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THE ADOLESCENT'S SENSE OF BEING LITERATE: RESHAPING THROUGH CLASSROOM TRANSITIONS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements iv

Table of Contents v

List of Tables vii

Abstract viii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Context of the Support Reading Class 4

The Context of the Mainstream Content English Class 7

Comparison of Curriculums, Instructional Materials and Strategies 7

Theoretical Framework 9

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Reshaping of Literacy for the Adolescent 15

Multiliteracies 17

Identity 23

The Sense of Being Literate 42

What Policy Groups are Saying to the Adolescent 46

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The Setting 48

Participants 50

Data Sources 62

Data Collection 64

Researcher's Role 70

Data Analysis 72

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Students' Theories of Literacy 77

Students' Identities 91

Conclusion 113

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Why Did Students' Literate Identities Change? 118

Understanding Adolescent Literacy in Their Own Lives 124

Implications and Future Research 125

Limitations 127

Summary 128

REFERENCES 130

APPENDICES 140

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1. Personal note writing prompts between first and second interviews 68

ABSTRACT

Sense of being literate embodies the individual's identity of who they are as literate individuals within their social world, and how they relate with others in a literate society. This study examined in what ways adolescents perceive their reading, writing and talking as a sense of being literate across two different class contexts. The students, six boys and five girls, transitioned into mainstream content English classes at the beginning of the school year after a district-level decision to eliminate the English credit reading support class. Phenomenological inquiry was used as the strategy to investigate the essence of the students' experience. Data sources included semi-structured audiotape interviews, personal notes, and the students' retrospective discussion of assignments. Data analysis entailed open coding to develop categories, application of codes to data, and creation of three matrices for each student using the code list categories within the broad areas of theory, identity, and self-efficacy to consolidate, organize, and express students' coded perceptions across time, noting commonalities or if change took place.

The study revealed that the students' sense of being literate was reshaped. The majority of the students described themselves as better readers and even more so as writers. Relationships and goal setting played key roles in this change. Relationships with teachers, friends or classmates helped them be successful with the more rigorous demands of the mainstream English class. Students recognized teachers' instructional decisions, such safe classroom talk, opportunities to write, and encouragement to practice literacy strategy use, as representative of good teaching, and this built students' trust in the teacher. The teacher-student relationships helped the students to feel good about themselves and their ability as readers and writers, therefore reshaping the students' literate identities. The students in this study admired and respected members of the mainstream class as more knowledgeable in reading and writing. They pursued these experienced students as a resource through relationships to support their success in school. This support not only informed the participants reading and writing but also cultivated acceptance and the identity of being a member of the classroom community as well as enhanced aspects of a positive self-efficacy. Through reflective, planful thinking, students identified what they believed was needed to be successful. The goal setting and the achievement of the goals reshaped students' identities in a cyclical manner. The conversations themselves between the interviewer and the participants provoked the process of goal setting and generated personal interest and focus. This metacognitive activity of asking questions about goals was set up because of the interview experience. As goals were achieved, student experienced success and their literate identity was reshaped. The implications from this study involve several educator groups, most directly teachers. As revealed in this study, relationships are important in the reshaping of students' identities, and teachers need to examine how their literacy practices build these relationships. Also teachers need to provide students with opportunities to set goals and to discuss these goals with teachers as to what is needed to achieve them.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As education has struggled with addressing and serving the complex lives of adolescents, so too have schools often misunderstood and neglected the issue of adolescent reading, writing, and speaking. Within the past decade, however, there has been a surge of change, coupled with interest and accountability across multiple areas. A first step came in redefining the very term that embodied the reading and writing experience for adolescents from content reading, a one dimensional approach limited to reading and writing within the academic contexts, to adolescent literacy, a more sensitive approach to literacy related to the adolescents' lives (Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000; Vacca, 1998).

Today adolescent literacy embodies youth reading and writing in a broad context that encompasses a multiple literacies perspective (Alvermann, Hinchman, Moore, Phelps, & Waff, 1998). Researchers appealed for future study concerning how misunderstood the social and developmental nature of literacy was and how marginalized adolescent literacy had become (Bean, 2000; Wade & Moje, 2000). Professional organizations, such as the International Reading Association, the National Reading Conference, and National Council of Teachers of English., commissioned and adopted position statements that detailed what their memberships deemed as the appropriate objectives of effective literacy instruction at the secondary level (Alvermann. Hinchman, Moore, Phelps, & Waff, 2006). Perhaps the most dominant force came in the form of mandated testing to hold schools accountable for meeting standards of excellence; this

was more problematic for the adolescent who struggled with academic reading and writing in the wide range of required content area studies.

Within this flood of change, adolescents attempted to function and succeed with their own view of themselves as a readers and writers, some within the context of support reading classes. Support reading classes were typically categorized as low ability tracked classes for English credit or remedial reading classes for elective credit, depending on the curriculum objectives and course purpose (Glatthorn & Shouse, 2003; Klenk & Kirby, 2000). A brief description of low ability tracked English included student placement based on achievement and aptitude test scores, student motivation, and classroom performance; curriculum design anchored in low level knowledge, young-adult fiction, workbooks and reading kits, simplistic paragraph writing and English usage assignments, and instructional practice based on limited direct instruction, discussion and group work with more emphasis on individual worksheets dealing with grammar and mechanics (Glatthorn & Shouse, 2003). Typically a certified English teacher instructed the course. Remedial reading classes were characterized by direct instruction, individualized, self-paced reading programs, literature circles, book clubs, reading/writing workshops, conferencing, and sustained silent reading (Klenk & Kirby, 2000). As an elective, students chose to enroll; however, some were encouraged to participate based primarily on reading test scores and teacher recommendations. In general, a reading specialist instructed the class. Hybrid support reading classes also existed. These courses offered a combination of the low ability English course and the remedial reading class characteristics. They were typically custom designed by local school districts.

For a variety of reasons, one such support reading high school class was discontinued. For the upcoming school year, the supported reading students would now have no choice but to enroll in a mainstream content English class to earn the necessary English credit to graduate from high school. These students were not faced with the pressure of passing a state mandated English exam to graduate because such state law was not in effect yet. Their pressure, stress, and concerns were framed in the uncertainty of completing future English coursework to graduate. With the dissolution of the English credit support reading class, these students were without the structured literacy support that they identified with as a means of success in English. A brief explanation describes how the transition came to be.

The news was sudden and unexpected. I received my first hint in an email from another English teacher and reading specialist. After almost thirty years, the school district was considering dropping the high school English-Reading support course for the next school year. Initially, the rumored reason was because the NCAA challenged a current English-Reading student's English credit as not valid and worthy of an athletic/academic scholarship. To my knowledge, no attempt was made to investigate the credibility of the curriculum or the teacher. Weeks later, the school district office said the course had a disproportionate number of struggling mainstream students, special education students and English language learners required to be in an accredited English class. Also the district office stated that the English-Reading class did not "stretch" the students academically to meet the necessary level of the state's Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) objectives mastery. For the coming school year, English-Reading students would now have no choice but to enroll in mainstream content English class to

earn the necessary English credit to graduate from high school. The transition experience for English-Reading students was yet to be defined.

The Context of the Support Reading Class

The support reading course, English- Reading, was an English credit class grounded instruction that supported students' literacy needs while adhering to the state's English language arts PASS objectives. I constructed the curriculum, chose the materials, and set up the environment. Ideally, it was a transition course for students who were not at the moment successful in mainstream English. It differed from the mainstream content English courses in many ways: the teacher, class size, student membership, texts and materials, pace, and modifications for each student.

My interest in this experience began with my hiring in 1983 as the teacher for the support reading course. Previously I spent eight years teaching struggling readers in elementary, middle and high school in a different school district. With a bachelor's degree in language arts and masters degree in reading, I felt equipped to meet the literacy needs of the struggling readers at the high school. Initially, the English-Reading class did not include special education students or English language learners (ELLs). With the change in perspectives and laws on serving special education students through mainstreaming and the change in local and national culture of the community, both of these groups became a larger part of the support reading class. As the ELL membership grew, I pursued and acquired the state's ELL teaching endorsement through the local university. When needed, I also taught the mainstream content English 4 course, which gave me the additional perspective of the mainstream English student and the practical teaching experience of the mainstream content English curriculum.

Class membership in the English-Reading class was small, between 10 to 18 students in each class. Mainstream content English averaged 30 students per class. Ninth and tenth graders were combined into one class, as were eleventh and twelfth grades unlike mainstream English. The mainstream English student population consisted of average ability students who chose not to take any of the accelerated English classes. Students enrolled in the support class were there by choice, or, if they met certain criteria. These criteria included classification as a struggling reader, an English language learner, or a student served by Special Services on an individual educational program (IEP).

Struggling readers were described as students scoring two or more grade levels below their school grade on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and/or lack of success in the mainstream English content course. This class was their sole literacy support for success in high school. Typically, this group of students had behavioral problems in the mainstream classes and was more successful in the support reading class because of the smaller class size, greater explicit instruction, and individualized support in literacy needs.

The English language learner (ELL) group was composed of students who were identified by their completion of the Home Language Survey with one of two possible responses: their native language was spoken more frequently than English; or English was spoken more than their native language, but the student had scored below the 35 percentile on a nationally norm-referenced achievement test or scored an unsatisfactory performance level on the state reading criterion-referenced test (CRT). All identified ELL students took the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) and had scored as limited in English language proficiency or lower. The native languages spoken included, but were not

limited to Spanish, Korean, Arabic, and Chinese. One ELL student was also on an IEP. The English-Reading course instruction was modified to fit the individual ELL's language needs in a comprehensible format with attainable literacy goals. The ELL students also enrolled in an English language class, unless there was a course conflict, where they studied the fundamental language skills of oral and written English and were provided with course support in other content courses. I taught this course also, and the class met in the same room as the support class. The ELL students also received language and content course support from the multi-lingual tutor provided by the school's Title III grant.

Both indirect and direct service special need students also enrolled in the support reading class. Enrollment decisions were made at the IEP meeting, which I frequently attended as the regular teacher at the request of the student's special education teacher. Many parents requested that their child enroll in the support class as a transitional step out of special education laboratory English into mainstream English. Ongoing communication between the special education teachers and me concerning the development and mastery of the student's reading and writing skills was paramount to the students' success. This group of students required modifications in literature reading difficulty levels, re-teaching of previous English course objectives, additional time on assignments, additional opportunities to rewrite assignments, and limited demand of critical thinking skills. Personal, one-on-one instruction was important for many of these students to help them focus, to connect school objectives and meanings to their personal lives, and to experience immediate feedback.

The Context of the Mainstream Content English Class

The mainstream English student represents the generic group of students at the high school. This group also included proficient speaking English as a second language students and indirect service special education students who were successful in mainstream English with monitoring and support by their special education teachers. Typically, about 10% to 15% the English-Reading students moved into mainstream English by my recommendation and/or personal choice between the end a school year and through the following school year. I supported their choice and expressed that I was always available to help them with any literacy needs during overtime. Overtime was part of the instructional day when teachers were available to work with students outside of the class period. Students used this time based, on their need or at teacher request, for reteaching or makeup time. Some mainstream English students, who were struggling, refused to enroll in the support reading class because of the stigma identified with the class members referred to as dummies.

Comparison of Curricula, Instructional Materials, and Strategies

The English-Reading class curriculum focused on instructional strategies using abridged texts similar to those in the mainstream content English courses. The English-Reading students did not receive the district-adopted textbook to use as the principle source of reading as did the mainstream students. My sources for English-Reading class texts ranged from class sets of abridged literature texts, to the Globe series of short stories, mysteries, and biographies to *Scope Scholastic Magazine's* nonfiction, debates, fiction, and plays. Students did projects in which they were asked to choose books from the school library or home to read and write about. Individual, small group, and large

group work were used for daily assignments as well as major projects. There was a balance between teacher-directed and student-directed readings and assessments.

Many mainstream English teachers and I used similar instructional strategies, but the pace of the two types of classes differed. Because of the small class size, I could individualize and reteach students more easily than my colleagues. Students always had the option to rewrite and edit simple sentences and short paragraph assignments with no penalty for time extensions. If the class needed more time to complete projects, the students would negotiate with me the amount of time necessary. Limited amount of homework was assigned. I saw little success with the quality or quantity of work done outside of class. Special education students would seek help on homework from their special education teacher, and ELL students would ask the language tutor for assistance. So, I decided to try to offer more support during class to facilitate students' success with reading and writing assignments. In the English-Reading class, students and I read most of the texts orally or in play form. Most mainstream English classes required the majority of the reading to be done as homework. Support class students read silently for short periods of time in class, usually 15 to 30 minutes and then would discuss or write about their readings.

This group of struggling readers typically described themselves as different from the mainstream content English high school student. Some descriptors might include not being able to read or understand the regular English textbook; needing more time to do assignments or more opportunities to rewrite assignments; requiring adjustment to grade scales; having insufficient knowledge of the English language or learning disabilities; lacking confidence to be successful to do work on their own or without a support person;

or even being motivated to go to classes. Yet, these students also have various notions and ways of how they perceive their sense of being literate, both in theory and identity.

Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Framework

The concept of adolescent literacy is more than the singular notion of the student's ability to read and write in academic contexts (Vacca, 1998). I use literacy through a pluralist position of multiple literacies and literate practices that are constructed personally, historically, culturally and politically (Beach, 1994; Heath, 1983, 1986, 1991; Scribner & Cole, 1981). These literacies are socially organized practices that are overlapping and drawn from multiple texts, which attribute meaning to multiple sign systems (Alvermann, 200l; Alvermann, et al, 1998; Phelps, 1998; Scribner & Cole, 1981). In this way *multiple literacies* refers to the various forms of literacy through which the adolescent informs, defines and transforms her life including and beyond what O'Brien (1998) calls school-sanctioned literacy (Alvermann, 2001; Phelps, 1998). This notion of multiple literacies is grounded in Gee's (1996) view that meaning in language is tied to peoples' experiences of situated action in the material and social world. Furthermore, because the students in this study are exclusively adolescents, literacy is defined in how their sense making is represented by the unique adolescent's self as it is bound to a relational world (Alvermann, 1998, 2001). My personal definition of literacy is the ability to read, write, listen, and speaking as tools to learn, communicate, and reshape my personal thoughts, feelings, and knowledge, using multiple forms of texts, as reflected in my sociohistorical experiences and serve my ongoing needs in the life

process. I believe this definition supports a reconceptualized notion of adolescent literacy.

Struggling Readers. The term of struggling adolescent is frequently associated with the students in the support reading class as well as terms such as *at-risk* or *remedial* (O'Brien, Springs, and Stith, 2001). O'Brien (2006) describes the "predominant processing definition of 'struggling' adolescent learners is that they lack the skills and strategies that competent readers possess. They are struggling to be like their more competent peers" (p. 34). These labels position these adolescents as failures and as persons likely to continue to fail (O'Brien, 2006). Alvermann (2001) refines the adolescent's struggle as that of a struggling reader. She points out that the struggling reader label is a disputed term that can mean different things to different people. "It is sometimes used to refer to youth with clinically diagnosed reading disabilities as well as to those who are English language learners (ELLs), 'at-risk,' underachieving, unmotivated, disenchanted, or generally unsuccessful in school literacy tasks that involve print-based texts" (Alvermann, 2001, p. 12). She contends these descriptions tell very little about the adolescent as a reader, but they do imply ways of thinking about culture and adolescents in terms of achievement below their full potential as readers.

Discourse, Identity, and Culture

In this study, literacy encompasses more than the ability to read and write as an individual, but also as a set of social activities involving written language. As such, these multiple literacies involve reading, writing and language embedded in discourses. Scribner and Cole (1981) conceptualized literacy as a tool that is culturally determined and used for specific purposes. Consistent with the sociocultural perspective, multiple

literacies are embedded within discourses or social practices. According to Gee (1992; 1996), a Discourse or an "identity kit," is a way of acting, talking, and writing, that communicates a particular role that others will recognize, not all of which are equal in status. As individuals try to learn Discourses that derive from cultural models different from their own, individuals come up against other identities (McCarthey & Moje, 2002). It follows that the support reading students may have trouble adjusting to or with not fitting in at all with the majority Discourse in the mainstream English classroom because their perceptions of who they are and of being successful in one context do not fit or are not accepted in another context. In this case, flexibility on the part of mainstream English teachers and the ability of the support reading students' to reshape their "identity kits" will in part, control their academic success.

The support reading student has an image that encompasses her behaviors, beliefs, values and norms representative of the culture to which she is member. Culture, as a descriptor or aspect of society, contributes to the development of the individual's identity. As a member of a defined culture, all literacy users have a cultural identity, and the degree to which they participate in learning or using literacy is a function of this cultural identity (Perez, 1998). Cultural identity determines the ways in which literacy users understand and encode information about the world and their experiences (Ferdman, 1991). Adolescents, as a group, are a culture unto itself, and adolescence is perceived as a time of "becoming," or a time of choice making (Neilsen, 1998). The adolescent, because of her involvement in many different contexts and spaces of experiences, must negotiate multiple practices and experiences that shape how she uses literacy and construct identities (Moje, 2002).

The Sense of Being Literate

Support reading students have a personal view of who they are as literate individuals within their social world and how they relate with others in a literate society (Young & Beach, 1997). These students' personal views of their literate selves is what Heath (1991) termed a sense of being literate. Heath's examination of being literate encompasses more than literacy skills that allow the individual to disconnect from the understanding or production of a text as a whole, discrete elements of print. Heath states, "The sense of being literate derives from the ability to exhibit literate behaviors. Through these, individuals can compare, sequence, argue with, interpret, and create extended chunks of spoken and written language in response to a written text in which communication, reflection, and interpretation are grounded" (p. 3). Young and Beach's research expanded on the definition to include the notion that students' literate identity is complex, dynamic and far from constant in terms of confidence, relationships, and as members of the community of literacy. For most individuals in the United States, being literate also embraces the meaning of having achieved learning through special efforts to gain knowledge not readily available in the direct experiences of daily life. It is a part of being American, to better oneself, and a necessity to be independent.

