachers are encouraged to acknowledge the realities of their students'

lives and use them as a foundation for culturally relevant instruction.

Since each student is a product of a particular sociocultural context, whose knowledge is a result of world view (Delpit, 1995), it follows that some learners' ways of knowing will be looked upon more favorably by teachers than others. Heath (1982, 1989) argues that non-mainstream ways of knowing, learning, and using language are not valued, that there is only one particular way of taking meaning from books that is privileged in the school setting. Those who do not fit the mold of the preferred way of knowing (in our case, the preferred way of comprehending a text) are placed at a distinct disadvantage.

James Gee (1990, 1992), best known for his work in Discourse Analysis, New Literacies, and Video Games (namely, "good learning principles"), is not typically associated with literature circles; however, his work in discourse analysis and sociolinguistics can be used to make the case for literature circles as part of a developmental reading curriculum. The view of language as a social network suggests that knowledge is constructed in contextualized social settings in which information is exchanged with others. Collective knowledge is valued, and language "otherness" (outside the mainstream) is a cultural resource, not a problem to be fixed (1990, 1992). In fact, classrooms should be a site of language contact (Hornberger, 2002; Pratt 1987; Winford, 2003). Just as we can view otherness as a resource, we can also view mistakes or miscues as resources in a group discussion setting. Goodman (1984) expands on this view by adding that mistakes made in groups of learners have a unique value and provide insight into cognitive processes.

Building on Goodman's work, Short et al. (1996) described and analyzed classroom behaviors through the lens of an inquiry curriculum. As its name indicates, an inquiry curriculum is built upon questioning. The questioning process is more the focus than any particular solution or correct answer. The theoretical assumption behind the inquiry

curriculum is that students will end up knowing more from the process of working through a process of inquiry, even if the problem at hand is not solved, per se.

Closely related to inquiry curriculum and other sociocultural perspectives to text is critical literacy, a theoretical and instructional approach born out of critical pedagogy (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; Janks, 2010). Critical literacy argues that the practice of literacy is more than decoding words—it is discourse about and analysis of a text using critical thinking and questioning. Critical literacy allows for multiple readings (interpretations) of the same text and use of multiple texts to create meaning (intertextuality).

Alim and Baugh (2010) claim that the classroom is the primary site of "language ideological combat" (p. 155). If classrooms are the site of language combat, then literature circles are the front lines. In a format where every student is given a voice and a chance to talk, the sky is the limit in terms of diverse language ideologies. Instead of viewing this arena of language contact as a problem or source of tension, developmental reading instructors should consider all the opportunities for learning. As participants in a literature circle, students can discuss language, power, and identity in the setting of a literature circle. They can investigate the language ideologies present at school, at home, and elsewhere. Through the critical exploration of language and identity, students can become critical thinkers, even "language and cultural theorists" (Fecho, 2000).

Methodology

In order to examine the complexities of a literature circle in READ 1000, a mixed method design was selected to best address two research questions: Compared to independent reading, to what extent does participation in a supplemental literature circle 1) improve reading comprehension for college students in a developmental reading course

and 2) impact the quantity of textual connections made by college students in a developmental reading course? This article focuses on the second question, which represents the qualitative portion of the study.

Participants

All participants in this study were students registered in READ 1000 at the university (see Appendix C for READ 1000 student demographics). READ 1000 is a required pre-curriculum course for students who are accepted with low verbal/reading scores on the typical standardized college admissions exams, such as the ACT, and unable to demonstrate college readiness through the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. READ 1000 has three course requirements: In-class reading skill kits, outside-of -class textbook exercises, and outside-of-class book reading.

Novels Used in the Study

In an ideal classroom setting, students would have freedom to form groups and choose books on their own. Four novels were pre-selected before the semester began, so that the measure of reading comprehension could be developed and validated in advance. Together, the four books are considered high-interest, culturally diverse, critically lauded, "buzz worthy" young adult novels.

Many factors were taken into consideration for book selection. Using only two of the four books, I was able to honor participants' first or second choice for the literature circle condition, and I was able to honor control group participants' top choice. In terms of data analysis, two books were better than four, but even the added complication of two different texts would somewhat weaken the consistency of the intervention and related measures. However, this sacrifice of study design was outweighed by the importance of student choice—especially for college reading students. When readers have their say in selecting books, they exercise agency in the development of their identities and create richer relationships with

the texts (Bang-Jensen, 2010; Paulson, 2006). Furthermore, use of CRE (Culturally Relevant Education) practices, such as selecting books which align with student demographics, leads to increased student engagement and motivation (Hill, 2012; Ortega, 2003). Other factors taken into consideration included length, Lexile, and various requests from the READ 1000 program director (e.g., no film adaptations).

The two chosen books were Shine (2011) and I Am the Messenger (2006). Shine is a young adult novel written by Lauren Myracle. When her best friend, an openly gay teenager named Patrick, falls victim to a vicious hate crime, sixteen-year-old Cat makes a promise to God that she will figure out who did it. Cat delves deep into the dark secrets of a small town in the South and finds out how much strength it takes to challenge and question everyone you know in the name of doing the right thing. Shine touches on many sensitive topics: poverty, drugs, bullying, and intolerance. I Am the Messenger is a young adult novel written by Marcus Zusak. Ed Kennedy is a young taxi driver with no ambition. The only things he cares about are his best friend, Audrey, and his coffee-drinking dog, the Doorman. His life is pathetically predictable until he unwittingly stops a bank robbery and begins receiving cryptic playing cards in the mail. The cards send Ed on a series of missions in his community, but he does not always know what to do or how to do it. What he does know, however, is that he faces death if he does not comply. I Am the Messenger contains themes including poverty, domestic abuse, existentialism, and ethics.

Literature Circle Format

During the introductory meeting, the facilitator distributed materials, including a copy of the signed consent form, the book, a custom bookmark, page stickies, an expectations "contract," and a Star Connections insert (Appendices A and B). Also, the facilitator read aloud a script detailing the many ways in which one can participate in a literature circle. Participants were directed to the Star Connections infographic, at which point the various types of connections were explicitly named by the facilitator. Together, the participants and facilitator filled out the meeting days and times on the custom bookmarks. The facilitator read aloud the "ways to talk about books" on the back of the bookmark (see Appendix D). Throughout the intervention, participants were reminded to refer to the bookmarks and Star Connections sheets any time they ran out of things to say. Finally, the facilitator went over the "normal" discussion meeting format and the post-testing procedures, and the group confirmed the following week's reading assignment. The facilitator asked students to read to the page listed on the bookmark and urged students not to read past that point.

After the introductory meeting, the "normal" book discussion meetings followed a set format—a three-part researcher-developed intervention comprised of a collaborative oral re-tell of what was read that week, a short written activity, and an open discussion. The facilitator played a minimalist role in the open discussion and only spoke if more than five seconds of silence passed in order to provide a somewhat standardized amount of wait time that would allow students to have an opportunity to speak up.

Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each study participant (after the completion of the literature circle meetings and all other post-tests) in order to gain a deeper understanding of the backgrounds, experiences, and attitudes of the participants, as well as to assess the depth of engagement with the assigned novel. See Appendix D for the interview script. The questions for the semi-structured interviews were conceptualized based on Seidman's (2006) three-interview design; however, due to testing time restraints, I conducted one 30-

minute interview with three sub-sections mirroring Seidman's structure: life story (specific to sociocultural identity, reading, and education), reconstruction of experience (in a literature circle, reading independently, giving a book report, etc.), and reflection on meaning (various affective factors).

Interview questions were conceptualized as a direct result of my reflection as a college reading teacher and literacy researcher. I conducted a series of brainstorming sessions and jotted down the types of information I wanted to learn. Using Seidman's three sub-section structure, I streamlined and organized my questions into categories and arranged them into a logical order. I conducted a series of practice interviews using a loose adaptation of the cognitive interviewing process. I instructed interviewees to provide instant feedback on each question and to "put the question into their own words" in order to verify that they were answering the question I thought I was asking. Through this method, I was able to eliminate or re-structure weak items.

Each participant was asked four "connections questions," such as "Did you make any connections between the people you read about in book and yourself?" The respondent first answered "yes" or "no." If the respondent answered "yes," then the individual was asked to provide one or more examples of the connection. The respondent earned one "point" for each discrete connection articulated, which resulted in a simple score for each type of connection. If a responded initially answered "yes" but could not articulate a connection, no point was earned. Multiple scorers volunteered to tally the interview responses, and inter-rater reliability was 100%.

Results

The second research question (textual connections) was addressed with two distinctly different methodologies. First, the question was explored through quantitative analysis of three sections of the semi-structured interview: general questions about textual connections, specific questions about textual connections, and specific questions about the lasting impact of the assigned book. While these results will not be discussed here, it is worth noting that the literature circle participants articulated statistically significantly more textual connections than their control group counterparts. The research question was further explored through a sociocultural, qualitative lens. The specific questions about textual connections and the last impact of the assigned book were analyzed using grounded theory techniques (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Responses were transcribed and read multiple times through an analytic, sociocultural lens. Then, utterances were organized into descriptive categories. Interview data were collected from 37 participants; of these, 20 participated in literature circles, and 17 were in the control group. Twenty-three participants read Shine, and 14 participants read I Am the Messenger. The findings are presented and discussed by interview question.

Participation in Literature Circles

Only participants who participated in literature circles (n = 20) were asked a set of questions about the activity: 1) How did you feel about participating in a literature circle, 2) How would you compare literature circle discussions to book reports, 3) How did literature circle participation impact your reading experience, and 4) Did literature circles harm your reading experience in any way? Each of these questions was intended to elicit responses which would reveal what, if anything, was gained by those who participated in the literature circles. Since the questions were all closely related, responses were combined for purposes of analysis.

Response to the literature circles was overwhelmingly positive (n = 17). Positive responses were defined as any utterances synonymous with "like," "love," "enjoy," or

"fun." More specifically, three individuals explicitly expressed a desire for more opportunities to participate in literature circles. One student who was initially reluctant shared, "I was hesitant at first. I didn't quite like the idea. Now that it's over, I really liked it, and I'm sad that it's over." When asked if literature circles harmed participants' reading experiences, 17 individuals answered "no." For the three participants who responded with either mixed or neutral feedback to this question, the emergent theme was that the forced pacing of the activity was uncomfortable for them. For example, one respondent explained, "I felt that I was slowed down with the pacing, which was frustrating." However, other students noted the exact opposite:

> If you did it on your own you wouldn't have read as much at all, and you would have waited until the last day to read it. With the literature circles, you stayed on top of it and remembered it and talked about it.

Beyond the general positive reaction to literature circles, analysis of the responses yielded five descriptive categories.