In the context of this study, literate identity refers to how an individual sees herself as being literate (Gee, 1996; Heath, 1991; Young & Beach, 1997). Literate identity reflects a part of selfhood because the socially constructed mind and consciousness are tied to learning and using literacy (McCarthey & Moje, 2002). Identity matters, according to McCarthey and Moje, for several reasons. Identity shapes or is a part of how humans make sense of the world and their experiences in it, including

experiences with print. Individuals are understood by others in particular ways, and how they act toward one another is a result of such understandings. Finally, who students are influences how they interact, react, and learn in classrooms. In different spaces and as part of different relationships, identities may shift (McCarthey & Moje). This flux in identity is not negative, but can be seen as a hybrid identity that is a part of the adolescent's positive construction (Anzaldua, 1999; McCarthey & Moje). This view of hybrid identity helps define the adolescent's search for identity, not as incoherent and contradictory, but a complex, fluid and shifting construction as she moves from space to space and relationship to relationship (McCarthey & Moje). Therefore, the sense of being literate is defined as the convergence of the adolescent's literate identities and personal, tacit theories that act as both psychological tool mediating literate activity in a particular context, as well as an artifact of engagement in literate activity (Young, 1996).

Context Transition

An essential part of the discussion about the importance of looking at this transition from one sociocultural setting to another is the sociocultural theory that underpins the experience. The sociocultural theory is centered on Vygotsky's (1978) perspective of the individual's development in social interaction. Neo-Vygotskian theorists (cf. Scribner & Cole, 1981; Wertsch, 1991) focused on the social process underlying an individual's higher mental functioning and semiotic mediation. According to these theorists, the individual is molded through the internalization of activities acted out in society and through the interaction that occurs within the zone of proximal development. This theory builds on the central tenet that more knowledgeable members, as in this study, the teacher and other students in the English classroom interact in social

mediation to bring others into the literacy practices of the context. The essence of the experience determines how the student will construct her literate identity and achieve academic success.

Adolescents' perception of themselves as readers, writers, and speakers is fundamental to their success in school. Identity matters in the lifelong construction of our literate lives (Heath, 1991; McCarthey & Moje, 2002; Young, 1996; Young & Beach, 1997). Adolescents have little choice but to experience the decisions made by policy makers and school administrators. These decisions not only control the context and design of students' learning experiences, but also inform the construction of their literate identities and successes in school. This study seeks to inform those involved and committed to supporting adolescents in their quest to be successful in school, society and evolving literate identities. It is an echo of the reminder put forth in the second edition of *Reconceptualizing the Literacies in Adolescents' Lives*, "in an age of externally mandated, life-changing accountability, educators and policymakers alike need to remain grounded in the day-to-day lived experiences of those whose literate identities are being affected the most" (Alvermann, Jonas, Steele, & Washington, 2006). My research questions are: In what ways did in the transition experience from a support reading class to mainstream content English class affect the students' sense of being literate? Specifically was the support reading student's sense of being literate reshaped? If so why? If not, so why?

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The academic community appealed for future study concerning how misunderstood the social and developmental nature of literacy was and how marginalized adolescent literacy had become (Bean, 2000; Vacca, 1998; Wade & Moje, 2000). With the response, adolescent literacy research moved beyond the one-dimensional perspective of reading and writing skills to encompass the academic and nonacademic literacies that exist in the day-to-day lives of adolescents. This expansion included a focus on adolescents' identity-making practices in mediating their perceptions of themselves as readers and writers (Alvermann, Hinchman, et al., 2006). Discussions have also focused on the notion that identity matters in the lifelong construction of the individuals' literate lives (Heath, 1991; McCarthey & Moje, (2002); Young, 1996; Young & Beach, (1997).

To best understand the students' sense of being literate during the transition experience, it was important to review the literature that looks at adolescent literacy. This includes an examination of the background of adolescent literacy, multiliteracies, adolescent identity, sense of being literate, and struggling readers.

The Reshaping of Literacy for the Adolescent

The terms describing literacy for post elementary school age students evolved over the past twenty five years. Beginning with the terminology of secondary reading and later content area reading, these terms referred to the teacher instruction and student learning in relation to discipline-based texts, specifically print texts (Alvermann & Moore, 1991). Accordingly, secondary school students who struggled reading at grade level were tracked into low level content classes and/or remedial reading courses (Moje,

et al., 2000). Content area teachers often resisted instructional practices aimed at facilitating adolescent literacy, despite professional development training (O'Brien & Stewart, 1992).

In the following years, qualitative and quantitative research on content literacy put forth questions about the social, political, and cultural aspects of secondary schools (Hinchman & Moje, 1998). Vacca (1998), in the forward of *Reconceptualizing tthe Literacies in Adolescents' Lives*, addressed the advent of the term adolescent literacy and acknowledged its replacement of secondary reading as a more powerful notion to describe literacy learning among young adolescents in middle and high schools. He noted the shift from a one-dimensional perspective of what matters as literacy being limited to reading and writing in the academic setting to a multiliteracy perspective. This new perspective took in account the complexity of the social and developmental nature of literacy and how marginalized adolescent literacy had been represented. Concurrently, the Adolescent Literacy Commission's position statement on adolescent literacy advocated repositioning the adolescent at the center of inquiries into literacy processes and practices (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999). Secondary school educators were now being asked to look at literacy learning beyond elementary school with the notion of reading to learn. This shift in terminology reflected a change in way of teaching and learning for adolescents. Several broad themes defined this shift in adolescent literacy: multiliteracies, which go beyond fluency and school sanctioned textbooks; an expanded notion of text, to include multi-media text; the position of literacies in identity development; and the need to sanction such literacies in the schools (Alvermann, et al., 1998; Stevens, 2002). Within these descriptive adolescent literacy

themes, the secondary school curriculum shifts to a project-based pedagogy with a mastery in practice that is responsive to students' identities and utilizes standards as guides for instruction rather than assessments (Moje et. al, 2000).

Multiliteracies

The literacies in adolescents' lives are complex with multiple and overlapping literacies that shift and are relational (Alvermann, et al., 1998). This perspective reflects a change in what represents literacy. The expansion of a single notion of literacy stems from a perspective in ecological terms as it exists in the social-cultural practices that must be continually interpreted and negotiated (Barton, 2006). In conjunction with this expanded perspective, literacy is also political, as diverse students express and live their lives with words as they acquire the means to enter into the educational and economic opportunities (Street, 1995). The New London Group (1996) addressed literacy as a flexible tool and literacy learning as a guided practice across varied rhetorical contexts. They recognized the need of a meta language so teachers and students could talk about language, images, texts, and meaning-making interactions. These multiliteracy theorists added to the social literacy understanding of literacy practices by emphasizing the function of multimodal forms of representation and meaning making (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) in students' lives.

Just as the view of literacy has been reshaped, so too has the view of what counts as text. Traditionally, what counted as text in school had been a single required text (Luke, 1991). For content area instruction, the textbook has been the primary form of standard text with the secondary classroom (Alvermann & Moore, 1991). Weiss (1978) studied this textbook predominance, noting that approximately 50 % or more of middle

and high school mathematics teachers reported using one text throughout the school year. From the same study, social studies and science teachers reported using two or more textbooks approximately 50 percent of the year. Alternative texts such as library books, pamphlets, and magazines seldom supplemented instruction. Alvermann and Moore (1991) gave two more generalizations as to secondary reading practices with print: teachers generally emphasize factual information and teachers typically govern students' encounters with print. These practices were a part of a controlled, rote pattern of secondary school study.

Drawing from multiple theoretical perspectives, a more current understanding of texts can be defined as organized networks that people create or use to make meaning either for themselves or for others (Wade and Moje, 2000). Accordingly, people have different views of what counts as text, and it follows that there are different views of what counts as learning. This, in turn, impacts the opportunities students have to learn in school. In *the Handbook of Reading Research*, Wade and Moje (2000) described text and learning in view of two categories of pedagogical approach, that of transmission and participatory. Within transmission approaches, textbooks and teachers' oral text have the position of transmitting information and directing how the information is used in the classroom learning. The authors continued that student-generated texts functioned as the principal form to determine whether the students had processed the information successfully. Even with multiple forms of text used in multiple ways, the primary role of texts within the transmission approach is viewed as "repositories, transmitters, and guardians of information and knowledge" (p. 616). Wade and Moje described what counts as text within the participatory approaches, and referred to an expansive array of

published printed materials, student-generated works, oral discourses, electronic texts, multi-media, visual and performance art. In comparison to transmission approaches, participatory approaches are fundamentally based in students' texts and experiences, across individual, social, or cultural areas. Lastly, unacknowledged and unsanctioned texts need to be considered; these are typically social writings that students generate (Wade & Moje). Even though these texts are not a part of the classroom experience, students learn about themselves and their world from the texts they manufacture and share.

When considering the notion of what counts at text, Ruddell and Unrau's (2004) sociocognitive interactive model placed text along with the classroom context as one of the three components in the reading process as a meaning-construction process. Ruddell and Unrau incorporated text within the learning environment in which the meaning-negotiation process occurred. Because of the many possible interpretations a reader can construct from a text, the researchers deemed it the work of both students and teachers to confirm the interpretations are supported in the specific text and in the readers' response to textual features. This meaning-negotiation process uses a matrix of meanings that impact meaning construction: meaning from the text, the task, the source of authority, and the sociocultural setting. Ruddell and Unrau recognized the research issue as to what kinds of texts and tasks support a reader's involvement or openness during meaning negotiation. The multiliteracy perspective (Wade and Moje, 2000) discussed earlier appears to be an answer to that concern by recognizing the diversity of what counts as text, especially for the adolescent and validates their identity-making practices in mediating their perceptions of themselves as readers and writers.

In reviewing the literature, no specific solution or definition is offered; rather the result is an exploration of new ways of seeing and talking about adolescents and their literacies. This research illustrates how adolescents use multiliteracies to shape their identities as readers, writers, and learners through relationships, with talk and class discussions, across contexts, as well as how this impacts their sense of being literate.

Adolescents' voices and their insider perspectives are central to the understanding of their use of multiple ways they use literacy in their lives. Two studies exemplifying this view are Finders (1997) and Bean, Bean, and Bean (1999). They illustrate how adolescents used multiple literacies to define themselves beyond the traditional school literacy, particularly the social aspects. For example, Finders (1997) described students' personal literacies as those literacies meshed or conflicted with school-based literacies. This year-long ethnographic study took place at a Midwestern junior high school. Data were obtained by participant observation, interviewing and collecting written artifacts of participants. During the transition year from sixth to the completion of seventh grade, Finders documented five girls' literate practices both in and out of school, focusing on their point of view. Finders made an effort to document naturally occurring poignant incidents, specifically called literacy events (Heath, 1982). The girls belonged to one of two groups in which the membership was framed by a distinct network of friends and was the main criterion for selection of focal students.

Finder's study revealed how students used note writing and semantic inventions to form personal literacy practices and to define self and social identity specific to the girls' lives as students within a peer culture in school. She also illustrated how girls engaged in sanctioned and unsanctioned literacy practices in school and used

multiliteracies to create peer allegiances and to fill time in academic settings. These girls used unsanctioned literacy practices, such as passing notes and writing graffiti which earned them status within their peer network. Finders concluded that personal literacy practices were the most prominent to the students' lives and contended that the girls demonstrated a passion of unsanctioned literacies in school, but completed sanctioned literacies in an obligatory manner with little enthusiasm. Finders identified a literate underlife that provided an independence and sense of agency that was absent in the strongly constricted world of school, where talk was discouraged. Consequently, the social roles formed outside the classroom directly influenced power relationships within the classroom.

Just as Finders brings into focus the need to recognize and incorporate students' personal literacy practices used in and out of school, Bean, et al. (1999) also exemplified the diversity between the traditional literacy practices of school and the social literacy used outside of school. This interpretive analysis of a researcher's conversation about his daughters' multiple literacies encourages teachers to look beyond the traditional textbook mode of teaching. Bean and his daughters, Shannon and Kristen argued that the current definitions of literacy and instructional schooling practices needed to be broadened from the standpoint of how literacy functions in their lives, or as they referred to it as functionality. He asked his daughters to keep a self-observation tally of how they allocated their time to various forms of literacy experiences. This tally was used as a basis for talking about the functionality of each activity and other aspects of literacy fostered by their conversations. The conversations were audiotaped. Bean also wrote reflective notes and key quotes during their conversations. His daughters then read and

edited the text that Bean had drafted and asked for their suggestions for improvement. Their analyses viewed reading functions in school as a means to answer questions and work on spelling for the girls. Outside of school, reading and writing took on a different perspective, connecting directly to envisioning life as a performing artist, acting in plays, singing, and creating new worlds. Shannon's and Kristen's perceptions of in-school literacy revealed a traditional, cognitive emphasis, in comparison to their views of out-of-school multiple literacies revealed a more sociocultural stance. Their research reflected the use of multiple sign systems, as well as an understanding that being literate no longer means learning to read and write, but also a need for social literacy. Bean et al. call for content teachers to put aside a dependence on a text-bound mode of teaching that positions adolescents in passive roles and tap into the multiple literacies of adolescents' lives.

These studies inform educators as to how adolescents' use of multiliteracies permeates their lives and interests. However, both Finders (1997) and Bean, et al. (1999) were limited to solely girls' points of view as to their literate practices both in an out of school. This study includes both boys' and girls' perceptions of how the view themselves as readers and writers. Also, this study focuses on the high school students' perspective, whereas these studies look primarily at the middle school students' views. In *Ten Years of Research on Adolescent Literacy, 1994 – 2004: A Review*, Phelps (2005) noted a gap in recent research on adolescent literacy looking at the older adolescent's literacy abilities, perceptions, and motivations. I believe this research contributes to the body of adolescent literacy research by listening to high school students' voice their use of multiliteracies in their everyday lives.

Adolescents' use of various forms of literacy informs, defines, and transforms their world. For adolescents, what counts as literacy, text, and how literacy functions are issues that have been redefined by the global changes in literacy with new technologies, media, and economies. They have embraced multiliteracies to facilitate their identity-making practices in mediating their perception of themselves as readers and writers.

Identity

Typically, adolescence is described as a time of turbulence, mood swings, irresponsibility and incompetence. Finders' research (1998-1999) of preservice middle school teachers' perceptions described early adolescence with terms such as "raging hormones," "out of control," and having "lost all ability to reason" (p. 252-3). Such descriptors give a limited and one-dimensional view of adolescence. Just within the last few years, have researchers begun looking into how students' identities shift and change as connected to the literacies they use (Hagood, 2000).

Adolescents have been identified as people in the process of *becoming* during a unique time period in their development (Mosenthal, 1998; Nielsen, 1998). This *becoming* encapsulates their development somewhere between childhood and adulthood, with the expectation of being literate and productive member of society. Adolescents typically have more choice and time to pursue different uses of literacy and forms of representation than as children (McCarthey & Moje, 2002). These opportunities permit adolescents to develop hybrid identities and to experiment with different identity representations in different spaces in conjunction with literacy experiences (McCarthey & Moje). A review of the literature looks at the different ways adolescents develop their identities and their literacy abilities and interests. In these studies, adolescents describe

how texts, written and/or performed by themselves or others, influenced who they are and how others see them. In some cases, the adolescents experimented with identities as expressed in novels, magazines, films, or song lyrics. These texts discussed reflected the adolescents' literacy practices as varied and situated across different media, distinct from traditional school literacy.

For example, Neilsen (1998) showed how adolescents perceived the role and integrated the stories of two favorite texts as symbolic resources that not only helped the adolescents to make sense of their experiences, but also offered opportunities for trying on or taking up often multiple and conflicting roles or identities. When the students were asked about their reading and writing in school and to discuss their favorite texts, two different types of texts, a novel, *The Catcher in the Rye* and the performed text, *Pulp Fiction*, were the focus of their interviews. Six hours of individual and paired interviews about key texts in the adolescents' lives were conducted during a 2-month period in the second semester of the students' junior year in a rural Nova Scotia high school. Other data sources included observations and artifacts. Neilsen's findings showed that some adolescents adopt texts, which she calls "touchstone texts" (p. 4), and use them in sustaining, life-informing ways inside and outside of school and adult approval as an aspect of their identity development.

Similarly, Finders (1996) examined the reading of teen magazines by young girls and the impact on their identity constructions. Finders' study considered how textual representations within literacy experiences serve to define and limit social roles. This article represented a smaller focus taken from a yearlong ethnographic study of four Eurocentric, seventh grade, early adolescent girls' literate practices and navigation of

social roles and relationships. The study of the reading of teen zines as literary event provided an opportunity to examine how the girls perceived and constructed their social roles and relationships as they crossed into a new cultural venue, the junior high school. Finders showed how the girls used assorted unsanctioned literacies such as teen magazines as a rite of passage. The teen zines served as a mark of maturity and a conduit or handbook to what was suitably of women's interest. The girls also used the zines to form and reinforce boundaries around their friendship network, to decide who was to be included and who was to be excluded. These adolescents were basically uncritical in their reading. They did not challenge any of the premises that situated girls or the gender roles positioned as ideal by the content of the magazines. Finders does not suggest that educators deny the power of such texts by suppressing their presence as literature, but rather examine how texts serve to define and limit lived experiences of adolescents and teach the skills necessary to look at text as socially constructed for particular purposes.

In contrast, another kind of zine was the focus of a case study by Guzzetti and Gamboa (2004) involving identity development through literacy practices. These researchers investigated three adolescent girls who self-published teen magazines, also referred to as fanzines. Fanzines differ from conventional trade magazines in that typically young women use zines creatively to express themselves. In general, teen girls write and edit zines for their own interest, but they also distribute them for public consumption and interaction among their peers. The young girls in this study wrote and published their own zine by writing against gender, race, and class stereotypes within their out-of-school literacy practices. Their zines featured social commentary, fiction, poetry, and music criticism created by the girls' using literacy and technology skills

acquired primarily outside of school. The researchers focused their query as to what influenced and enabled these adolescent girls in writing zines that promoted social justice and refuted stereotypical notions of how gender, sexuality, class and race typically perform.