Discourse. This category contained any utterances which mentioned an exchange or sharing of ideas. More than half of the literature circle participants cited discourse as part of the literature circle experience (n = 12). One participant said, "I got to argue with people … I got to tell people what I thought and vice versa." Another participant felt that literature circles "combined all the thoughts in a room," and that "maybe you understood something in a different way than they did." One participant enjoyed literature circles for reasons related to discourse: "I can get other people's opinion on the book, and I can think more about what will happen."

Social Interaction. Distinct from discourse, several participants spoke fondly of the purely social aspect of participating in a literature circle (n = 8). One particularly endearing description of the social benefits of literature circle participation was a respondent who said, "It reminded me of what you see on TV, like people having tea parties and talking about books." Another student reported that he "saw a few people around campus, and we'd talk about the book." One initially reluctant participant explained, "I thought it would have been weird with people I don't know, but after giving details about what we read, it actually opened me up."

Support and Collaboration. While closely related to discourse and social interaction, support and collaboration emerged as a third distinct category of comments. This category was comprised of all utterances mentioning the phenomena of helping, supporting, or working with other literature circle participants. Almost half of the respondents articulated the ways in which literature circle participants helped and supported one another (n = 9). The phrase "vice versa" was uttered over and over again by participants to describe the literature circle as a space of mutual support. One such literature circle participant describes a phenomenon commonly discussed among READ 1000 students: the paranoia of "missing something important" during the book report:

> [The literature circle experience] was good because if I missed something they would've said it. If I said something that they missed, they would've got onto it. We all came together and was like, 'Aw, this happened to so and so.'

Another respondent described a specific example of how mutual support plays out in a literature circle: "Maybe I will pick up and they may know the points I'm talking about but elaborate on it or give specific details on it, to help people … understand it." One student felt empowered by the ability to provide support for peers: "It gives me a sense of knowledge that I can know something and somebody else might not know it. They can help me out, and I can help them out."

Motivation. Several participants expressed that membership in a literature

circle motivated them to complete their reading (n = 7). As opposed to coming from a place of fear of failure, the motivation seemed to come from a desire to contribute to discussion and make good use of the time spent in the literature circle; in other words, "It encouraged me to keep reading." Some students felt a sense of duty as literature circle participants. One said, "When you read together, you have to give feedback," and another said, "I didn't want to miss [meetings]." Another respondent enthusiastically proclaimed, "Just make sure you read the book before the circle!"

Improved Comprehension. Any utterances related to improved text comprehension or vocabulary, deeper engagement, improved understanding, or improved "book memory" were coded as the broader category of improved comprehension. Half of the participants identified ways in which literature participation improved their reading comprehension (n = 10). One respondent very directly stated, "I think I understood this book better having that group than I would without." One of the English Language Learners felt that literature circle participation directly improved his vocabulary. Another participant made a connection between discourse, literature circles, and improved comprehension: "Literature circles help you understand more details because everybody has some differences in understanding." One of the central arguments of this inquiry is that deeper engagement with a text leads to improved comprehension; as a result, utterances related to depth of engagement were included in this category. Any utterances related to overall connection with the text, as well as any mention of opinion, prediction, or other types of higher order thinking were considered types of textual engagement. One student reflected, "My mind opened more when we talked about the book instead of just doing a book report." Another described the benefit of prediction-making in the literature circles: "We got to play around with how we

thought the book was gonna end: not just one way, but multiple ways."

Textual Connections

Each week, literature circle participants were asked to describe the connections they made with the assigned book. In order to maximize the quantity and quality of feedback, four types of connections were defined for the participant, and examples were elicited based on the four categories: book to self, relationships in book to personal relationships, book to other texts, and book to society.

General Connections. Just over half the participants confirmed that, yes, they make connections to "the self" (n = 15) and "other texts" (n = 15) when they read a book. Another portion was a bit more reluctant, saying that they sometimes make connections to "the self" (n = 12) and "other texts" (n = 10). Some participants did not seem to understand that it was possible to connect to a fictional text; for example, one respondent said, "Well, I like to read books that are real, so none of them relate to my life." Another participant explained a unique way of connecting text to self: "I put myself in the character's perspective and envision myself being that character but changing what they do to what I want." Yet another participant shared that, through participation in the literature circle, she realized that she should be working harder to make connections while she reads: "I don't usually, but for this book, I did [make connections], and I feel like I should start doing that more with other books to make it [gestures with hands to indicate waves]."

In terms of intertextuality, several participants misunderstood my question or had a very narrow concept of the question. Responses included statements such as, "I will compare the movie and book versions of the same thing," or, in response to the question "Do you tend to make connections between a book and other books, television shows, or movies?", answered, "No, not unless I'm reading a book that already has a movie out."

Seemingly, these students are under the impression that the only possible connection is "Book A" to "Movie adaption of Book A," as opposed to connecting "Book A" to "Movie B" or "Book A" to "Book B."

Other participants described the ways in which they make intertextual connections. Three individuals mentioned that their ability to make intertextual connections "depended on the book." When asked about intertextual connections, one student replied, "If I'm not into [the book], not at all." Participants mentioned other books, television shows, video game, and other texts when responding to this question. One participant even described a connection he made from the QRI test passage to his Marine basic training notebook: "You have to learn the Tet date to earn your pen, so every time I read about it in this story, I was going back to when I was reading my [Marine] book."

Another participant shared a personal anecdote about how he connected READ 1000 texts to his own life. In his response, the word kits refers to the short passage skill development drills which are the primary activity in READ 1000:

> In the READ1000 kits, there was a passage about a black kid. I was like, "Oh, okay." Anything along the lines of African Americans or poverty, single parent homes, I instantly think about my own life, and intrigues me to know that somebody else has ventured on in these types of things as well, and I'm not the only person. I'm not alone in these things. Their life would interest me, and I would be like, "Hey, I've done that before, too. I know what that's about."

One particularly memorable intertextual connection took place when a literature circle participant who had read Shine told his peers about a documentary, titled Snow on the Bluff, which explores drug use in an Atlanta neighborhood. Later, during the interview, the same student told me about how he had gotten some friends together over spring break to watch the movie again, since he kept thinking about it after reading Shine.

The ability of students to identify and articulate intertextual connections was limited yet promising. Simply put, the more texts one consumes, the more intertextual connections one can make. For developmental reading students who have not read as much as their peers, a lack of intertextual thought may very well be due to a lack of texts, period. While no pre-testing was conducted, I observed a slow but steady increase in intertextual discussions over the course of the literature circle meetings, which show the great potential of how intertextual connections could be used to empower students and improve not only reading achievement but also enjoyment of reading.

Book to Self. Participants were asked, "Did you make any connections between any person or people you read about in Shine/Messenger and yourself?"

Shine. Participants made connections to most of the characters in Shine, but the majority of respondents made a connection to Cat, the protagonist and narrator of the story (n = 10). Several students related to Cat's detachment from her friends during high school. "When bad things happen, I kinda shut down." Others related to Cat's loyalty to her (then former) best friend: "Things that Cat did for her friend, I feel like I do for my friends, too. People aren't perfect, but when you have a person that you care about, you're gonna help that person." Still others related to Cat's environment and her ability to rise above: "I grew up in a neighborhood where everything was surrounded by drugs and violence, and I didn't get involved in that. I wasn't a product of my environment." Another emergent theme, especially for the male participants who chose to read Shine, was a connection between the self and Christian, Cat's older brother (n = 3): "Christian kinda reminds me of me. How he was protective with his sister, I'm that way with my two sisters."

Messenger. Participants made connections to most of the characters in I Am the Messenger, but the majority of respondents connected specifically to Ed, the book's protagonist and narrator (n = 7). Specifically, respondents tended to relate to Ed's lack of direction in his life: "There was a portion of my life where I thought I wasn't much of anything." One interviewee seemed to reason through his connection and make a discovery in the moment of his response: "Ed. Because I like helping my friends. Ed was helping strangers, though. Maybe I should help strangers."

Relationships in Book to Personal Relationships. Participants were asked, "Did you make any connections between relationships in Shine/Messenger and relationships in your own life?"

Shine. While many relationships were identified in Shine, the relationships that participants most connected with were the friendship between Cat and Patrick (n = 8) and the sibling relationship between Cat and Christian (n = 6). Among those who related to Cat and Patrick's relationship, the connection was either based on having a best friend with a major problem ("me and my suicidal friend") or losing touch with a best friend ("when they stopped talking, she noticed she needed to be there for him"). Among those who related to Cat and Christian's relationship, the connection was either based on being a protective older brother, having a protective older brother, or a lack of closeness with a sibling. One respondent describes the coexisting contradictions of sibling love brilliantly:

> My brother wasn't really a 'brother' brother. We were never close to each other, but we were close. He was protective in a secretive way. If I was teased, he would talk to them. Like Cat and Christian. He was protective but didn't let it be known.

Messenger. The social network of I Am the Messenger is much smaller than that of Shine, so participants had fewer relationships to

connect with. The most common relationship mentioned by respondents was the friendship/romance between Ed and Audrey (n = 8). Of those who related to Ed and Audrey's relationship, the connection was based on being on one end of unrequited love ("me and this girl I loved") or the other ("I had a guy who felt that way about me"). A few respondents mentioned the friendship between Ed and Marv; namely, they related to the kind of friendship where you don't talk about important things (n = 3): "Ed and Marv are close friends who don't say everything in their lives to each other."

Book to Other Texts. Participants were asked, "Did you make any connections between the plot, setting, or characters in Shine/Messenger and any other books, movies, TV shows, songs, or video games?" Because the word text was defined broadly in this study, participants were invited to connect not only to other books but also to movies, television shows, songs, video games, and more.

Shine. Participants made a variety of intertextual connections. The most popular types of intertextual connections were to movies (n = 8), television shows (n = 5), and books (n = 3). Below are three particularly compelling connections articulated by participants:

1. Movie: Shank. "In the movie, it was about a gang who jumps a gay guy. One of the guys in the gang felt bad, and he was secretly gay. He went back to the guy, and they get together." In Shine, a member of the "Redneck Posse" is secretly gay and turns out to be both Patrick's secret boyfriend and his attacker.

2. Song: "Hometown Glory," by Adele. "In the song, Adele is talking about the things she remembered from her hometown. It's a pretty song. It reminds me of Shine. Cat is always reminiscing about her childhood memories."

3. Video Game: general connection. The respondent describes the climactic scene in Shine (where Cat climbs up the edge of a cliff to stop a murder) to "climbing up the wall to the 'final box' in a video game."

Messenger. The smaller cast of characters and quirky group of friends reminded participants of a variety of formulaic "sitcom" television shows, including Friends, How I Met Your Mother, That 70s Show, and Big Bang Theory. Many respondents noted the pop culture trend of the group of friends which contains a possible (but usually unrequited for some time) romantic pairing. Overall, textual connections articulated by participants included television shows (n = 6), movies (n = 4), and books (n = 4). One particularly fascinating intertextual connection came from one of the international student participants: "There is a Nigerian novel about a rich man with an irresponsible son who is always messing around. He gives the son tasks. If he doesn't complete them, he'll lose his inheritance." Indeed, this is similar to Ed's situation, in that he is being given "good Samaritan" tasks to complete, or else face death.