The study took place in an affluent community in the southwestern United States, primarily the local high school during the course of two academic years. Data collection consisted of observations, formal and informal interviews both in and out of school, artifact collections, and open-ended questionnaires. The girls' zine, *Burnt_Beauty*, centered on a punk rock and personal capability, with articles and art representing feminism, animal rights, and social and economic justice issue, but the girls' identities also developed in their shared communications. The researchers concluded that these female teens were rewarded and supported by family members, peers, teachers, and one another that enabled them to write points of view not commonly written by adolescent girls. Guzetti and Gamboa also noted that the girls socially established values and habits, created a set of beliefs in which the literate behaviors they participated in by choice were compatible with their current identities, and empowered them to write in ways that exemplified those identities.

In a progressive study of adolescents' use of unsanctioned literacies, Moje (2000) stretches the educator's inclusion and understandings of adolescent multiliteracies and their identities as literate. The study occurred over a three year period with five gang-affiliated youth. Moje's purpose centered on illustrating how these youths used their literacy practices as meaning-making, expressive, and communicative tools. The study setting included three venues in an urban area of Salt Lake City, Utah over the three year

period: two English classrooms; outside of school, specifically their homes and at restaurants; and after becoming more a part of their family and social practices, Moje was included as an accepted part of their social gatherings. The five participants represented four different ethnic groups in seventh through ninth grades. Moje was clear to describe herself as an outsider, not only because of age, race, and social standing, but also as a non-gang member. She described how she cultivated and nurtured the trust relationship with the adolescents but still clarified that the data reflected their stories that they related to her, whether they were true or not.

Data collection was extensive, ranging from formal interviews to electronic communications with teachers, field notes, and in the final two years, a researcher's journal. Data analysis included constant comparative analysis, inductive analysis, and critical discourse analysis. The data showed how these adolescents used literacy practices to claim a space, construct an identity, and take a social position in their worlds. However, Moje stated that she did not imply that educators should valorize and invite such unsanctioned literacy practices into schools, but rather support youth in the writing of their own stories, and teach them how to reconstruct dominant stories. Moje expressed that this was especially relevant for those adolescents who are typically marginalized or disengaged to use their literacy practices as resources in school in a manner that neither romanticizes nor vilifies the practices.

As exemplified by these studies, text, in multiple forms, plays significant roles in the way adolescents express who they are and how others see them. Neilsen (1998) showed the impact of the text experience as a part of identity development as a case study of two academically successful adolescents. Similarly, the students in this study give

their perceptions of who they are as readers, writers, and learners with the literacy they use and produce in their classes. However, because these students were identified as struggling readers and writers, this study informs educators as to this group's unique perceptions of literate identity. Moje's (2000) adolescents also represented a group of students who were typically marginalized or disengaged in school, but as with Finders (1996) and Guzzetti and Gamboa (2004), these three studies focus on the literacy identity of younger adolescents. In contrast, this study focuses on the perceptions of the older high school student. Guzzetti and Gamboa contributed to the understandings of the out-of-school literate practices of a specific group of adolescents, specifically those of the upper socioeconomic class and those who were highly literate in traditional ways. The students in this study, however struggled with tradition school literacy. This study informs educators as to the literacy practices of older struggling readers across contexts, especially those limited in their access and understanding of technological literacies.

School influences on identity

Classroom practices also shape adolescents' sense of who they are as readers, writers, and speakers (Moje, et al., 2000; Moje & O'Brien, 2001). Students perceive themselves as learners in various ways, such as contributors, participants, and members in relationships as well as negative positions, such as non-participants and non-learners. Research suggests that when adolescents view themselves as competent readers and writers, they are motivated to participate as learners in school (Alvermann, 2001; Bandura, 1993; Pajares, 1996). Students' beliefs in their ability to regulate their own learning and to master academic activities determine their expectations, level of motivation, and academic success (Bandura, 1993). This sense of efficacy impacts

personal accomplishment or failure (Bandura, 1993). For example, O'Brien (2001) discussed Dan, a struggling reader, whose relative incompetence with print texts and print literacies framed a personal negative self image as reader, writer, and student. However, Dan experienced uplift in confidence and sense of agency when given the opportunity to explore and express his competency, creativity, and artistic success with media literacies. Likewise, the students in this study struggle with their image as successful readers and writers. This study offers additional insight as to students' perceptions of attaining success in school, but across the context of two different classes

A further review of the literature considers the daily face-to-face interactions among adolescents, their teachers, and peers as they participate with print and literacy practices through relationships, with talk and class discussions, and across contexts. For example, Dillon (1989) looked at how teacher and students work together to create meaning during classroom lessons. The purpose of the study was to determine the nature of the social organization of low-track high school English-reading classroom. The participants included the English-reading teacher, a white, middle-aged male, and 17 high school juniors, six males and eleven females, predominantly black with low-reading abilities and low socioeconomic levels and a variety of academic backgrounds and family compositions. Data collected comprised of classroom observations, field notes, formal and informal interviews, and both student and teacher artifacts. Dillon's results showed that teacher's identity as an effective educator went beyond the typical outstanding teaching behaviors noted in research literature; his effectiveness, described unique in nature, was defined by ability to create a social classroom organization that took into consideration the personal background of his students that facilitated a meaningful

literacy experiences for remedial readers and writers. By varying his teaching style, the teacher was able to successfully communicate with students during instructional interactions which resulted in increased opportunities for student learning, improved student attitude toward learning and school, and positive beliefs about themselves as readers, writers, and learners.

In another ethnographic study, Moje (1996) examined how the relationship established between a teacher and her students contextualized their uses of and decisions about literacy. Set in a high school chemistry classroom over the course of two years, Moje interviewed seven students as key informants, along with the teacher. Moje acted as participant and observer while emphasizing her struggle to understand literacy practices in the classroom rather than to evaluate them. Data sources included daily field note observations, formal structured and semistructured interviews, and artifacts of classroom text materials. Constant comparative method of analysis was used for data-analysis procedures. Moje asserted that literacy was practiced as a tool for organizing thinking and learning in the context of the relationship built between the teacher and her students. Organization, modeled by the teacher, was the strand that wove literacy and chemistry learning together.

As shown in both of these studies, teacher-student relationships played a role in the students' success. Dillon (1989) showed that effective teaching style, jointly organized instruction with students, and cultivation of trust-based relationships, contribute to adolescents' sense of competence and self-worth. Likewise, Moje's (1996) teacher's strong personal values and her lived experience of respect, caring, and support of others permeated her relationship with her students and grounded her student-centered

orientation of instruction. Similarly in this study, relationships play an important role in contributing to the students' success in class. However, this study addresses a gap in the research as to the ways teacher-student relationships shape students' identities as readers and writers, specifically what the adolescents say they need teachers to do to achieve their goals.

Both Dillon (1989) and Moje (1996) centered on student-teacher relationships with conversation being a part of the context. Other studies looked at talk and class discussion as a way to understand how talk impacted adolescent's identities as readers and writers. In one such study, eight researchers investigated adolescents' engagement in face-to-face interactions as they reflected and described their perceptions of their own and their classmates' experiences in discussing assigned content area texts (Alvermann, Young, Weaver, Hinchman, Moore, Phelps, Thrash, & Zalewski, 1996). Over the course of a year, the multicase study took place in five diverse school sites across the United States. Data sources included three sets of video-taped class discussions, followed by focal group interviews, field notes, memoranda, narrative vignettes, and sample of students' work. The procedure for data collection and analysis entailed sharing field notes, transcribed interviews, and videos across sites so that participants were a part of common sets of data generated findings. Results suggested that students are aware of the conditions they believe to be conducive to good discussions. Students in the study preferred discussions in small groups rather in large, full class discussions because of more opportunities to talk and less risks when expressing personal or unsure thoughts. A second finding stated that students say the tasks teachers present and the subject matter assigned for reading influences participation in discussion. Lastly, the researchers noted

that students see discussion as helpful in understanding what they read, especially by listening to each other, voicing opinions, and attending to vocabulary.

Similarly, Hinchman and Young (2001) explored classroom talk about written text. These researchers revisited an earlier study (see Alvermann, et al, 1996) that utilized student-to-student talk about text. Using critical discourse analysis, these researchers analyzed field notes and transcripts from classroom videotapes and student interviews according to three dimensions: description, interpretation, and explanation, and with attention for three contexts: situational, institutional, and societal. Two students were chosen as participants for apparent differences, yet they represented certain adolescents to assist the researchers to consider the ways societal influences could be embedded in classroom talk. One student, Colin, a 16-year old, White, middle-class male was very vocal and straightforward in his social studies class discussions. He appeared to enjoy being recognized. Colin participated in classroom talk about text with an attitude of expertise, only to lose credibility when his teacher expected richer understandings about the class readings. Likewise, Desuna, a 14-year-old African American female appeared to be knowledgeable about the conditions for text-based class discussions, but she did not always implement them. In her eighth grade language arts class, all the students were identified as gifted. She participated in classroom talk from the assumption of equality, yet no one acknowledged what she said until it progressed to the point that her classmates mocked her. Desuna explained at the beginning of the study that she liked to argue and express her opinions; however, as the study progressed, the frequency of her contributions in discussions diminished. Colin and Desuna participated in talk in

complex ways that appeared to be tied to a variety of social constructions in and out of school.

As presented in these studies, teachers included small group discussions in their instructional practice to give students opportunities to talk as a means of expressing their thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Both Alvermann, et al. (1996) and Hinchman and Young (2001) concluded that students benefited from small group discussions; however, they suggested that educators should be watchful in the organization and implementation of classroom talk about text and discussions in general. They challenged teachers to examine the ways they maintain control over curriculum, class routines, and class outcomes. Alvermann, et al., in particular, offered suggestions for facilitating small group discussion for teacher who value student independence and self-learning. These studies contribute to the understanding of how students' perceptions of talk impact their identity as readers and learners; however these studies were limited to exploring talk as related to text-based discussions in small groups. Furthermore, a gap exists in understanding why students feel more comfortable with certain peers, struggle with reading class texts, and have negative feelings about discussions. Also, research is needed on talk that looks at how students perceive their ability to express themselves in different contexts, especially the struggling adolescent who might feel marginalized in a mainstream content class.

Struggling readers

Research has revealed that literate actions and literacy instruction do not happen in a vacuum; literacy teaching and learning occurs in contexts (Moore, 1996). This reflects a social action perspective where teachers and students are viewed as participants actively constructing situational contexts that are meshed within shaping influences

(Moore, 1996). Such a perspective gives attention to literacy contexts as the products of individual action, and in this study, adolescents that address face-to-face interpersonal events as well as institution, psychological and societal forces expressed in various experiences (Moore, 1996). Historically, students identified as struggling readers and writers have been placed in classes to remediate their literacy skills (Klenk & Kibby, 2000). These classes and other special programs, within the school context, continue to address a growing literacy gap between successful and struggling students (Moore, et al., 1999).

A review of research related to struggling readers looks at these adolescents' experiences in non-mainstream classes and how they developed their notion of literate identities. An aspect of these studies is what students say about their literacy experiences in this context. The first two studies, Broughton and Fairbanks (2003) and O'Brien, et al., (2001) outcomes reflect if teachers asked or listened to students' views about their literate identity, especially as related to their text choices and success in school. A third study, Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, and Mueller (2001) looked at an alternative to remedial reading instruction that emphasized, among other aspects, joint collaborative inquiry between teacher and students into reading and reading processes as they engaged in with subject-area texts.

Research conducted by Broughton and Fairbanks (2003) explored the adolescent identity and literacy development of four girls from sixth grade elementary school through seventh grade junior high within the context of their language arts classes. These girls, three Latina and one African American shared their views of the ways that they saw themselves in terms of their developing beliefs, self-perceptions, and social behaviors.

During the first year of study, observation was the principal form of data collection; however, once the girls entered seventh grade, they were no longer in the same classroom and scattered in different classes and time periods. Consequently, interviews of the girls' accounts of their school literacy experiences were the form of data collected instead of observations for the second year. Three girls were in a regular language arts class, and the fourth girl was moved to a special education resource class for her language arts instruction. Also, as a result of their inadequate state reading tests performance in the previous year, three of the girls were placed in remedial reading classes. These changes invoked continual revision in the girls' self-perceptions in both their senses of being literate and their personal identities. Broughton and Fairbanks came to the conclusion that the literacy curriculum did not offer the girls sufficient opportunities to express and explore their developing identities. Instead, the girls were perceived as struggling to negotiate a sense of self. The adolescents saw their accomplishments on literacy tasks as a preparation for high-stakes exams or for later grades. From the girls' comments, they had less opportunity for personal choice of books, to write extended compositions, or to participate in cooperative groups. The researchers also concluded that during school day, the girls had little opportunity to participate in personally meaningful or engaging literacy experiences. In this study the outcome of the students' non-mainstream experiences did not shape their literate identity in a positive way.

Implications of the research involved the following suggestions to educators: make an effort to listen to girls talk; provide social learning activities within the literacy curriculum; allow ample opportunities for self-expression and self-exploration through

reading, writing, and inquiry; and a balance of texts in the reading curriculum, with both genders and multiethnic protagonists.

In contrast, O'Brien, et al. (2001) showed that struggling students, positioned in a context where literacy engagement as a situated practice used non-traditional texts and other media, repositioned themselves beyond the traditional notions of at-riskness and school failure. Unlike Broughton and Fairbanks's (2003) students, these adolescents engaged in personally meaningful literacy that they chose to do. The setting of the study was a Literacy Lab at a four-year high school where the enrollment represented the lowest achievers in reading in the school, and they were traditionally recognized as remedial readers. Data sources included observations, videotapes, audiotapes, and artifacts. O'Brien, et al.'s analysis suggested that students willingly engaged in activities that helped them construct and affirm their social identities; and when given choice, these students would almost always avoid traditional schoolwork.

O'Brien, et al. (2001) offered three issues on which he grounded the implications of the study, with the first being that non-traditional texts, such as technology are constructive and engaging educational tools for motivating reluctant learners to read and write. The second issue, media and media literacies, as culturally shared texts, may be more powerful that traditional print texts in engaging this group of adolescents. Lastly, the use of non-traditional texts are tightly connected to matters of power, control, and the underpinning of certain economic, social, and cultural values.

Both studies inform educators as to the importance of listening to what adolescents say about their reading, writing, and learning in a non-mainstream class, as well as expanded access to multiple forms of texts. However, the studies' implications,

particularly O'Brien, et al. (2001), bring forth several limitations. One such limitation involves the assumption that struggling readers, especially those with limited access to technologies out-of-school, have the opportunity to engage in multiliteracy experiences connected to their literate practices, within the traditional curriculum of mainstream English classes. Students, such as those in the support reading classes and the Literacy Lab, need to have access to an expanded concept of text and literate practices from print to multiple forms of representation. Researchers need to investigate how adolescents perceive text and their literate practices within the mainstream English classroom with limited access to non-traditional texts. Further, research needs to examine if adolescents perceive something is missing if not given opportunities to express their literate identities with an expanded concept of text. Also there is the issue of students transitioning between support and mainstream courses. There is a need to investigate the older adolescents' literacy identity perceptions across contexts to inform educators as to curriculum and text choices to increase engagement and motivation.

Another perspective on non-mainstream classrooms is the Academic Literacy course drawing upon the concept of literacy apprenticeships (Greenleaf, et al., 2001). This study explored both the implementation and formal investigation of the Academic Literacy course. The authors explained that the creation of the course came about as an alternative to remedial reading instruction to support struggling readers. The course had three goals: to increase students' engagement, fluency, and competency in reading. This concept of literacy apprenticeship suggested that teachers need to engage students in complex academic literacy tasks while at the same time provide the explicit teaching and support necessary for students to perform literacy tasks, such as comprehension

strategies, text structures, and work-level strategies successfully. The instruction takes place in a process where teachers and students partner in collaborative inquiry into reading and reading processes as they engage with subject-area texts. Central to the partnership is the view of both members being experts, specifically what subject-area teachers know and do as discipline-based readers and adolescents' unique and frequently misunderstood strengths as learners. Both university-researchers and teacher-researchers designed the course for ninth graders in an urban San Francisco high school that served the low socio-economic neighborhoods. The high school had been established to provide college preparatory studies for the Latino, African American, and immigrant students.

To evaluate the impact of the course on students' literacy learning, the researchers collected an assortment of data, including standardized test scores and qualitative data. Standardized assessments included pre-post-test of reading proficiency using the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Test. Qualitative measures included pre- and post-course reading surveys, students' written responses as reflections, self-evaluations, and course evaluations, focus group interview, classroom observations, and samples of course work randomly selected from the two class roles. Also case studies on eight of the original thirty students were completed. These eight students participated in video-taped reading interviews on three occasions during the year-long Academic Literacy course. The focal eight students were volunteers recruited by their teachers as typical ninth graders who represented the cultural and gender diversity of students in their classes. These students' reading interviews demonstrated the degree to which students were appropriating the reading practices available to them in the instructional setting. At the end of the course, results of the DRP test showed that the ninth graders in the Academic Literacy classes

increased from an average late seventh-grade level to a late ninth grade level by May, and therefore caught up to the national norm for ninth graders. In the student responses to reading surveys, the number of books students reported reading, almost doubled from the fall to the spring. Students also described their changing motivations and attitudes towards reading, as well as acknowledging the change in their reading processes, specifically strategy use, in their self-reflections and survey responses. This change was supported in the analysis of the reading interviews; the students implemented metacognitive, metadiscursive, and strategic reading practices and experienced an emergence of their "academic identities in literacies of thoughtfulness" (p. 110). The interviews with the eight case-study students mirrored the metacognitive conversation these students had experienced as members of the Academic Literacy classroom.

While this study informs educators as to what factors create successful reading instruction programs for secondary students, the course design focused exclusively on a non-mainstream class. This leaves a gap as to how these adolescents would view themselves as readers within a mainstream content class. Researchers need to examine if these factors, such as strategy use, are continued in mainstream content classes. Also, the study is limited to the adolescents' reading improvement and perceptions of their reading meaning-making and processing but does not explore students' perceptions as writers.

Research also looked at the struggling readers' transition from support to mainstream classrooms as to how they developed their notion of literate identity. The two studies discussed look at the special education and English language learner sub groups. In Fitch (2003) and Harklau (2000), struggling readers' transition from support classes to mainstream classes resulted in the students' changing sense of themselves in relation to

the ideological beliefs and practices within particular schools and classes. In both studies, teachers' beliefs and their relationships with students impacted students' identities and academic success. For example, Fitch (2003) focused on how special education students made sense of the transition from self-contained special education environment to full inclusion in general education. Fitch examined eleven students while in elementary school and through junior high school over a period of six years. He observed the students as they moved from the self-contained class into the mainstream and interviewed the mainstream classroom teacher and the students. Teacher interviews determined the teacher's beliefs between two ideologies: traditionalist or inclusive. He concluded that, as the students moved into and out of traditionalist and inclusive classrooms, they presented a changing sense of themselves in relation to ideological beliefs and practices within particular schools and classrooms. Fitch asserted that students in inclusive classrooms constructed a sense of themselves that was markedly different (and more positive) that those in either segregated or traditionalist classrooms.

English Language Learners (ELL) students are also subject to the school experience being affected by the way their identities are constructed. Harklau (2000) examined ELLs' identity construction of three such students as an element of success in school. She conducted a three-year long ethnographic case study of three students at an ethnically diverse urban high school and local community college. Interviews were conducted with each case study participant at 2- to 4- week intervals during the students' senior year of high school and entry year at the college. She also observed the students in their classroom, interviewed ELL teachers, and collected students' work. The data were analyzed inductively and recursively; students verified the findings with Harklau at the

end of the study. Harklau found a direct relationship between how the student was perceived by her teacher and the student's success or lack of success in the classroom. In her study, high school ELL teachers perceived positively, so the students were successful. In college, ELL teachers perceived, even before meeting, negatively---specifically deficient, so students began thinking of themselves as not successful and began to manifest inappropriate behaviors. Harklau's study directly relates to the possible marginality existing in representation or labels of, not only the ethnolinguistic identities of the support reading students who are also ELL, but the use of struggling reader labels as discussed by O'Brien, et al. (2001) and Alvermann (2001), being counter productive towards the goals of school success and positive identity construction.

Both Fitch (2003) and Harklau (2000) showed how adolescents, specifically those identified as members of specific sub groups, are affected by the face-to-face interpersonal events as well as institution, psychological, societal forces expressed in various experiences (Moore, 1996). Specifically, Fitch examined adolescents' transition from elementary through junior high school; in contrast, Harklau's students moved from high school to a community college. Both studies involved students' transitions and how change impacted their identities. However, I believe my study offers an important, alternative perspective of how adolescents' identities as readers and writers are influenced as students transition between different high school class contexts. Furthermore, because Fitch and Harklau only address how sub group member students may react, special education and ELL, respectively, there is a gap in the understanding of the experience to other groups, specifically struggling readers who transition from a supportive environment to a potential non-supportive environment.

The Sense of Being Literate

Current research on identity looks at how the individuals make sense of themselves and their lives through reading, writing, speaking and listening. This sense of being literate stems from the ability to exhibit literate behaviors (Heath, 1991). Through the function of these behaviors, individuals, specifically adolescents, can do a wide range of skills, from drawing comparisons and making inferences to creating chunks of spoken and written language in response to a written text in which communication, contemplation, and interpretation are based (Heath, 1991). Similarly, adolescents' perceptions of being literate shape who they are or are an integral part of how they understand the world and their experiences in it, including the multiple experiences with print available to them (McCarthey & Moje, 2002).

Lastly, a review of the literature examines the students' sense of being literate as a convergence between schooling and lived experiences. Just as adolescents' literate identities are continually being reshaped, so too are their personal tacit theories reshaped to support their way of looking at what it means to be knowledgeable about literacy and to be competent (Young and Beach (1997). An important piece of research that underpins this study is Young and Beach's investigation of the sense of being literate with 12 first grade children during the first semester of school. Additional questions in their research specifically looked at what theories of literacy at school do first grade children hold and how do first-grade children view themselves as readers and writers. Data collection included three semi structured interviews, classroom observations, and informal interviews. Coding of interview data aimed at themes through the children's aggregated view and coding of the observed data looking for themes across events for

each identity category. In Young and Beach's study three themes were grounding the children's theories characterizing their collective ways of making sense of literacy at school: literacy as social; literacy as strategic; and that literacy learning requires active participation. Their findings on children's literate identity included a sense of their capability and a sense of themselves in relation to the social world of the classroom.

In comparison, McCarthey (2001) examined the relationship among fifth grade students' self-perceptions, the perceptions of others, and the classroom contexts that contributed to shaping those perceptions. Data collection included interviewing students, parents, the language arts teacher, and peers, making classroom observations and analyzing student writing. The twelve participants were chosen randomly from the fifth grade language arts classes and reflected the ethnic and cultural diversity of the elementary school. Seven students were Latino/Latina, two African American, one Asian American, one European American, and one of mixed Latina and European background. Data sources included observations, three semi-formal interviews, and writing samples. She found that because perspective and context played more prominent roles in some students' identity construction than in others, there was an agreement about the identity of these students on six of them by multiple stakeholders, and there was less agreement on the other six. McCarthey also found that reading and writing was an important feature of how some students viewed themselves but not in other students, generally the struggling readers. In terms of the literacy curriculum's influence on the students' identity construction, students chose not to write the most revealing aspects of their identity in response to specific questions but used instead the school-wide, computerized program to evaluate their reading abilities and interests.

In contrast, Oates (2001) examined adolescents' sense of being literate as expressed in their writing. In this case study, he illustrated how high school students' use of language in everyday life as exemplified in students' beliefs, understandings, and meanings that informed their use of written language, as well as the relationships that influenced and were influenced by their literacy practices or a combination of both. He studied two students, one girl and one boy, in a 12th grade mainstream content English literature class. Data collection used participant observer techniques, semiformal interviews, and collected written artifacts from inside and outside of school. Using constant comparative method analysis, Oates showed an overlapping of three codes because the textural meanings a student produced (textural practice) were, simultaneously, a way of using literacy (a social practice) and a way of enacting social relationships (a relational practice). In his findings, Oates revealed that students in the secondary English classroom implemented social purposes that supported their literacy practices and that various Discourses (cf. Gee, 1996) were woven throughout their literate practices in the English classroom.

Each of these studies contribute to educators' understandings of how students' perceptions of being literate shape who they are or are a fundamental part of how they understand the world and their experiences in it (McCarthey & Moje, 2002). However, some limitations exist. For example, Young and Beach's (1997) study was limited to the children's sense of being literate at a specific moment and does not examine the possibility of change over time or in different contexts. Researchers need to explore the temporal notion of the student's sense of being literate and how it is impacted by the change of contexts from a support classroom to a mainstream class to address this gap in

the research as well as the from the perspective of the older student. Similarly, McCarthey's (2001) study was limited to fifth graders, as well as solely to the children's literacy perceptions in relation to their experiences with a specific reading workshop program. This leaves a gap as to understanding students' literacy perceptions of competency in a broader sense of being literate. Research suggests that adolescents' literacy identity is more multidimensional through which adolescence inform, define, and transform their lives, and therefore comparisons or transferences between children and older adolescents' literate identities may be limited (Alvermann, et al, 1998). Even though Oates (2001) looked at the older adolescents, his study was limited to only two Caucasian 12th graders, and therefore, leaves a gap as to how diverse students' literary practices and various Discourses, as a part of students' social sense of being literate, are implemented in the high school English classroom. Because this study includes students from sub groups special education, ELL, as well as struggling readers, it informs teachers as to the adolescent's sense of being literate in a broader understanding of the mainstream English class membership. Also important, this study looks at adolescents' perceptions of themselves as not only as writers in school, but also as readers and learners.

A review of the research examining adolescent literacy reflects the social construction of adolescents' identities within a multiliteracy perspective and in new ways that adolescence has come to be defined. This reconceptualization of adolescent literacy, both in terminology and practice, is a result of new understanding of adolescents' use of multiliteracies throughout their lives. Putting aside the marginalization of adolescence, research shows the multiple ways adolescents develop their identities and literacy

abilities as well as interests. These identities are not fixed but change with the experimentation that adolescents encounter in different spaces during literacy experiences. Adolescents, when they perceive themselves competent in literacy experiences, are motivated to learn in school; however, classroom practices also influence who they are as readers, writers, and speakers. Relationships formed between students and/or students and teachers as they participate in literacy events affect adolescents' literate identities, concepts of self-worth, and beliefs in their capabilities. Also research shows how student talk, both in class discussions and small groups, impacts adolescents as readers, writers, and learners.

Drawing upon research that reflects a social action perspective, literacy teaching and learning occurs in contexts where teachers and students are perceived as participants who actively construct their situational contexts. Because students identified as struggling readers and writers are frequently placed in non-mainstream classrooms for reading improvement instruction, their experiences in non-mainstream classrooms relate to how they cultivate their notion of literate identities. Finally, individuals make sense of who they are and their lives through their literacy experiences. This sense of being literate is reflected in adolescents' perceptions of themselves as readers, writers, and learners and how they define who they are and how they understand their life experiences, including experience with print.

What Policy Groups are Saying to the Adolescent

Numerous reports on adolescent literacy have been generated by organizations including educators, researchers, policymakers, professional organizations, and advocacy groups. In many cases, these discussions are embedded with the intentions to extend

accountability and assessment agendas of the federal policy, No Child Left Behind, to the field of secondary education. For example, the Alliance for Excellent Education has published several reports, the most recent, *Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas: Getting to the Core of Middle and High School Improvement* (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007), focused on reading success in the secondary school setting, minimizing position of adolescents' perceptions as being literate as a central topic. Additionally, numerous references are being made to being able to read content-area texts and perform in classroom settings. This emphasis on school-sanctioned literacies and their assessments, sidelines self-sanctioned literacies that many young people practice and identify, as well as the multimediated literacies required in an information age and global economy (Stevens, 2006).

While the notion of literate identity is essential in a student's journey to achieve academic success, there are few studies on the adolescent's perceptions of her sense of being literate and few that address the reshaping of the adolescent's literate identity across time and changing contexts in the terms of a phenomenological experience. My study adds to the understanding of the sense of being literate from the adolescents' viewpoints, but it also shows the construction and negotiation that takes place in the students' identities as readers, writer, and speakers in two different English class settings. This study's perspective of literacy draws upon a sociocultural theory of learning that pursues to understand the cultural context within a student's growth and development. It conceptualizes how a student understands who they are in relation to others and how the student learns to process, interpret, and encode their world.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study explores the research questions: In what ways did the transition experience from the support reading class to mainstream content English affect the students' perceptions of their sense of being literate? Specifically was the support reading class student's sense of being literate reshaped? If so why? If not, so why? Phenomenological inquiry was used as the strategy to investigate the *essence* of the students' experience (Creswell, 2003). The phenomenological framework is appropriate because it focuses on the identification and description of the subjective students' experiences as they were formed at the moment, and how they looked back on the previous support reading class experience (Cresswell, 2003; Schwandt, 2001; Moustakas, 1994). The interviews and conversations used as data sources sought the students' reflection of how their sense of being a literacy learner was recognized, accepted, and valued in different contexts of their transitional experience (Moustakas, 1994). I focused on the varied and multiple students' meaning as they constructed their lived experiences to inform others that make school-related decisions and impact this student group (Cresswell, 2003; Neuman, 2000; Schwandt, 2000). This perspective facilitated the opportunity for students' voices to be heard as they continued to shape their sense of being literate and exhibit academic growth.

The Setting

The research took place during the fall semester, 2004 at Westwood High School *(pseudonyms are used for all names).* Approximately 2100 students attended Westwood High School. The school served both suburban and rural populations with estimated

backgrounds: 84% European-American, 6% American Indian, 4% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. Over 22% of these students came from low-SES homes, qualifying them for reduced cost lunch program.

The high school was one of two high schools located in medium sized city in the southwest. The school district had undergone a reconfiguration of the secondary schools in 1998, shifting from one senior high school and two middle high schools to two four-year high schools. Both high schools operated within a common model. The school followed a seven-period flex schedule school day with a 30-minute overtime. The traditional six-period schedule was expanded for the 2003 - 2004 school year to an expanded flex schedule that offered a limited number core classes, such as English, Algebra I and U.S. History at 7:45 a.m. to students wishing to take an additional class. The overtime period was additional instructional time available for students to meet with faculty outside of the class period to discuss academics, attendance, discipline, or any other needs. Before and after school time was also available for students to meet with faculty and staff, but this time frame had conflicts with sports, extra-curricular activities, transportation schedules, and employments obligations.

The administrative staff consisted of a main principal, four assistant principals, six counselors, a community liaison, and a school psychometrist. The faculty was comprised of approximately 125 faculty members in the areas of language arts, social studies, science, mathematics, foreign languages, fine arts, practical arts, physical education, and special services. Core course offerings included mainstream content curriculum, nationally designed advance placement, district-designed advanced studies,

and modified content curriculum laboratory courses for students on individual education plans.

The language arts department offered approximately 60 core content classes for English 1, 2, 3, and 4 course credit and 15 elective classes. Included in these core classes was English-Reading. Previously, I taught the four sections of English-Reading before it was discontinued. Elective language arts classes included the following courses: Film and Literature, Reading for Pleasure, Sports Literature, Creative Writing, Classical Literature, and Experiencing Shakespeare. Aegis English was a district-designed course for juniors and seniors with a limited enrollment based on a student's submitted literary portfolio and interview reviewed by the course teacher. Students enrolled in advanced placement (AP) English 4 and Advanced English 1, 2, and 3 by choice instead of the mainstream content English courses. Twenty-five sections of these advanced courses were offered at the high school during the school year. I worked as the literacy resource teacher (LRT) and English language learner (ELL) coordinator for the 2004 - 2005 school year. The LRT was a newly created position for both high schools under the supervision of both the school principal and the district's language arts director. The primary purpose of the high school LRT's was to support content high school teachers with literacy instruction aligned with their course work. Also the LRT supported students struggling with reading and writing on an individual basis during overtime and outside the school day.

Participants

I purposively sampled with the main criterion being that participants must have experienced that transition from English-Reading to mainstream content English at the

beginning of the 2004 – 2005 school year. These students were described by the school district as struggling readers, English language learners (ELL), and students served by Special Services on individual education programs (IEP). There were approximately 56 students enrolled in the English-Reading classes during the 2003 – 2004 school year. Fourteen English-Reading students graduated in spring 2004. That resulted in 42 English-Reading students potentially enrolling in mainstream English for the next school year. The potential sample size was dependent on several factors: how many students transferred to other schools, dropped out of school, completed their English requirement during summer school, or changed the IEP to participate in direct service English laboratory classes. Twenty-one students who had previously been in English-Reading, enrolled in mainstream English classes for the fall 2004 semester (eight students in English 4, eight students in English 3, four students in English 2, and one student repeating English 1.) All of these students were invited to attend a meeting explaining the research and their potential participation. Twelve students chose to participate. During the semester, one student dropped out of school and therefore did not continue in the research study.

Six boys and five girls participated in the study. Five students, four girls and one boy were seniors; three boys and one girl were juniors: one sophomore boy and one freshman male student, repeating English 1, also participated. The content English teachers became aware of the fact that these students had been in the English-Reading course the previous year because all students had portfolios that they added to and which traveled with them from year to year. Also, several content English teachers approached

me with questions of how to support these students within the rigor of the mainstream English classes.

Charm

Charm was one of four seniors in the study. Charm loved to read and write poetry in and out of school. She spoke of Robert Frost's work as one of her favorites and admired his ability to express feelings with words. She kept a notebook of her own writings and would share it with me frequently. It was filled with personal experiences, highly emotional and tumultuous adolescent issues. Charm's academic writing was good, but she struggled with deadlines, directions, and out-of class assignments. She was very insecure about her academic writing. She expressed concern about taking regular English her senior year after the previous three years in English-reading. During her first semester of regular senior English, she asked me to edit longer writing assignments and makeup missed class work. She chose a topic on poetry for her senior paper. I helped her with the research portion, but she was successful on her own when it came to analyzing the specific poetry. She spoke of herself as a good writer, specifically because she could add to her writing easily by knowing how to organize her ideas and words. Second semester, she established a relationship with her English 4 teacher, became more confident in the regular English class, and needed less support from me.

Charm described herself as giving a lot to her classmates and doing most of the group work on projects while in English-reading. She enjoyed helping others because she felt she knew what she was doing, while many times her classmates did not. At the same time, Charm added that she liked working in groups because when there were

multiple tasks to be completed, there were others to help get it done as well as catch things she might have missed.

Hoghead

Hoghead, also a senior, was a jock. He played football and wrestled. He and his family had hopes of him getting an athletic scholarship at a small four-year college. He also was on an IEP. He was tested and placed in the indirect special education program at the end of his freshman year. In his junior year, he discovered he enjoyed reading while taking a course elective named, Reading for Pleasure. Hoghead recognized that his independent reading increased and that it made a difference in his comprehension. Academically, he still struggled with school reading, but his identity as a reader impacted his personal belief about succeeding in school. He also matured and used the support system afforded to him in the special education program. He voiced concern about having to take regular English his last year of high school, but at the same time, he expressed confidence at succeeding. He mentioned that he would have his special education teacher to help him as well as making sure that I would still be available to explain more difficult readings. His reading for pleasure teacher was still a source for independent reading.