Book to Society. Participants were asked, "Did you make any connections between what happened in Shine/Messenger and what has happened, is happening, or might happen in the world you live in?"

Shine. Participants who read Shine were reminded of several things they had seen in the news, including Trayvon Martin, Sandy Hook, and Matthew Shepard. The themes which emerged from the responses mirrored issues faced by students. Most students, still only in their freshman year at the university, drew primarily on their high school experiences. Some students were concerned about homophobia and the difficulties of "coming out" in a hostile environment (n = 8). More specifically, participants discussed bullying, hate crimes, and suicide as a result of both homophobia and racism (n = 11). Participants represented a range of relative

acceptance of homosexuality, yet even those who were strongly against it did not agree with bullying or hate crimes: "I don't agree with it, but that's their choice. That's their decision. If it makes you happy, go with it. I'm not gonna hate you because you're gay." Another emergent theme was the prevalence of drugs in the small community of Black Creek (the setting of Shine), which reminded many students of the prevalence of drugs in their own communities, both past and present (n = 6): "Drugs is out there. It's taking people's lives when we could be doing something far more."

Messenger. I Am the Messenger is less politically overt than Shine, but participants still made connections between the world of the novel and the world in which they live. One such theme was rape and domestic violence (n = 3). Indeed, one of Ed's first missions in Messenger was to stop a man who raped his wife every day. Ed observes the family, talks to the young girl whose mother is the rape victim, and eventually runs the rapist out of town. This particular scene in the novel seemed to resonate with readers. One participant shared a story from his past that he had been thinking about more since he had read Messenger:

> I was at work (at a grocery store), and a cop received a domestic violence call. He could hear what was going on, but we couldn't. It's sick how he has to hear that stuff on the radio. It brings reality back to you.

The other emergent theme was the act of helping strangers (n = 4). Participants interpreted the question about connecting the book to society as an invitation to imagine how the world could be if more people were like Ed. One participant shared how he connected Ed's transformation from do-nothing to Good Samaritan to his vision for how the world could be: "I want it to happen in the world. If everyone would actually help people—if you could start with the street you live on—that would be amazing."

Findings and Implications (Impact on Textual Engagement)

Guthrie and Humenick's (2004) meta-analysis on reading motivation pointed to four motivational practices which impacted reading comprehension: content goals, student choice, interesting texts, and collaboration. No doubt, each of these factors was present in the implementation of the literature circles in this study. Students were able to rank their preference for high-interest young adult novels, and those assigned to literature circles had the opportunity to collaborate as they discussed and made meaning with the novel. Overall, participants were very satisfied with the novels. Literature circle participants discussed the ways in which the meetings and reading goals motivated them to complete the assigned readings.

Comparison to Book Reports

The subset of the participants who participated in literature circles were asked to directly compare literature circles to book reports. I asked this question to elicit more information from literature circle participants about what they gained from the experience; however, some students chose to explicitly state a preference. Seven participants said that they preferred literature circles. No participants said that they preferred book reports to literature circle. One student stated that she had no preference either way but humorously noted, "It takes you five minutes to talk about a book in a book report and a month to talk about a book in a literature circle." Some students chose to compare the two activities by describing the things they did not like about book reports. Three themes emerged as criticisms of the book report format: the relatively superficial content of book reports (n = 4), the solitary nature of book reports (n = 8), and the fear of forgetting something during a book report, (n = 3).

In terms of content, one respondent noted that, in book reports, "you don't get to play around with ideas as much." Another student seemed to be touching on the relative lack of textual engagement: "During a book report, you don't get into as much detail or what you think about what happened." The solitary nature of book reports emerged as a theme when respondents kept using words and phrases such as "alone," "by yourself," "on your own," "only you," and "one person." One example came from a respondent who explained, "In a book report you pretty much read a book by yourself, and you have to say what it's about by yourself." For some, the solitary nature of book reports led to a fear of "forgetting something important" in a book report: "If you're just giving [a book report], there's no one helping you. If you forget something, it's hard to go back."

Participation in Literature Circles

While no hypothesis was developed for the qualitative portion of this inquiry, the findings related to this construct are not surprising, given the theoretical perspectives and solid body of qualitative work on the power of literature circles. Response to literature circle participation was overwhelmingly positive. To put it plainly, the students in this study—even those who were initially reluctant—enjoyed being in literature circles and talking about books.

The fact that a majority of literature circle participants explicitly mentioned the exchange, the sharing, and/or comparison of ideas comes as no surprise, given the body of work on language contact (Bakhtin, 1981; Hornberger, 2002; Pratt 1987; Winford, 2003). The oral exchange of ideas led to linguistic contact, which resulted in any number of language and literacy phenomena: bilingualism, vocabulary borrowing, polyglossia, latching, and choral speech are just a few examples. One participant described the benefit of discourse better than I ever could: "Other people have their own opinion and can agree or disagree with your opinion of the book … and having them all

come together brings the book to life and adds more curiosity." Indeed, discourse was directly related to the depth of engagement with a text (Lawrence & Snow, 2011). Their theoretical assumptions included the belief that participation in oral discourse is a vehicle to internalization and scaffolding of comprehension processes, which pointed straight back to Vygotskyian (1978) theoretical perspectives. Book reports and literature circles were both activities of oral production, but the latter was an act of dialogic discourse. When asked about book reports, several participants stated that they liked to talk about the assigned novel, but none of the participants mentioned an oral exchange of ideas, something that emerged as a theme when they were asked about literature circles.