Writing continued to be a challenge. Hoghead struggled with organizing and expressing his ideas. He was very limited in expressing an opinion, defending a position, and supporting a thesis. Even in discussions, he limited his contributions to concrete examples or simple opinions of like or dislike. He described himself as being just more open and not afraid to "blurt out any answers" or ideas.

Hoghead considered himself just another person in the class. He enjoyed group work, asked others for help, and did not get upset if other group members did not contribute. He liked the social aspect of working with others.

Diana

Diana spoke English as her second language. She was born in Mexico and consequently, spoke Spanish. At the beginning of the school year, Diana spoke to me with a great deal of concern about her senior year. She said she felt she was not going to graduate and that she could not pass regular English. Diana expressed confusion about school literacy, the difficulty of the readings, following directions, and the demands to work independently. She also expressed worry having a new teacher after two and half years of my being her English teacher. She described herself as a good English-reading student, and everything would be more difficult this year. Fortunately, Diana's English 4 teacher had a working knowledge of Spanish and made major modifications to the senior level English class. Her senior paper was a major undertaking; she appealed to me to help her complete the assignment. She chose *Wuthering Heights* as the British novel to study. Not only was the critical reading and writing difficult, but the level of keyboard knowledge and organizational management overwhelmed her. Her English instructor said she would accept anything that came near to meeting the research paper requirements. Diana worked with me during overtime periods and ELL class study time for three weeks to complete the paper.

Diana spoke of herself as being extremely shy. She hesitated to ask others for help including her teachers. With her limited English knowledge, it became more complex for others to know if she understood the content, or if she was just being her

quiet self. Even in group work, she participated minimally and accepted the work of the group members without questioning it.

Cole

Cole loved dogs. She talked about her pets and her participation in dog show competitions frequently. Besides her coursework at Westwood High School, Cole also attended the other public high school for her electives in vocational agriculture. This was her junior year. She was a struggling reader and writer.

Cole talked about herself as growing but not where she wanted to be as a reader. She expressed fretful anticipation about attending regular mainstream English 3. She expected it to be more difficult and that another teacher might not be as understanding. Cole depicted herself as not a very good writer because she was not creative, but she talked about writing in her journal, both in and out of school. Cole asked me to help her with some of her English 3 writing assignments. She approached me after her English class upset about not knowing what to do or understanding what her teacher expected of her. Instead of using overtime, she received permission to leave class and work in the Literacy Resource classroom. The most challenging assignment for her involved a character analysis study of the play, *The Crucible*. She wrote character descriptions in list form but had difficulty organizing the paper. She did not write much of the paper while working with me, but she did complete the assignment outside of class.

Cole willingly helped others. If she knew an answer, she wanted to share her understanding. She said it made her feel good. She recognized that with group work, each student had a job and depended on each other to get a good grade. Being in a group, encouraged her to not disappoint others and forced her to complete her part of the task.

At the end of the fall semester, Cole transferred to the other high school. She said she had more friends there. She returned to Westwood High to complete her final interview one day after school was out.

Sandra

Sandra was also a senior. She received support as a student in the indirect services special education program. She expressed some concern about taking regular English, but she knew there were others, like teachers, family, and friends, that were there to help her. She sought help from both her special education support teacher and me with reading comprehension and proofing writing assignments. When reading *Macbeth,* Sandra asked me for an easier play version than the one in the English 4 course textbook. She said the British literature language was much more difficult to read.

Sandra liked doing her own thing and not associating with many classmates. She strove to do her class work successfully on her own, even though it required more work doing assignments independently. When working in groups, she redid tasks if the work was unsatisfactory. She did it ungrudgingly in the belief one does it over until it is completed the right way.

Sandra enjoyed reading and writing for her own pleasure. She used extra class time to read romance books and write poems. She did not like to be idle, and reading filled any gap in the school day. Sandra knew her strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing. She understood most stories but needed more time to finish a reading assignment and would plan accordingly. No matter how difficult a task appeared to be, she pursued it with confidence that she would be successful. She understood who was out there to help her, would make sure she received support, and had enough time to

complete her assignment successfully. Sandra set goals for herself and enjoyed achieving them. She improved her standardized reading test scores every year and gave credit to herself for reading a lot in and out of school. Sandra planned on attending college after high school.

Carl

Carl was also a junior. He and Cole were in the same English 3 class. Carl displayed a great deal of anger, sometimes violent. One day, he appeared in my classroom just before the class bell rang. He was very upset, uncontrollable. He said he had just hit his longtime girlfriend and then a male English teacher, who was trying to intervene on the girl's behalf. He tried to defend his actions by saying that his girlfriend had taunted and provoked him, but he deeply regretted what he had done. Consequently, he was suspended for several weeks.

Carl depended a great deal on others for support in school. He was on an IEP, and his special education teacher helped him with his regular English 3 class assignments during the study skills support class for indirect support students. However, he often requested to see me for help organizing his ideas and writing essays. Carl struggled getting class work done outside of school. He worked almost a 40-hour work week besides going to school. He mentioned the need to read and write well because of the connection of literacy with work. Carl talked about his difficulty in remembering what he read and then reading it over and over again. He felt he just did not have the time to let the stories sink into his head and remember the characters, plots, and setting. Yet, he realized he needed to help others in class, especially those he perceived as not as capable. When somebody messed up, he helped them pronounce a word or answer a question.

Carl frequently wrote personal notes to his girlfriend during the school day. They had been dating for three years. I would see them pass notes in the hall, and later he would read them before class started.

Jake

Jake could be best described as a "character." He was the kid who popped his head in my doorway between classes and flashed a big grin. "Hi, Ms. Akey! How's it go' in?" He was the only sophomore in the study. His attended his English 2 class just down the hall from the literacy resource room, and I saw him almost everyday. Sometimes, he would stop by even when he was on a bathroom hall pass. It was like he was checking up on me.

Jake saw himself as a pretty good reader and able to write just about anything but did not do a lot of either. He talked optimistically about himself and others. He expressed little concern about being successful in regular English other than there would probably be a lot more reading and writing. He believed the teacher would expect more out of him in regular English, but he expressed the confidence that he could do it. Although he did come by and see me frequently, he never asked for my help. He talked about his regular English 2 class, and described the assignments and class activities. Each time he expressed that things were going well in the class. Jake described working with his fellow classmates as coming together so everybody could be successful.

Vern

As one of the four juniors in the study, Vern believed that the change in English classes was not going to be a problem because he adapted pretty well to changes. Vern spoke Hebrew as his first language and spent the majority of his elementary school years

in Israel. However, Vern was not classified as an ELL student because his parents regarded English as his primary language. He was on an IEP as an indirect service special education student.

Vern viewed himself as a decent reader and read several instructional books and magazines at the same time. He also enjoyed putting things down on paper but described himself as a poor speller. During my experience with Vern, I encouraged him to use the computer that led him to be more successful with sentence structure and spelling. During his first semester in English 3, he showed me drafts of his assignments. Even with spell check, he spelled much of his writing phonetically, and it looked like a code. Because I had been working with him for the previous two years, I was familiar with it. We rewrote his drafts together, with corrections primarily in spelling and word form. He organized and developed his ideas successfully.

Vern expressed eagerness to be in a regular English class. He felt superior to the students in the English-reading class because they never wanted to listen to him. Even though his spelling was not as good as the other English- reading students, Vern believed he worked harder, expressed himself better, and understood concepts more thoroughly than his classmates.

Scott

Scott was also a junior and on an IEP. He played football and struggled to stay academically eligible. He expressed concern that he would not get as much help with his English class because there were so many more students in the regular class. He needed support with writing assignments and was not successful working independently. He frequently asked me to help him write his English 3 essays but did not have the

assignment written down, class notes on the subject, or drafts started. It took a great deal of effort for him to express his perspective on a subject. Scott expected me to give him the ideas and write from my opinion. He struggled writing sentences and developing a paragraph. So when he needed to a five-paragraph essay, he panicked. He and I wrote lists of ideas and then developed sentences with the concepts. He was willing to accept the minimum for credit on the essay.

Scott viewed his strength in talking and being with people. Scott enjoyed being in school as a social experience. He preferred to work in groups because he could get more ideas from others. He liked to make others laugh.

Patience

Patience was a senior and on an IEP. She also expressed concern about being in regular English, but she believed that there would be people to help her. She described English-reading class as a support team, but in regular English she believed there would be no one helping her. She expected more difficult vocabulary and confusing poems to be problems. Patience depended on modified versions of the British literature readings used in the course textbook. She asked me for copies of *Macbeth* and the legend of the *Green Knight* during the first semester of English 4. Patience did most of her English assignments with her support special education teacher for both English-Reading and regular English class.

Patience described herself as a leader and enjoyed helping others in class. She felt that by explaining stories to others, it helped her to understand better. Patience easily spoke her opinions in English-reading. She enjoyed discussions but was uncomfortable about reading out loud because she thought someone might laugh at her not knowing how

to pronounce a word. She liked reading with a teacher or somebody who understood the story. On her own, she had difficulty understanding the plots. Patience claimed she knew her limits and would do extra credit work to keep her English credit up.

Jose

Jose was repeating his freshman year classes including English 1. He spoke Spanish as his primary language but did not know how to read or write Spanish. He was born in Mexico but left before he started school. He attended schools in Texas and California before coming to Oklahoma. His mother and stepfather said they moved from California to get Jose away from the gangs where he was member. Jose wrote gang signs and other graffiti on the school property and consequently, disciplined. Jose struggled with school rules and procedures. He liked to pull pranks on teachers and students, like putting glue on classroom doorknobs.

Occasionally, I asked him if he needed help in his English 1 class. He said that the teacher just explained everything, and he did not have to write any assignments. He never brought any homework to the ELL class when we had free study time. He preferred to draw. His notebooks were filled with sketches and words written in different types of font style. Some were gang-based tags.

Jose was a quiet student. He didn't like participating in discussions or talk informally to other students, even in Spanish. He said he preferred to do class work in groups because he could get help from others but typically did not complete his group tasks.

Data Sources

Data sources included semi-structured audiotaped interviews, personal notes, and the students' retrospective discussions of their artifacts. With multiple data sources, different types of data contributed to the trustworthiness of the data or triangulation (Glesne, 1999). The combination of interviews, personal notes, and discussion of personal artifacts afforded a deeper understanding of each student's identity. Each data source gave a picture/snapshot of who the student was in different contexts at different times that complimented each other.

Interviews

I chose the interview form because I regarded it as the best direct access to the students' authentic and meaningful interpretations of their transition experiences (Schwandt, 2000). Using three interview sessions enabled me to discover who each student was at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the transition semester.

I created a different set of interview questions for each session. The first set of interview questions elicited students' perceptions of their experiences in English-Reading and their own identity as readers and writers. These interview questions established a baseline of each of the students' perceptions (see Appendix A for interview questions). Students responded to questions about their expectations for the coming semester and goals. The interview concluded with the student selecting and discussing an artifact from her English- reading portfolio, available in the classroom. The second set of interview questions asked the students to draw comparisons between their previous English-Reading class experiences and their current English class. This interview obtained students' insights about changes and challenges they faced in the mainstream English

class and how this impacted who they were. During this interview, students selected and discussed an artifact from their current English class which they brought with them to the interview. The third set of interview questions encouraged the students to look at who they were at the completion of their first semester in mainstream English. Students reflected on how their expectations and goals were met or left unfulfilled. They also discussed why change occurred or did not occur in their literate identity. Each student discussed and compared a third artifact to the previous two artifacts. The interviews were semi-structured and took place individually with each of the students. Each set of interviews began with the same set of questions, but probes and follow-up questions were determined by the students' responses to elicit richer understandings of their transitional experiences. Ten students were audiotaped; the eleventh student requested not to be audiotaped, so I wrote detailed notes during her three interviews.

Personal Notes

Students wrote personal notes to express their spontaneous feelings, reactions and reflections about their mainstream class that might be lost between or unspoken during the interviews. Students frequently pass notes as a popular form of communication about how they feel about their lives at that moment. Also, I anticipated that students might be uncomfortable discussing something that was happening to them in English class and might be more open to write about. The objective had been to collect four to six personal notes between each of the semi-structured interviews. On Wednesday of each week, students received a note asking them to respond as to how things were going in the English class. I asked them to tell me about something that was interesting or amusing,

frustrating or challenging (see Appendix B personal note format). Students had the opportunity to send handwritten notes or emails.

Retrospective Discussion of Artifacts

Students discussed three different artifacts as an opportunity for them to explain what they were doing and how it influenced their literate identity at that time in their course transition. Students chose artifacts produced in both English-Reading and mainstream English. Using the artifacts as a springboard, students talked about how they did the assignment, how they felt about their work, and how this work showed their way of doing and learning in the English classes. The goal of this talk was to see if it mirrored or added to their perceptions of what was happening in mainstream content English and how it compared to English-Reading. Students chose the first artifact from their English-Reading portfolios during the interview. The English-Reading portfolio collection represented some of the students' projects from the 2003 - 2004 school year. I asked students to bring an artifact from their mainstream English class to each of the other two interviews. I sent reminders one day prior to the interview. Artifacts included, but were not limited to, written final-form assignments of various lengths (for example, essays, autobiographies, editorials, poetry, and creative writing), including, when possible, any drafts and editing.

Data Collection

Recruitment Procedures

After receiving approval from University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school district to conduct the study, I determined which English-Reading students were enrolled in the mainstream content English for the fall 2004 semester. Because of

my position as LRT/ELL Coordinator, I had access to the school database, Student Attendance System and School Information (SASSI). Using the 2003 - 2004 English-reading class lists, I determined 24 of the previous English-reading students were enrolled in mainstream English. The remaining English-reading students were enrolled in direct service English classes and therefore were not considered part of the study sample.

During the third week of school, I sent students notes inviting them to attend a meeting about participating in a research study (see Appendix C for note). This meeting took place during overtime of the fourth school week in my classroom, the literacy/ELL resource room. A school counselor, Ms. Terry conducted the meeting so the students would not perceive coercion of any kind. She read a pre-written script to the group explaining the research, the purpose, and their potential participation because of their special knowledge of being in the English-Reading course the previous year (see Appendices D for script). I did not attend the meeting. Interested students received cover letters and parent/legal guardian permission forms or informed consent forms (depending on their age) that described the study (see Appendix E for forms). For the ELL group, the cover letter and permission form were translated into the Spanish for the student and parent (see Appendix F for forms). The counselor asked the students to return the forms to her within two days. She also expressed her availability to answer any questions about participation in the study. I sent a reminder two days later (see Appendix G for reminder). Fourteen students returned signed forms. Two declined to participate in the study. Twelve students chose to participate and returned the informed consent form if they were 18 years or older, or if younger than 18 years, later returned the signed

parental/legal guardian permission form to the counselor and then signed the student assent form. One student chose to drop out of school during the middle of the semester and, consequently, did not complete the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The three semi-structured interviews took place during the fall semester of the 2004 school year. The first set of interviews was collected during the third and fourth weeks of school (September, 2004). The second set of interviews occurred during eleventh and twelfth weeks of the semester (November, 2004), and the third set of interviews took place during the first 2 weeks of second semester, after final exams were completed and semester grades reported (January – February, 2005). The actual length of the interviews varied from 25 minutes to 50 minutes in length. The interviews took place in the language/literacy resource classroom, which was the same classroom the students attended English-Reading during the previous year. This room helped contribute to a positive rapport and relationship between the student and me because of its familiarity. I also took notes to record observations about students' behaviors during the interviews that were not possible to note during the audiotaping.

I contacted the participating students by notes sent through the office system. Students decided when to do their interviews at their convenience: during overtime, before school, after school, or during study skills. Most interviews took place during overtime and lunch period at the student's choice. I sent students overtime slips or office notes to remind them about the interview. Students were interviewed using the first set of interview questions. At the latter part of the interview session, each student chose a project or written assignment from her English-reading portfolio to discuss. The original

artifacts or photocopies were collected for the purpose of clarifying my coding and future data analysis.

A possible total of four personal notes were collected from each student between the first and second interviews. Initially, I had planned on sending a reminder on Wednesday of each week between interviews and ask students to respond about Thursday's class. However, because of the short school weeks, shortened class periods, and cancelled classes, I decided to send reminders within a 7 to 10 day interval to collect responses from as many students as possible. After the first set of interviews was completed, I sent a reminder with a prompt asking the students to send me a personal note about their English class sometime before the end of the week. The personal note reminder included the following prompts focusing on their literacy experiences: "How are things going in English class this week? What did you read or write about during your last class? Tell me about something that was interesting or funny in the class?" I expressed that I was looking forward to hearing from them. Eight students responded to the first personal note reminder. Responses were written on the front or back of the reminder note or on a separate piece of paper. Students were asked to leave their notes in a large yellow envelope posted on the bulletin board in the literacy/ELL classroom, which some did, but others left them on my desk, in my mailbox, or handed them to me in the halls. None of the students responded using email.

Students commented informally to me in the halls that they wanted more cues as to what to write about. So I responded with more prompt questions in each reminder that built on the second set of interview questions. I sent four personal note reminders to the students between the first and second interview sessions (see Table 1). Included in the

reminder prompts, I encouraged students to write and that their personal notes were important to me. In the fourth personal note reminder, I wrote that we would meet next week for the second interview and to remember to bring a writing assignment/project to discuss during the interview. I mentioned that if their English teacher had it, to explain that we needed it for the interview, and that we would make sure that it is returned to her for grading. This personal note reminder served as an opportunity for students to let me know when it would be convenient to complete the second interview.

Table 1:

Personal note writing prompts between first and second interviews

October 5, 2004 What did you read or write about during your last class? Tell me about something that was interesting or funny in the class? If it happened to you or another student let me know also?
October 20, 2004 I would like you to tell me what you are reading in class? Describe your reading experience? Are you reading your literature out-loud (orally) or are you reading it to yourself (silently). How do you feel about the story you are reading? What are you thinking about when you read or listen to the story? What do you do if you don't know a word?
November 1, 2004 I would like you to tell me about the discussions you are having in your English class. What are you talk about in class? Did you voice your ideas or opinions? If yes, what did you say? If no, why not?
November 10, 2004 What did you write about during your last class? Describe your latest writing experience in English class. Tell me about something that was interesting or funny in the class If it happened to you or another student let me know also

For the next two weeks, I completed the second set of interviews with the students. Students contacted me verbally or in writing about a convenient time for their

second interview. I set up the interviews within a two to three day period at the student's convenience. Because of the constant change in the high school schedule, it became difficult to make appointments farther in advance. Some students had last minute conflicts, and interviews were rescheduled usually the next day. At the second interview, students responded to the second set of interview questions. Ten of the eleven students discussed writing assignment/projects (artifacts) of their choice from their current English class. One student did not bring an artifact. He said his teacher did not have them do any writing thus far in class. I asked students to continue writing me personal notes.

Three more personal note reminders were sent through the end of the semester. Initially, I had planned on only sending personal note reminders without prompts, but during the second interview, students requested that I continue to send reminders asking questions about their English class to get them started on their notes. So I continued with the same type of prompts focusing on their reading, writing, and talking that were sent between the first and second interviews. I also thanked the students for doing the second round of interviews. In the last personal note reminder, I notified the students about the last interview to take place after finals week. I also reminded them to bring another writing/project to discuss.

Students completed the third interview during the first three weeks of the second semester (January – February 2005). I scheduled this last set of interviews using the same procedure as with the first and second interviews. One student transferred to the other high school in the town between semesters. She informed me of her plans prior to the end of the first semester. She chose to do her interview after school at Westwood

High School. Students responded to the third set of interview questions and discussed their artifacts.

Researcher's Role

In this study, I was a participant-observer. My bias as a researcher was grounded in my past and current relationship with the English-Reading students, as a teacher of English, reading and English language acquisition at Westwood High School and my studies as a graduate student. I was an insider, immersed in the culture of the high school. I have background knowledge and experiences with these students, some for six semesters. I had been an advocate for them because they were not represented during the decision-making process of whether or not to retain English-Reading. I continued to support these students as the literacy resource teacher. I was known by most of the high school students and teachers as the teacher to see for help in reading improvement and English language learning.

My theoretical orientation is built around social constructivism and critical theory for teaching and learning. Because of this perspective, I have a set of beliefs as to how I look at students and what they say. I believe students actively negotiate meaning based on their experiences with the world, with the support of others and/or text that yield their understandings. Their construction of meaning making and reality building is related to their cultural contexts and social interactions with others who provide guidance, direction, challenge and impetus for learning. I believe students' multiple perspectives should be recognized, valued, and challenged as a part of classroom discourse. At the same time, students should be exposed to multiple ways of seeing the world. Using a critical perspective, students will learn that there is not just one way of seeing things but

many ways. Through this process, students can be empowered to take risks, to be curious, and to question. As a teacher, I view the classroom as a forum for the student's voice to be cultivated in reading, writing, discussing, and working with others.

My dual position as a researcher and past English-Reading teacher can be viewed as both an asset and a liability because of my history with the students in this study. The liability may be the previous relationship with the students, teaching them English and supporting them in literacy and for some, language acquisition. The student-teacher relationship continued with the students as I helped them in mainstream English class as the literacy resource teacher/ELL coordinator. Because of this teacher-student relationship, there is a great deal of history and experience that can influence as to how an experience is viewed. I have strong ties to these students and to their being successful. I constantly attempted to step out of the teacher-role and view the students' words as a bystander with no ties. Discussions with other researchers facilitated this exercise. These discussions facilitated my being attuned to my possible emotional bias and personal subjectivity. I also wrote notes to myself, reflecting to monitor my subjectivity. I used this task to increase my awareness of the ways it might distort, but I believe it also increased my awareness of my own values, attitudes, beliefs, interests, and needs (Glesne, 1999). This note taking occurred most often after the interviews. Because I was aware of what was going on in the students' school lives, such as attendance, grades, discipline, and peer relationships that were frequently not a part of the specific research data, I made a concerted effort to not let this knowledge influence my analysis.

I also believe my previous and continued relationship with the students was an asset. Because of this student-teacher relationship, the students would talk to me, tell me

their ideas, and not view me as an outsider. They openly expressed concerns about not having the English-reading course with the assumption that I, too, was not happy about the change. The students wanted affirmation that I would continue to be there as a support in their pursuit to be successful in school. Students continued to pursue a relationship with me, both for academic support and as teacher who they believed understood their needs. They shared with me what was working in mainstream English and what was not. Our conversations reflected and built upon a mutual experience in English-Reading and Westwood High School. This relationship heightened my awareness, and it made possible to get at a deeper knowledge with students about their literate identity.

Data Analysis

Support reading students, as with all individuals, have a personal view of who they are as literate individuals within their social world and how they relate with others in a literate society (Young & Beach, 1997). At the onset of my study, I sought to not only add to the understanding of the adolescents' sense of being literate, but also show the construction and negotiation that takes place in the students' identities as readers, writers and speakers.

Data were analyzed in three phases. In the first phase, open coding, I coded each transcript, using the rephrased interview questions to develop the categories, grouped similar student responses, defining and clarifying these specific coding categories in the process. The second phase, I applied codes to all interviews and personal notes. For the third phase, I created three matrices for each student using the code list categories within

the broad areas of theory, identity, and self-efficacy to consolidate, organize, and express students' coded perceptions across time, noting commonalities or if change took place. Students were grouped by similarities for each interview which permitted me to look for change in group membership between the first and final interviews and examine why this shift occurred or did not occur.

Phase I

I reworked and rephrased the responses to the interview questions to develop the main set of categories that would evolve into the baseline code list used in initial coding. For each category, I created a phrase in the form of a question, explicitly describing that aspect of the student's literacy theory or literate identity, six questions for the former and seven for the latter. I read and reread, by individual student, the transcripts from the first set of interviews and their artifact discussions, looking for descriptive phrases of student's sense of being literate and academic growth/success, as she perceived during the English-reading class experience. After coding each transcript by noting student's words answering the appropriate question, I compiled the phrases separately for each student. From the individual student's lists of coded phrases, I reorganized student's responses by categorical question, and grouped similar responses, defining and clarifying these specific coding categories in the process. Multiple times, I reformulated the categories to embody the student's words, first individually, and then as a consensus of the students' voices.

Sub-categories emerged, both in similarities and differences, for example, in positive and negative responses in how one describes herself as a reader. Students' responses expressed skills and knowledge that they have to support their self-confidence

as readers, for example, as to how they "know it." Conversely, students' responses expressed their lack of "knowing it." This reworking of coded phrases brought forth another tier of more definitive sub-categories, reflecting more refined meaning. For example, this finer delineation illustrated dichotomies, such as how they know or do not know; quantity of reading frequently or infrequently; vocabulary knowledge as in accurate or inaccurate word recognition of meaning in text and fluency.

Two categories were collapsed, the qualities admired and respected as a reader with those of a writer to form a single category because the sub-categories for each category evolved to be the same for both readers and writers. The set of codes served as the baseline for the coding of the two other sets of interviews, discussions of artifacts, and the personal notes. This code list enabled me to shape a description of the student's sense of being literate using the student's words at the onset of the experience and afforded me the opportunity to note change or lack of change across time in the subsequent data sources. From the original individual student's list of phrases organized by categories, I identified the responses that occurred in the discussion of the artifacts. This process was repeated with the second and third set of interviews.

A fellow doctoral student, who is in literacy education and understands literacy issues, read through a randomly chosen, unmarked transcript from the first set of interviews. I trained this person as to what they needed to look for as aspects of the student's sense of being literate. By categories, she looked for phrases that reflected the student's sense of being literate. If goal of the 90% agreement between the external auditor's matches and mine was not met with the first reading, we continued to code until

a 90% agreement was attained. This interrating process was repeated with the second and third set of interviews.

Phase II

I applied the initial codes to the rest of interviews and the corresponding discussions of artifacts. This resulted in adding and collapsing of categories. During the second interview, one question elicited students' responses as to possible differences and/or similarities between English-reading class and mainstream English. This question necessitated an added category to reflect this new information. This category gave the student an opportunity to express their perception of what was different between the English-reading and mainstream English class.

Similarly, students' responses about their actions necessary to be successful shifted from what they would have to do to what was working or not working. Because students' responses became more detailed and temporal, sub categories were adjusted and expanded to reflect the students' perceptions of being successful, the action of getting support of others, what the teaching was doing or not doing, and what was needed to be successful. This process was repeated during the coding of the third set of interviews and resulted in the addition of the sub category, writing strategies to what is working to be successful. Students discussed the use of writing strategies, other than note taking, in the capacity of rewriting drafts, more writing, and a conscious improvement in quality. This final set of codes was checked with students' responses across all interviews and artifact discussions to reaffirm coding decisions (see Appendices H for code list).

I grouped the personal notes into two blocks within the study's timeframe. A possible four personal notes were collected between Interviews I and II and three

personal notes between Interviews II and III. This process provided students' perceptions between interviews as a representation of who they were as readers and writer within that time frame. The personal notes were coded. Each student's coded responses were reorganized by student across time.

Phase III

I designed a matrix to consolidate, organize, and express the students' coded perceptions across time (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). I constructed a snapshot of each student's sense of being literate for each data collection event. This enabled me to determine if change occurred or not. For each student, I compared the coded categories from the first interview to the last interview and noting where change began to occur across data sources. I created three matrices for each student using the code list categories within the broad areas of theory, identity, and self-efficacy. Each matrix consisted of categories listed down the page for that area and the data collection continuum and change across the top (see Appendices I for matrices).

I then compared and noted commonality and/or change in codes across categories to determine if change took place. I looked for possible reasons for the change or lack of change across categories. I collapsed or consolidated each matrix for the first interview and then the third interview, yielding a broad description for each area: student's theory of literacy, literate identity. Students were grouped by similarities for each interview. Finally, I looked for change in group membership between the first and final interviews and why this shift occurred or did not occur. I referred to each student's second interview, personal notes, change category, as well as the self-efficacy matrix for documentation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Analysis of the data showed student's sense of being literate changed during their transition experience. Several broad themes evolved across categories after intense scrutiny of the coded data explaining the change To best examine these themes, students' theories of literacy and feelings about themselves as readers, writers, and learners as members of a support reading class are presented, followed by another discussion of the students as members of a mainstream content English classes. Examples of change or absence of change is noted.

Students' Theories of Literacy

Students' literacy theories encompassed five areas: What counts as literacy; how one becomes literate; the qualities that are admired and/or respected as a reader and writer; what counts as text; and how literacy functions in one's life.

What Counts as Literacy

Students defined literacy in five ways. At the beginning of the study, the most frequent response was the ability to read different kinds of texts with understanding. All the students discussed their ability to read, from reading a variety of texts to what and how they read. Another definition was functional reading and writing of print. All but one mentioned functional literacy. Writing notes to friends and employers as well as letters to family and friends were the most common practices recounted. Some other functional literacy activities included reading directions, writing addresses, and checks. Surprisingly, only a few students mentioned using electronic devices for functional

reading and writing; these included using computers to do writing, sending email, and using text messaging to contact friends.

School reading and writing played a prominent role in students' literacy. The students defined this aspect of literacy as any reading and writing done for school, for example homework and course work. Students mentioned reading specific textbooks and doing homework, but the greatest focus was on writing. Students included types of writing such as reports, essays, journals, class notes, summaries, paragraphs, and answers to questions to name a few. Several students reflected on the process of writing. For example, Cole and Diana described the steps to writing five paragraph essays. Patience detailed the process of writing without all the necessary punctuation and grammar and then going back and adding to it. During Jake's discussion about his support reading class project, he noted his writing about what a character does in the story and the differences and similarities of that character who is both in a film and novel version of a story.

As members of the support reading class, students expressed themselves through conversation and writing about their ideas and beliefs. Their conversations focused on sharing their opinions, talking about stories, and discussing elements of literature. Students' writings were predominantly in the form of personal notes and poetry. For example, Cole divulged the purpose of her note writing because she was upset and needed to share her feelings with someone. Charm and Sandra wrote poems as conversations with themselves.

Lastly, what counted as literacy to the students included their personal knowledge related to content in stories and how to write. During conversation about projects,

students recounted specific details about plots, characters, and themes relating to core content literature such as *Pygmalion*, *Macbeth*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Students' personal writing knowledge included grammar, spelling, and sentence construction.

At the end of the study, the students' literacy definitions remained basically unchanged. All but one student mentioned reading with understanding various texts as literacy. Students discussed their everyday reading and writing of print that included reading instruction booklets on video games, writing reminders or questions about problems with a salary check. While describing their projects, students continued to express their personal knowledge of literacy related to the specific content as well as how to do the necessary writing to show their understanding. For example, Scott described how he compared and contrasted two advertisements for a class assignment, and explained what emotions were invoked. He delineated why people pick one product over another based on the ads' contents and what the advertisers were targeting.

Students' definitions of literacy maintained their initial focus on school reading and writing. Their readings reflected the core curriculum of English literature such as *Julius Caesar*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *Macbeth*. One addition to their definitions, students referred to not only text but also literary periods in relation to their reading and writing experiences. They also discussed writing practices that included processes and constructions.

Students continued to express themselves through talk and writing about their ideas and beliefs. However, more comments about their self expression occurred during project discussions than during the beginning of the study. For example, Jake said that during writing presentations to the class, he responded to teachers' questions, answered in

his own words, and expressed what he thought. He also learned about other students' opinions from what they wrote because they had to share with the class. Students also carried forward other ways of self expression. For example, Charm described discussions about class readings as an opportunity to express her ideas. Patience and Cole conveyed that writing expressed their personal passions and emotions. Some students used journal writing as venue for self expression. Others talked about note writing to friends. Diana professed that she wrote to her boyfriend in both Spanish and English.

All of the students, except one, continued to define literacy in multiple ways. Carl conveyed very little as to what counts as literacy at the close of the transition. He made only two references, that of school reading and reading texts.

How One Becomes Literate

At the beginning of the study, strategy use emerged as the most common choice in students' pursuit of becoming literate. Students implemented a procedure or plan to succeed in reading and writing. These plans included personalized tactics such as reading out loud, at their own pace, or several versions of a story. Students explained procedures for vocabulary learning. For example, Hoghead explained when he read for pleasure and did not know a word, he would keep reading because sometimes he could understand the meaning of the word after reading for awhile. Jake, Jose, and Hoghead indicated that looking up definitions of unknown words and writing the definitions helped increase their vocabulary. Several students focused on personal questions and reflections. Carl, for example, asked himself questions about what specific characters were doing in a story.

Patience became a character in the story as she read. She internalized the dialogue, talked to other characters, and experienced, in her thoughts, the events of the story.

Both Carl and Patience stated that writing down their thoughts facilitated their ability to understand and remember what they read. Other students included strategies to write successfully, including note taking, procedures for sentence and paragraph construction, and using outlines. Vern described organization as most important, as well as especially getting access to a computer. Vern divulged that learning typing skills was crucial to his being successful as a reader and writer. Cole also explained her procedure, beginning with thoroughly reading the assignment, taking notes, and organizing sentences into paragraphs. The majority of the students also stated that by practicing reading and writing frequently, they facilitated their literacy abilities.

Several students expressed the need to be interested in what they were reading and writing. For example, Patience professed that when she liked the story, she remembered and understood it. Similarly, Sandra stated she liked science the best and read it well. Scott and Vern claimed that they had to be interested in a subject to write about it.

Students sought help from more knowledgeable others with reading and writing. Students' support members included teachers, family members, friends, and classmates. Several students indicated that when teachers read to the class or to them individually, they understood better. Scott voiced the necessity to know people in class, then he would ask them for help when he needed it. Charm and Sandra expressed the importance to go over their writing with their teacher.

Upon completing a semester in the mainstream content English class, the majority of the students upheld the belief of how one becomes literate through strategy use; however, there was a greater emphasis on practicing reading and writing frequently as the most popular strategy. For example, Charm recounted how, with a second time reading, she could find other things to help her understand. Sandra mentioned reading outside of class time being helpful. Scott referred to textbook reading and commented that he had to read assignments a couple of times to really understand what it was saying. Students also stated that practicing writing was effective. Both Jake and Carl discussed writing more often as a way to improve. Hoghead also commented that writing more improved the quality of his sentences.

Several students maintained the use of reading and writing procedures, such as vocabulary and organizational strategies. For example, Diana said she used a dictionary or hand translator to find a meaning of an unknown word. Sandra described a series of vocabulary strategies beginning with looking the word up, continuing reading to see if she could determine the meaning from the content around the word, and writing the word down to check the meaning later. Patience explained her plan to organize her writing assignments by deciding on a main idea for each paragraph.

To become literate, students continued to pursue help from others more knowledgeable with reading and writing. They again cited teachers and friends as their primary sources. Students reflected on the techniques shared by others to help them better understand what they were reading. Cole described how her friend helped; "she encouraged me so I felt like I could do it, and she would help me if I had any questions, and she wouldn't make fun of me or anything like that." (Interview III, 2/3/2005, lines

139-140) Sandra explained that if she felt confident she would do well because she would always ask her teachers or a friend if she did not understand an assignment or a reading, and it helped.

Finally, students, once again, maintained that having an interest in what they were reading and writing about helped them become literate. For example, Charm said when she understood what she was reading, it was easier to write about it. She said it also helped to have a strong opinion about the writing topic. Jose expressed he improved his reading when he reads stories he liked.

One student, Carl offered less discussion and examples, during his final interview as to how one becomes literate as compared to his first and second interviews. This pattern continues during the duration of the literacy theory analysis.