Interview responses revealed that literature circle participants enjoyed the element of social interaction, which is inexorably tied to discourse. In addition to data formally collected in this inquiry, as a literature circle facilitator, I often observed students talking excitedly about the book before and after literature circle meetings. From both a "common sense" and theoretical stance, these findings are not surprising. The inherent social nature of "talking about books" touches on the connection between speech act theory and literacy. Analysis of the speech act considers the context of the statement, the intentions of the speaker, and the roles of the participants. Analysis of the literacy event also considers context, intent, and role (Goodman, 1984). There is a transaction between text and reader during every literacy event, but in literature circles, an additional component of transaction and meaning-making is introduced through peer groups. The findings of this study confirm the importance of social networking (Gee, 1990, 1992) and social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978) to textual engagement for READ 1000 students. If the standardized placement tests are accepted as valid indicators of reading achievement, the students who must enroll in READ 1000 have not benefited from

traditional reading experiences (i.e. independent, solitary reading).

The sheer number of participants who explicitly described the process of mutual ("vice-versa") support in literature circles was a significant, yet not surprising, discovery. Mutual support was described in a variety of ways, including a described model of "coverage" ("If I missed something, they would've said it") and a more structured prompt-and-response model ("I give the main idea; someone else gives the supporting details"). Students felt empowered when they were given the opportunity to provide support from a peer. This phenomenon is notable and should be considered by anyone weighing the benefits of adding literature circles to their curriculum. The importance of collaborative learning has been discussed extensively for both K-12 (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1988) and college (Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 2001; Nelson, 1994; Slavin, 1983) populations.

Connections

Participants were asked about the ways in which they connected to the literature circle books. Students described a variety of rich connections that mirrored the scaffolded connections built into the "STAR" literature circle format. These results point to the importance of the role of critical literacy in K-12 education (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; Janks, 2010), as well as the importance that students be empowered to interact and make meaning with a text (Rosenblatt, 1969).

Another exciting finding of this qualitative analysis was participants' ability and willingness to make connections between the assigned novel and "what's going on in the world" (i.e., society). One participant stated, "The activities where you connect to yourself and other things; it helps you remember the book longer than just the week I need to do the book report. I'll remember the book a year from now if someone asks me about it." Participants enjoyed tying the books to "issues": homophobia, hate crimes, bullying,

and drug use with Shine, and domestic violence to I Am the Messenger. These findings point directly back to Dewey's (1902) important foundational work on the connection between reading, education, and democracy. Literature circles are an ideal space for the intersection of literacy and social progress.

Conclusion

One of the new chapters in the most recent edition of The Handbook of Reading Research (HBRR, Volume IV, 2011), titled "A Dialogic Turn in Research on Learning and Teaching to Comprehend," notes and encourages a "dialogic turn" in literacy research (Wilkinson & Son, 2011). The authors define "dialogue" in multiple, co-existing ways: discussion, voice/agency, collaborative inquiry, and the co-construction of knowledge. When the qualitative findings of this study are viewed through the lens of this multi-faceted definition, literature circles are found to address the dialogic turn on all counts. Indeed, "the interaction among different voices is the foundation for comprehension" (Wilkinson & Son, 2011, p. 361).

In the chapter on dialogue, Wilkinson and Son (2011) identify four waves of comprehension instruction are identified: strategy instruction, multiple strategy instruction, transactional strategies instruction, and dialogic approaches. Within the "fourth wave" (dialogic approaches), four sub-topics are categorized: content-rich instruction, discussion, argumentation, and intertextuality. Literature circles fall squarely into this fourth wave, and I contend that the literature circles relate to each of the identified sub-topics. While literature circles do not involve direct instruction, they could be included as one of many activities in a content-rich literacy curriculum. Discussion is the bedrock of literature circles, and argumentation touches on both the role of discourse in literature circles and the

connection between text and society, which almost always manifests as a sociopolitical debate. Texts do not exist in a sociocultural vacuum (Bakhtin, 1981), so a literature discussion group is necessarily a space for intertextuality. Wilkinson and Son (2011) refer to intertextuality as "the sine qua non of dialogic approaches to teaching comprehension" (p. 374).

While, the HBRR (2011) offers valuable insight, the assumed student population is K-12 with the exception of one chapter devoted to "Adult Literacy," which covers all readers aged 18 years and older. The Handbook of College Reading and Study Strategy Research (Second Edition) offers an entire tome dedicated to college learners. Perhaps most relevant to the exploration of the impact of literature circles are the chapters on "Comprehension Development" and the "Reading-Writing Connection." Holschuh and Aultman (2009) discuss the importance of "generative strategies," those in which readers actively construct knowledge by linking new ideas to old ones. They argue that instructional strategies must have cognitive, metacognitive, and affective components in order to catalyze generative learning in students. These requisite elements seamlessly map onto the structure of the STAR literature circle approach developed and implemented for this inquiry and—for that matter—literature circles in general. Jackson (2009) provides an extensive historical overview of the relationship between reading and writing in college settings, critically analyzes "the split," and calls for transparency in instruction. While the word explicit is typically associated with direct instruction of discrete subskills of reading comprehension, Jackson leverages the term to prove an important point: teachers can and should also make explicit the "transferability between reading and writing" and the "sociocultural elements of reading and writing" (p. 167).

Explicit strategy instruction and dialogic approaches need not pointlessly compete for space in the reading classroom; instead, these

complementary methods could and should be used in tandem. While teacher modeling and supervision of comprehension strategies gives students an opportunity to add "tools" to their reading "toolkits" and practice using them under the helpful guidance of an expert, literature circles create a space where students can be empowered to use their favorite tools, trade tools with a peer, use the same tool together with one or more peers, or create a brand new tool through collaboration and discourse.

It is in the spirit of the idea of complementary instructional methods and classroom activities that I suggest that literature circles be added to the college reading curriculum. This study found that literature circles improved reading achievement and the quality and quantity of textual connections for college reading students, compared to independent reading, as determined by a reader-developed book test and a semi-structured interview. However, the connection between gains in text comprehension and

motivational/affective variables is likely at play in this inquiry and should be more thoroughly explored in future studies. No matter what the underlying cause-and-effect chain connecting intervention to gains in reading achievement, given that only five weeks of participation in a literature circle led to significant group differences, peer-led book discussion groups seem to be a promising addition to college reading classes.

There is power in talking about an interesting book with a group of one's peers. Literature circles improve reading comprehension, facilitate deep and meaningful textual engagement, motivate students to read, and—perhaps most importantly—provide true enjoyment One participant perfectly described the potential of literature circles as a permanent fixture in college reading courses: "I feel like if I got to do [literature circles] a lot more … if people got to do that a lot more, it would strengthen their reading experience, because it really drew me in. I loved being with people I could discuss the book with."

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Appendix A

Literature Circle Expectations

What is a literature circle?
A literature circle is a group of people who read, reflect, and talk about books together.

What can/should you do in a literature circle?
1) *Ask questions!*
   - There are no stupid questions or wrong answers in a literature circle.
   - Asking questions about the book is just as important as "saying something interesting" about the book.
2) Be *respectful*: Please listen to and respect your literature circle peers. Avoid hurtful words.
3) Be *yourself*: Use the words/language/accent/dialect you are most comfortable using.
4) Don't forget the *Star Connections!* (They are on the back side of this card!)
   - You could make comparisons between your literature circle book and…
     o Your own life
     o Another book
     o Your friends and family
     o Society/culture (something you saw on the news or online)
5) Don't worry too much about the facilitator. *You aren't reporting to the facilitator;* you are having a discussion with your peers.
6) *Use your book:* If you forget something you read, you should look it up or ask someone about it!
7) *Use your bookmark:* The bookmark has your reading assignments, meeting schedule, and suggestions for ways to "talk about books."

Appendix B

Star Connections for Literature Circles

LITERATURE CIRCLE BOOK

SELF   SOCIETY

FRIENDS
& FAMILY   OTHER
TEXTS
(RELATIONSHIPS)   (BOOKS, ETC.)
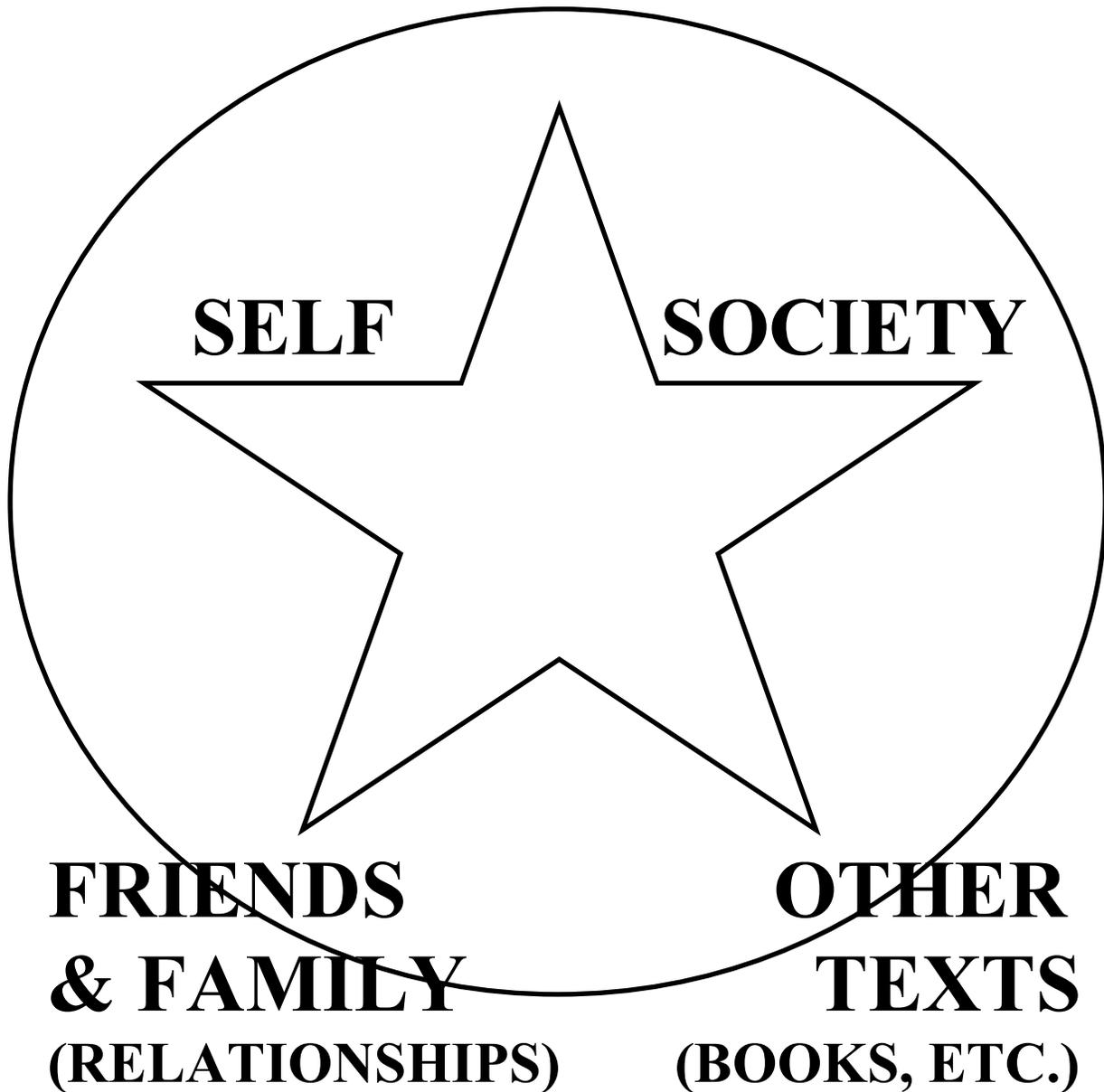
Appendix C