Qualities Admired and/or Respected as a Reader and Writer

Students recognized confidence and capability to read and write with ease as prominent literacy quality. Students described this admiration and respect in terms of procedural knowledge: knowing how to do reading and writing. The essence of knowing how to do it focused on being able to read fast with total comprehension and understanding. Charm summed it up as the ability to look at text and understand it immediately. Cole described it as an ability to understand what one reads without questioning oneself. Students also admired the ability to focus on what one was reading, staying on task, and explaining clearly what one has just read. Lastly, students expressed admiration of those able to write and rewrite easily. For example, Charm valued others knowing what to write, adding words easily, and putting them where they best express her ideas.

Students also admired and respected declarative knowledge about reading and writing. Approximately half of the students stated that knowing and understanding a lot of words was important. Students also expressed respect for knowing correct grammar and spelling. For example, Carl described such knowledge as "knowing sometimes where to put commas, abbreviations, especially when you get down into it." (Interview I, 9/28/04, lines 43- 44) Vern referred to such knowledge as the ability to put all the pieces of words, information, grammar down accurately. Several students declared that being smart was necessary. Carl suggested that it was the ability to hold a lot of information in his mind at one time. Sandra conveyed that to be a good writer a person had to remember what she had read.

Only a few students regarded a more knowledgeable other willing to help share knowledge as important. Jake reflected on his teacher getting him ready to be able to finish school; through all the years, she had helped him a lot. Cole also divulged the support of her teacher; knowing that if she needed help, she could go to her for assistance.

At the end of the study, students maintained that the same qualities of admiration and respect were valuable in readers and writers. All of the students expressed the importance of confidence and capability to read and write with ease. Vern offered his dad as an example of a confident reader and writer because he envisioned his dad sitting in the front of the class, being the first to raise his hand to answer all the questions, and asking informative questions himself. Vern juxtaposed his lack of confidence while discussing his dad's capabilities. Students described this admiration and respect in terms of procedural knowledge and/or declarative knowledge. For example, Hoghead indicated

that a really good reader reads fast, understands what she reads, and is able to explain it competently. Cole framed this reading capability in her words.

> [She] probably understands more when she first starts reading and does not have to think about it, like I still have to go back and think what the story that I had just read is about, like actually break it down and think about it. I think she just knows, like puts it all together in her head while she's reading it, and I don't think I do that yet. (Interview III, 2/02/2005, lines 37-41)

Vern described this literacy capability as being a good speller and having book knowledge. Carl expressed it as not having a learning disability. Several students thought a capable reader and writer was more intelligent, had a larger vocabulary, or was in AP English.

Approximately half of the students indicated the importance of a more knowledgeable other willing to help share their knowledge; consequently, there was a slight increase as compared to the beginning of the study. The type of support remained to be similar. For example, Diana recounted how a more knowledgeable classmate encouraged her to do her homework, and when she did not understand, explained it so Diana did understand. Charm said her friend gave her some techniques to catch on faster, expressed faith in Charm to be able to do the work, and was not hassled by giving her time to help.

What Counts as Text

Students expressed what counts as text in four ways: literature, structure of text, functional print, and school texts. All the students used literary terms and popular culture vocabulary when referencing text. This text included specific pieces of literature studied

in the support reading class. Students also spoke of the traditional forms of text, such as novels, poetry, stories, newspapers, and specific genres. During discussions about their writing projects, students stated more refined references to text, for example, satire and Old English.

All the students discussed the structure of text. They understood text in terms of grammar, syntax, as well as the whole body of text and words. Students recounted their strengths and weaknesses in writing referring to specific text of punctuation and spelling. The majority of the students used elements of a story and parts of text to explain the reading and writing involved in their projects.

To reference completion of a task, students used functional print. Carl expressed the greatest number of references to functional print of all the students. He discussed using literacy at work, which may account for this difference. Jose, a native Spanish speaker, also expressed use of functional text when assisting his mother, a non-English speaker, with check writing, signatures, and letter reading. Note writing, including personal, class, business, and information, represented the most used functional print text by the students.

Surprisingly, the smallest number of texts, involved school texts. For example, Diana referred only to essays when discussing school reading and writing. Students explained school texts as any written object used for instruction. Other references to school texts included assignments, tests, homework, and specific content courses.

Students, at the end of the study, continued to make similar references to the types of texts. The majority of the students used literary terms and popular culture vocabulary when referencing text. This text included specific works of literature studied in the

mainstream content English class and reflected the grade level curriculum. The greatest number of text references occurred in this group. All the students mentioned the structure of text, but there was no pattern in the type of words used. Text structure vocabulary was the only category that Carl referenced, however. The smallest number of text discussed by the students involved functional texts. Four students did not refer to functional print, and three others only expressed using such print once during the post transition interview. Within school text, senior students referred to their senior papers and the essays, which reflected the significance of the literary experience.

How Does Literacy Function in One's Life

For these students, literacy functioned as one mode of recreation. The majority of the students described reading and writing for pleasure or entertainment. This activity occurred by themselves or with others in and out of school. They communicated a strong satisfaction in reading a variety of texts, including books, comics, magazines, and informational texts. For example, Sandra said that she was reading more than before at school, especially if she did not have to study, as well as reading more at home, too. Charm divulged that she did not like to watch television and preferred to read poetry. Most of the students expressed that they would read or write when they had a choice of what to do with their time. Writing also gave enjoyment to several students. Diana, Charm, and Patience shared that writing notes to friends was a fun thing to do.

Students voiced a strong connection to reading and writing as a means to express personal emotions and creativity. For example, Cole described the need to express herself in writing when upset about something. She said, "When I'm angry or upset, or really happy or proud, I want to note that time [in my journal] I was most happy or proud

of myself for doing something." (Interview I, 9/22/2004, lines 102-103) Patience also felt the need to make a record of her feelings "to express how I feel at the moment, so later I can remember what I felt or went through so I don't forget." (Interview I, 9/24/2004, lines 68-69) Vern discussed reading and writing as an opportunity to express himself in complicated ways and to focus his creative energy.

Literacy also functioned as a mode of communication for these students. They explained communication as a way to share information or knowledge within relationships with themselves or in work. Most students communicated using note writing. Students described note writing to friends as an alternative to having a conversation. Scott, for example, conveyed that he wrote notes to friends to ask "what's up?" (Interview I, 9/27/2004, line 48) Cole explained that note writing let her tell someone her thoughts at the moment even though they would read the message later. The main type of communication with self was class notes. Students discussed purposes for class notes, such as Hoghead's recounting that they were a convenient way to help him out when going over class readings; he would refer back to them. Patience said she took class notes to remember important information presented by the teacher. Only Carl talked about communication for work purposes. He discussed writing business notes as a receipt or check list to show what tasks had been completed. There was a limited amount of discussion about electronic communication. Patience mentioned emails as another choice to writing letters to family members to stay in touch, and Scott included text messaging as an option to phone calls.

Students discussed how reading and writing showed their abilities, mastery, and maturity. Cole, for example, described her ability to write down her understandings of a

story and receive a good grade that reflected her knowledge. Carl explained that by knowing how to write a paragraph, he understood reading more. Several other students looked at literacy as a demonstration of their competency from a different view. They described it as being intelligent adults in today's society. Jose stated that he had to know how to read and write to have a job. Charm declared that she would use reading and writing her whole life, and it was necessary to succeed. Sandra's perspective looked back at her learning to read and write. In elementary school, she realized that literacy would take her places.

At the end of the study, this group of students continued to view the function of literacy as a way to demonstrate their competency. Although there was no specific change in their theory, the intensity of the students' responses reflected a connection between the literacy function and their new sense of accomplishment. For example, Cole stated that completing a regular English class assignment showed her ability and growth in reading and writing ability. It also exemplified the change in her personal belief that she could do it. One student, Hoghead, discussed in detail how his writing improvement was because of his increase in reading ability and quantity. He gave numerous examples in both his second and third interviews as to what he knew and could write about as shown in his class notes, in his essays, and during class discussions. At the beginning of the study, he only mentioned his class notes as part of his theory to demonstrate his competency. During the project discussions, students often commented about demonstrating their competency. For example, Sandra divulged that she is more capable at explaining what she knows by writing. She explained further about using quotations from literature readings to support her ideas and opinions in discussions and writing

assignments. Scott described doing a project on persuasion, and how he was able to explain the purpose of specific advertising campaigns by writing a comparison and contrast essay. He repeated this reference in his personal note.

On a more limited basis, several students described reading and writing to share information with themselves or others. Hoghead and Vern discussed writing down information to reference later. Hoghead made notes of phone messages for others. Vern journaled algebra information so he could access it later because he did not recall math formulas easily. Diana remembered to communicate to others at work by writing questions a head of time about her paycheck.

Students continued to voice strong relationships between their emotions and their reading and writing. For example, Cole talked about how writing comes from inside and how she feels about something. Patience reflected that she records in her journal about what happens to her that others might not understand. Vern also described his personal writing expression in a personal class journal.

Ms. Akey: What do you think is the best part of her journal assignments? The stuff for the class, what do you like about that?

Vern: Very interesting questions, good, thinking questions. You know, emotional, possibly private, deep.

Ms. Akey: And so what do you learn from doing that kind of journaling?

Vern: It makes me think about certain points about myself, you know like would I do this if this was me, how would I react in this situation? (Interview III, 1/20/2005, lines 190-196)

Vern added that journal writing makes him reflect about himself as to doing certain behaviors or how he would react to a certain situation. When discussing her favorite poet, Robert Frost, Charm confessed she wished she could write like he does because she, too, could touch others. Jake said the best part of his writing project was the opportunity to express his thoughts, and the teacher was interested in the students' ideas.

Students carried forward reading and writing as a means of enjoyment. Several students referred to specific pieces of literature in positive manner. For example, Diana said she liked reading *Gulliver's Travels* because it was funny. Cole stated that Flannery O'Conner was a good writer and read all of her short stories in her textbook. Cole also described that emotional rush she feels from a story and the pleasure the experience brings. In a personal note, Sandra reflected her feelings about listening to a sonnet being read. She recounted her thoughts about what does this mean and how does the writer feel. As in the beginning of the study, several students continued to find pleasure in writing personal notes. For example, Diana explained that she enjoyed writing notes to her boyfriend during school and letters to friends in Mexico.

In contrast to the rest of the students and his first and second interviews, Carl did not make any reference as to how literacy functions in his life in his final interview. With Carl as the exception, overall, the students' perceptions of their literacy theory did not change over the course of the study.

Students' Identities

Students described their literate identities in terms of being readers, writers, and learners.

Self as Reader

As members of the support reading class, students perceived themselves as readers in multiple ways. A majority of students responded positively and described themselves as being decent readers with one student even declaring she understood everything she read and remembered it. Students gave specific skills and knowledge that showed self-confidence. These comments illustrated their perceptions of being readers such as doing the act of reading or expressing understanding when reading alone. The students expressed a strong interest in reading as a choice and reading for pleasure. They commented about being comfortable reading anything from romance novels and mysteries to sports and poetry. Vern said he had to be interested in the topic to read, and Jose read if he felt it was a good book. Jose also referred to himself as a reader in terms of reading mail, street signs, and newspapers. Hoghead pointed out that he read frequently in and out of school, and Vern commented that he was reading four things at once. One student, Scott, however, did not give any examples of himself being a reader.

Students discussed their strategies to succeed in reading. The predominant strategies included rereading text to clarify understanding, attempting to read more difficult text, and reading assignments outside of class. Strategy use also included sounding out words and using a dictionary for unknown words. Students asked others for help, such as the teacher or classmates For example, Sandra discussed being successful in reading school related activities, such as being able to understand her science textbook. Charm and Cole mentioned that they could comprehend well when they read at their own pace.

Several students expressed a lack of belief in their own reading ability. Students gave a variety of reasons for their lack of confidence. Jose explicitly responded that he was not a good reader and wanted to do better. Cole stated that she was still improving, but she was not where she wanted to be as a reader. Scott expressed frustration in that he could read a newspaper but was not the best reader of big paragraphs. He said he really did not know if he could learn anymore. Students referenced specific areas of weakness as opposed to a general statement of no confidence. For example, Jake and Vern described themselves as not good at spelling. Charm, Hoghead, and Jose mentioned a need for stronger vocabulary knowledge. Students revealed not having skills and knowledge to be a reader in especially areas of comprehension and recall. Vern voiced concern about being able to keep focused on what the class was reading, and Carl indicated that he had difficulty comprehending a lot of material at one time. Charm expressed an inability to interpret class readings.

Student's comments on their lack of success in school activities focused on specific content area problems. Jake did not liking to read out loud, and Patience divulged that she was nervous about reading out loud because she secretly thought somebody would laugh at her not knowing how to pronounce certain words. Sandra said she was not able to understand English literature very well because of her difficulty interpreting Old English and Middle English. Students also expressed difficulty doing schoolwork at home because of not having a teacher to help them. Another reason for lack of confidence was several students felt that they could not read at an adequate pace to understand the content.

Upon completing the semester in regular mainstream English, the majority of the students described themselves as better readers. For example, Vern reflected that at the beginning of the semester, he was a miserable reader, but he became a lot better and continues to do well. Because her comprehension level increased on the standardized reading test, Cole stated her reading was obviously better than before. Cole also commented that her past experiences in English class built her into a better reader, and therefore she believes in herself. Sandra talked about getting more out of what they were reading in class and having the confidence in herself to accept the identity of a good reader. Patience expressed her reading confidence this way.

> Ms.Akey: You talked to me during our first interview, mentioning a person who you thought was a good reader and you told me why you thought this person was a good reader. How do you compare yourself to this good reader? How do you compare to her? Do you still think this person is a good reader?
>
> Patience: Yeah. If you understand what's going on, no matter if you can read good or not, you're a good reader so I think I've gotten better with understanding stuff. If it takes you an hour just to read one book or one chapter but you understand everything, then I think that makes you a good reader.
>
> (Interview III, 2/20/2005, lines 33-40)

Several other students indicated that they were continuing to improve. Hoghead, for example, said he was reading better than before and just getting better at it. Diana

mentioned in her personal note and final interview that she felt her reading had improved because she now could understand her course readings.

The majority of the students also continued an interest in reading as a choice and for pleasure. Cole commented that she had learned to like to read and therefore was reading more for enjoyment. For several students, reading interest was one of the few areas expressed as a positive perception of self as a reader. For example, Jose said he read weather magazines and car sales. Scott recounted reading the sports page and was looking forward to reading *Huck Finn*. Carl indicated he read performance car magazines.

The students discussed specific skills and knowledge that exemplified their confidence. As in the beginning of the study, students continued their use of strategies to succeed in reading. Students maintained the practice of rereading text to have a better understanding; however, they gave more explicit explanations of their procedures. For example, students mentioned looking for details, continued reading to determine meaning of an unknown word, and pausing and reflecting on meaning before rereading. They also related examples of reading success not mentioned earlier in the study. For example, several students responded that they increased the amount and frequency of their reading. Cole and Jake said they were reading more consistently, and it made a difference in their school work. Sandra explained she was reading more because she wanted to become more proficient and to be prepared for college. She added that it was necessary to read more often to be competent to understand college studies, and she might not always have the opportunity.

Another skill described by the students was their ability to read at a good pace to understand. Both Charm and Hoghead conveyed that they were reading faster and understanding what they read with greater ease. Students made fewer references to vocabulary strategies or success in school related activities than had been indicated at the beginning of the study. However, students continued to get help from others, especially support from teachers. For example, Jose's reflected about his teacher. Jose explained that his reading "changed a little" because his teacher read more stories orally that he liked and understood; Jose even read one story on his own. (Interview III, 1/24/2005, line 10) Charm related how a teacher gave her technique that enabled her to grasp concepts more quickly.

Of those students who expressed a lack of self confidence at the onset of the study, three, again, voiced their shortcomings as readers. One of the students, Scott, explained that he could read, but reading was not really his strong point, and it was difficult for him to explain what he read to others. He summed it up by saying his reading ability was at the same point it was at the beginning of the school year. Jose repeated his earlier statement that he was not a good reader both in his last personal note and during the final interview. Carl also discussed his lack of reading confidence.

Ms. Akey: Now that the first semester is over, give me one word that would best describe you as a reader.

Carl: Different.

Ms. Akey: Is different the same word you would have used back in September that would describe yourself as a reader? (Yes) Why did you choose this word? How is it that you're different?

Carl: Well, it's a whole lot easier for other people but it's a little bit rougher for me.

Ms. Akey: Why do you think that's true?

Carl: Part of the reading problems are comprehending.

Ms. Akey: Do you not think other people have comprehending problems?

Carl: They probably do but not as severe as me.

(Interview III, 1/24/05, lines 3-12)

Because the majority of the students expressed a positive change in their perception as readers, there were fewer references to not having the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful.

Self as Writer

Less than half of the support class expressed confidence about their writing. Students recognized a connection between reading and writing. Some student confidence in writing depended on remembering what they had read or knowing what to write about. Students expressed confidence about their writing skills and knowledge, such as confidence in writing sentences, essays, and class notes. For example, Hoghead recounted how writing class notes helped him recall previous readings and discussions to prepare for a test. Students explained their implementations of procedures or plans to succeed in writing in more detail when discussing their artifacts. Sandra supported her success as a writer by explaining that she determined what the plot was before attempting to write about a story, and also she preferred writing in third person versus first person. Students described their writing confidence in terms of being able to add to writing, rewriting, creativity, and specifically the ability to write from different points of view.

Students felt more competent when writing for personal or functional reasons rather than academic reasons. Personal writing fulfilled the need to express emotions and to communicate. For example, Vern commented,

Vern: Well, I enjoy putting my thoughts down on paper. I like using like physical descriptions like, not physical descriptions, like physical examples, like the other day I was talking, we were talking about you know were people born evil or whatever and I was using a slate, a stone sla- like a stone tablet as an example and how once you carve up the slate it's already set but when you're born you got like a clean slate and you can - and it kinda works - it's carved up by like society and the parents and the environment.

Ms. Akey: And so you know with this description what are some of the things you do well as a writer?

Vern: I express myself.