READ 1000 Student Demographic Data

Variable	Fall 2012	Spring 2013
Total students enrolled	311	142
Residency		
In state	88.1%	72.5%
Out of state (within U.S.)	3.5%	2.8%
International	7.1%	24.6%
Unknown	1.3%	0.0%
Gender		
Male	37.0%	43.7%
Female	63.0%	56.3%
Ethnicity		
African American	44.1%	39.4%
European American	19.0%	19.0%
Asian	4.5%	8.5%
Native American	0.6%	0.0%
Latino	0.3%	0.7%
Other	0.3%	0.0%
Not available/Not specified	31.2%	32.4%
Median Age	18	19
Mean ACT reading score	15.50	14.94
Most popular majors		
Undeclared	17.4%	12.0%
Nursing	12.2%	9.9%
Science	11.6%	9.2%
% of students repeating READ 1000	N/A	52.1%

Appendix D

Ways to Talk About Books (back side of bookmark)

- Discuss how something from the book reminds you of something from your own life or the lives of your friends and family.

- Explain why you agree or disagree with something that one of the characters did or said.

- Discuss how something from the book reminds you of something else you have read.

- Discuss how something from the book reminds you of something that is happening in the world/ country/ community right now or has happened in the past.

- Predict what might happen next in the book.

- Explain why you were surprised or disappointed by something that happened in the book.

- Find a theme in the book: black/white, rich/poor, men/women, family relationships, sex/romance, war, politics, crime… these are just a few possibilities!

- Ask about something that you don't understand—a word or phrase in the book or something that happens in the plot.

Appendix E

Interview Questions

Part I. Life Story.

1) Please tell me about your childhood.
   a. Where were you born?
   b. Where did you grow up?
   c. Who raised you?
   d. How did you spend your time?
   e. What is your fondest memory?
2) Please tell me about your school life before college.
   a. Where did you go to school?
   b. What was your school like?
   c. What was your favorite thing about school?
   d. What was your least favorite thing about school?
3) Please tell me about the role reading has played in your life so far.
   a. What are your memories of reading in school?
   b. What are your memories of reading outside of school?
   c. Did your high school experience prepare you for college?
      i. (if no) What could they have done differently?
4) Tell me the story about how you decided to go to college.
   a. Why are you going to college?
   b. What do you want to do after college?
5) How do you feel/what do you think about being in READ 1000?
   a. Do you think you should be in a college reading class?
   b. How do you feel/what do you think about the test you took? (Nelson-Denny)

Part II. Reconstruction of Experience.

1) For all participants:
   a. How do you feel/what do you think about how you are asked to read books in READ 1000?
   b. How do you feel/what do you think about giving a book report?
   c. How do you feel/what do you think about the test on the Malcolm X story?
   d. How do you feel/what do you think about the test on your assigned book?
   e. Did you like the book? Why or why not?

2) For literature circle participants:
   a. How do you feel/what do you think about participating in a literature circle?
   b. How would you compare talking about a book in a literature circle to giving a book report?
   c. How did reading and talking about the same book with a group of your peers affect your reading experience?
      i. Did it improve your reading experience? How so?
      ii. Did it harm your reading experience? How so?

Part III. Reflecting on Meaning.

1) When do you feel most motivated to read a book?
2) When do you feel least motivated to read a book?
3) Do you think you will be a lifelong reader? (describe if necessary)
   a. (if no) What would it take for you to become a lifelong reader?
4) When you read a book, do you make connections to your own life? Can you give an example?
5) When you read a book, do you make connections to other books? Can you give an example?
6) Describe your attitude toward reading.
   a. Do you enjoy reading?
      i. Why?
      ii. Why not?
   b. What do you like to read?
   c. Do you think you are a good reader?
      i. Why?
      ii. Why not?

Part IV. Engagement with Text. (after re-tell)

1) Did you make any connections between the people you read about in book and yourself?
   a. (If yes) Describe the connection.
2) Did you make any connections between the people you read about in this book and your friends or family?
   a. (If yes) Describe the connection.
3) Did you make any connections between this book and any other books, movies, TV shows, songs, or video games?
   a. (If yes) Describe the connection.
4) Did you make any connections between what happened in this book and what has happened, is happening, or might happen in the world?
   a. (If yes) Describe the connection.
5) What do you think you will remember about this book, even in a few months from now?