(Interview I, 9/23/2007, lines 83-93)

Several students voiced a love for writing in general, especially poems and writing notes to friends, as a personal release and to communicate. Diana spoke about writing to her friends in Spanish and English for the fun of it. Carl and Jose noted functional writing as satisfying a necessary or required task in business transactions or helping a parent who had limited literacy skills.

The majority of the support class students expressed a lack of confidence as writers in school. Students indicated confusion about what and how to write. Cole expressed her inability to automatically write a summary of a story. Similarly, Vern

commented on his difficulty to put words on paper because of his weak spelling ability. He explained that he was unable to express himself as much as he would like to because he could not write down as much information as he could speak. Sandra associated expressing herself verbally to her inability to express her ideas in writing. In science class, she said she did not know how to put things the right way, but she knew what she was talking about. Charm stated uncertainty about writing the right thing. Students' gave examples of their insufficient writing skills and knowledge that included mechanics, sentence and paragraph construction, and personal expression of ideas. A few students reflected on the fact that they write infrequently unless assigned or had to write for a functional purpose.

At the conclusion of the study, all the students expressed confidence or improvement in their ability to write. For example, Cole described herself as a considerably better writer at the end of the semester. She discussed learning the steps of writing an essay, developing her ability to be creative, and coping with her self-consciousness about what others think about her writing. Even though Diana said she needed to learn more about writing, she described herself as improved because of her experiences writing in her English class, specifically about *Macbeth*. Previously, Sandra discussed both her strengths and shortcomings as a writer, but at the end of the study, she felt more proficient. She supported her belief by describing how she wrote more examples to support her topics and took her writing to another level. Sandra also explained how working with students who were good writers influenced her ability to write. "Like, they make [your] confidence boost, boost your confidence, like they push

you to you know, go harder so you know, if they can do it, you know you feel like you can." (Interview III, 1/20/2005, lines 104-105)

Furthermore, students also illustrated writing skills and knowledge by revealing their strategy use. For example, Charm admitted that she had to write differently for her English 4 class by using two column notes and writing longer essays. Jake mentioned writing personal notes to complete school tasks. Organization development was also an important writing strategy. Several students discussed how they planned their writing assignments using topic outlines, drafts, and notes. Sandra described when writing drafts, she would systematically put her ideas in the appropriate order. Scott explained how he extended his writing by making a list of similar ideas and adding them to his essay. Vern recounted how he improved his writing by listening to others' ideas and taking notes of the discussion. Then, when he would prepare to write, he would refer to his notes. Vern explained further that starting with this strategy enabled him to get more into the literature.

Students continued to write to fulfill personal emotions and communicate. For example in her journal, Patience described writing about how she feels and what is happening in her life. Vern, also, shared that he enjoyed journaling and learned more about himself. In addition he explained a specific purpose for his writing

Ms. Akey: Tell me about your writing, your journal here, and why you wanted to share it with me.

Vern: Because it's a start on something new. I've never done anything like this before. I've never willingly put stuff done on paper.

Ms. Akey: What is the best part of your journaling?

Vern: I can access information that I usually don't put in memory very easily. Mainly mathematics stuff. As you can see I have the whole formula for like the yards and the miles and the square foot thing written down. . . . I have easy access to the information, once I use it several times it will go to memory.

(Interview III, 1/20/05, lines 166-175)

As in the beginning of the study, several students maintained the practice of writing to complete a task, such as letter writing, phone messages, and personal reminders.

Although the students voiced confidence and improvement in their perceptions as writers, a few students communicated concerns. All four senior students voiced concern about successfully writing a senior paper. They felt it would be difficult and challenging. Several students explained their shortcomings. Scott talked about his lack of self confidence even though he felt his writing had improved. He divulged that the better writers know what they are doing in class, but he was "just winging it." Vern also stated that he was improving as a writer, and he was not dwelling on the fact that his spelling was not very good--"not all that great." He also expressed that he needed to do more writing. Jose also commented that he did not write much in his English class. He did not bring any projects to discuss during the interviews.

Self as Learner

The support class students saw themselves as competent in class participation activities. They stated knowing what to do and how to read and working hard in class. Students' comments reflected a sense of self-satisfaction as a learner. For example, Jake indicated that he felt good about doing his class work. Charm voiced her pride because

she said she knew what she was doing. Sandra said she liked doing things the right way. Some students also described themselves as helpers, perceiving themselves as more knowledgeable others. They provided helping various ways, such as by explaining the meaning of a story, by giving writing support, and by pronouncing an unknown word. Patience pointed out that by explaining to others, it helped her understand more clearly, too.

Students also described their feelings about working in groups. They communicated positive perceptions of group work because it provided opportunities to get help, collaborate, give help to others, and be leaders. The majority of the students expressed strong feelings about the opportunity to get help in groups. Charm summed it up that if she missed something, someone else was there to help, and it ultimately meant that there were more people to get information from. Students also viewed group work as an opportunity to collaborate by motivating each other to be successful. Jake described his group work experience in the support class as the whole class coming together to get the job done. To a lesser degree, students saw group work as way to help others to understand. Several students also described themselves as leaders by inspiring others, personally rising to the occasion, and contributing ideas when the group necessitated leadership to make things work.

While some students saw themselves as the workers in the class, some also expressed a frustration or a dislike to work in groups because of others' lack of commitment or not being as capable. They felt they were doing more than their share of work. They perceived themselves as the workers, giving a lot to the success of the class. Sandra explained her feelings about groups:

Sandra: It's just kind of frustrating sometimes when you know that they won't be there and you have to do it, you want, you know some of the work done, helping but sometimes it gets done and sometimes it doesn't so you have to overdo what you're supposed to do.

Ms. Akey: How do you feel about contributing, putting forth more effort?

Sandra: It really doesn't bother me because I know it's going to be done right and I'm going to get the grade for it.

(Interview I, 9/27/2004, lines 115-120)

Carl commented that some students were not as capable of reading and writing as he was. He believed he just had to take over some of the other work, teach others how to do it, even if it slows the progress. Several students responded as being indifferent to how group work influences them.

Students expressed confidence in the ability to express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions. Most often students described why they were capable of expressing themselves as related to personal values, a parent's influence, or the influence of others. Students described their capability to express themselves because of their openness and honesty. Charm and Cole referred to being like their moms who also expressed themselves easily. The influence of others on ability to express self affected some of the students' beliefs about society and trust. Most students responded as to how they were able to express themselves because of their talking a lot and being a social person. For example, Cole declared she expressed herself the best using words because that is just the type of person she seems to be.

Even though most students felt confident about expressing themselves, two students conveyed a frustration or an unwillingness to express their ideas. Sandra voiced an inability to express personal ideas because it was difficult to be heard in class. Sandra said:

> It's harder to (express your ideas) in school because, I don't know, sometimes you feel like you know they don't really listen. Just, I'm not saying teachers, but like if you have to do something, you have to go through everybody just to get something said for something little. (Interview 1, 9/27/ 2007, lines 98-102)

Jose simply responded that he did not like to express himself because he did not know if he could trust anyone.

Also, at the onset of the study, students expressed concerns about being successful in the mainstream content English class. These concerns focused on difficult content, work quantity, sufficient time, teacher expectations, network support, and personal confidence at being successful. Students explained their concerns about having the ability to understand the literature, vocabulary, and assignments with the expectations that the content would be more difficult. This concern also related to students' trepidation about a greater amount of work required and sufficient time to understand and complete tasks. While describing the time issue, Sandra compared her support class and mainstream English class as basically the same thing, but the support class just went slower. Also, students believed teachers would be more difficult to understand and expect a greater responsibility from them. Similarly, students noted less or a different network system available to support them. For example, Patience described herself more on her own and personally responsible for pursuing help. Both Scott and Sandra

commented they did not receive as much individual help because of the bigger class size as compared to previous years in the support class. Lastly, the majority of the students discussed having the personal confidence to be successful. For example, Vern expressed his future success being based on his ability to adapt fairly well.

In relation to students' concerns, they talked about what actions they believed necessary to be successful. The first part of their plan focused on doing the work and paying attention. The second part encompassed strategy use. These strategies included: practicing reading to become a better reader, getting help from more knowledgeable others, doing word study to increase their accuracy of word recognition in text and word fluency in reading and writing, and rereading text to reinforce understanding.

At the midpoint of the study, students described their views as to what was different and/or similar between the support class and mainstream content English. The majority of the students described the two courses as different. They described the differences as pertaining to the course content, difficulty and quantity of work required, class procedures, other students' behaviors and attitudes, and teachers' behaviors, attitudes, and expectations. When referring to course content, students commented on not reading literature in class, as had been the practice in the support class, but as homework and then discussing or listening to lectures on the readings. Cole remarked about the difference in doing writing assignments; papers were not written during class time but individually and outside of class. Jake commented that grammar, spelling, and basic writing competency was expected; unlike in the support class where these skills were studied and practiced separately. Several students discussed writing journals daily as different. Patience explained that in the support class, papers and writing assignments

were the primary grades, but the mainstream English class was all about the tests. Jose, however, spoke of a different experience than that of the other students. He said his class was different because there were no projects, writing assignments, or group work. The majority of the students stated that there was more reading and writing in the mainstream class, and it was more difficult.

Several students commented on the attitudes and behaviors of the other students in the mainstream class as being different than those in the support class. For example, Cole felt that her mainstream class was more confrontational. She said everyone had a different opinion and wanted to argue. Patience, in contrast, commented that the students in her mainstream class were quiet, did not talk to each other except during a discussion, and even then, they did not say much. Vern expressed things differently, also. He described his mainstream classmates as more forthcoming about communicating, more willing to talk, express ideas, and not sleep through class, as was the case with a classmate in the support class.

To a lesser extent, several students communicated a difference in teachers' behaviors, attitudes, and expectations. Patience expressed the strongest feelings about the difference in teachers. She described her mainstream teachers as not giving instruction to students with their reading and writing skills. In another example, Patience describes her frustration with the teacher.

Ms. Akey: In your last interview you mentioned you thought English was going to be different and the way you mentioned that you thought that it was going to be, about the class was that you know there'd

be more independence and the reading itself was going to be different. Is this different this way?

Patience: Yeah it's extremely different. In my other English class we read together and if somebody didn't understand something you would explain it to them but this is read on your own you know if you don't read it then you're not going to understand anything it's like a survival for the fittest, if you don't do it, you don't get it then it's your problem.

Ms. Akey: O.K. What about, are there any other things that you thought would be the same and now they're different?

Patience: I didn't think, well I thought writing would be the same but it's not at all, it's totally different, I have to do everything on my own and I could write a D paper and he wouldn't care, it would just be a D. (Interview II, 11/16/2004, lines 112-125)

Several students also discussed similarities between the support class and the mainstream content English class but to a much lesser extent. For example, Sandra felt that both classes were very much alike. She said that in both classes they would read stories and discuss them. She added that her mainstream class teacher would give help if students needed it, but that they did not do much work that required the teacher's help. Because of the nature of the mainstream class seating chart, Cole remarked that she was sitting next to the same classmates that she sat next to in the support class from the previous year. She described how this group of classmates continued to help each other, just like they had done in the support class.

At the end of the study, the majority of the students continued to describe themselves as competent in class participation activities. They expressed a sense of comfort and identity with the other students who had always been in the mainstream English classes. For example, Hoghead described himself as just another student like everyone else in the class. Jake said that he was just an average kid, and that he did not feel any different or better. Patience described herself as a regular English student; specifically, she saw herself as one of them. Sandra voiced her confidence by saying she knew she could do it. She reflected that she was just like everybody else and no longer felt awkward. Scott offered a slightly different perception. He stated, "I know I can pass [regular English] now." (Interview III, 1/24/2005, line 145), but he added earlier in the interview that he didn't contribute much to the class. "I was just the guy everybody talked to, made everybody laugh." (lines 97-98)

Two students, who continued to view themselves as competent in class, did voice modifications in their perceptions. Patience described herself as more of an equal or group member at the end of the study; whereas at the beginning, she viewed herself primarily as a helper to others. Vern discussed a greater willingness to accept opinions and to listen to the theories of others than at the beginning of the study.

Part of the students' descriptions of their competency continued to be reflected in their discussions about working hard and helping others. For example, Jake talked about contributing his ideas and energy to projects. He explained how he volunteered to read aloud and lead discussions. Cole explained how she helped an ELL classmate who was struggling with the English vocabulary in their literature book. She related how she

helped her with word meanings and synonyms. Vern simply expressed his feeling by stating he worked hard to be successful in the class activities.

In contrast, several students described themselves as not being competent at the end of the study. One student, Jose, expressed a complete lack of participation and competency. For example in a personal note, Jose said that he did nothing in class because it was too hard. He added that the book they were reading was too difficult and too long. In his last interview, he said there was not much for him to do in class, and he did not help others. Carl also voiced a change as to how he saw himself in his English class. He shifted in his personal belief of himself as a pretty good reader and writer to being below average as compared to other students. He communicated that he still spoke in class and gave his answers and opinions, but he no longer perceived himself as a leader.

At the beginning of the study, students voiced a balanced perception of why they enjoyed groups that included getting help, collaborating, giving help, and leading others. However, at the end of the study, the majority of the students described a preference for group work because of the opportunity to collaborate and motivate each other. For example, Scott described how he gave his input and then they would divide the writing assignment, each sharing the responsibility to completing their part. Hoghead said he gave his opinion and stimulated discussions when others did not respond. Charm described how she made new friends and learned new ideas while discussing ideas in groups.

As a group, the students still felt strongly about liking small group work at the end of the study; though for some, there was a shift in the roles they played. For example,

Carl no longer perceived himself as a leader but stated that he did whatever task they assigned him. He described himself as being pretty reasonable while working in groups. Vern's comments reflected a respect for classmate's opinions and ideas which he did not hold at the beginning of the study. He also commented that while working in groups in mainstream English, his ideas and opinions were accepted and not ridiculed as had been the case in the support reading class. Previously, Sandra, who had been the most vocal about the burden of doing the majority of the work while in groups, did not say whether her feelings had changed, except to state in her second interview that she continued to help others.

The majority of the students continued to convey confidence in the ability to express their ideas, thought, and opinions. Most of the students supported this ability by referring to their personal values and the desire to express themselves. For example, Charm divulged that her writing success was facilitated by her having a strong opinion about the subject she was writing about. Hoghead described that it was easy for him to give his opinion during class discussions. He also talked about the connection between his ability to express himself better in class because he had a better understanding of what he was reading. While discussing his project, Jake explained that the best part of a class assignment was the opportunity to give his opinion, and then share it, followed by listening to other students' comments.

While Patience and Vern discussed how they continued to express themselves, both mentioned new dimensions to their experiences. Patience shared in her second interview that she had some reservation about voicing her opinions based on reading only the original version of a story because she needed to also read the modified text to have a

better understanding. At the end of the study, she emphasized expressing her opinions in writing more than in discussions for fear of being wrong. Vern related how much he relished class conversations and expressing his point of view versus students not listening to him while in the support class. He imparted that he really enjoyed having his opinions appreciated.

During the course of the study, students reflected on actions taken by them or by others that contributed to or impeded their success in the mainstream content English class. Students offered an extensive list of their efforts describing what they were doing to be successful. First and foremost, all the students except one voiced that they had to do the work and pay attention. Students also explained how they used strategies, including note taking to remember and organize their thoughts; rereading the text to reinforce understanding; practicing reading more often both in and out of school; doing word study to increase accurate word recognition in text and word fluency in reading and writing; and using writing strategies. Students' reflections on the use of writing strategies became particularly more prevalent during the final interview. These writing strategies included: rewriting multiple drafts, writing more often, and making a conscious effort to improve the quality of their writing. For example, Hoghead explained how he was writing better sentences with fewer run-on sentences and that his writing made more sense.

Other actions that contributed to students' success involved getting help from more knowledgeable others and what teachers were doing as part of their practice. All the students, except one, discussed how they pursued and received support from teachers, classmates, and friends. The students' descriptions of support from others ranged from

reteaching and explanations to encouragement and sharing ideas through talk. For example, Scott explained how his friends helped him to understand class assignments by repeating everything in his slang or kid talk; he said it made it more interesting. Students revealed another form of support by what their teachers were doing; this action included providing explanations, group work, writing opportunities, talk, and space. For example, Charm described how helpful it was to have discussions after trying to read the literature text the night before because she felt the caliber of reading was too difficult for her to understand on her own. She explained further that after teacher led discussions or small group discussions, the stories made more sense. Charm talked about her teacher's ability to teach. "Well , I mean like with him doing that, I guess the technique thing he does, I mean, whenever he does that, I would not only walk out knowing, I'd walk out remembering, too, so I would know what it is the next day." (Interview III, 1/24/2005, lines 124-126)

In contrast to what was working, students also reflected on what was not working for them to be successful. Students described problems with doing the work and paying attention, remembering, understanding words in text, and being confused about the reading, writing, and discussion in general. Several students spoke more frequently about this lack of success during the second interview, specifically Scott, Carl, and Jose. Although the number of responses of this nature decreased, they continued to express what was not working. For example, Jose explained that he did not read much because he did not want to. Carl said he had not had enough time to read. Scott professed that he did not know how to do his assignments, and had no idea how to explain things.

Students also commented on what their teacher was doing that got in way of their understanding. Responses focused on lack of examples and acceptance and difficulty understanding teacher's lectures. However, these comments were expressed during the second interviews and diminished at the end of the study.

Lastly, students talked about what was needed to be successful. Students described a need to change what the teacher was doing to teach the class, for more time to complete assignments, and to learn more in general. The majority of the students reflected on their needs during the second interview, but students offered fewer responses during the third interview. However, Scott, Carl, and Jose continued to voice their frustrations. For example, both Carl and Scott said that they did not have enough time to read and complete assignments. Jose simply expressed that he needed to read more. On a more positive note, Vern disclosed the need to respect one's teacher, and he added that then they will help but not if one is rude.

Conclusion

As presented in the analysis of the data, the students' sense of being literate showed change in their literate identity during the transition experience. The majority of the students described themselves as better readers as compared to the beginning of the study. Students communicated their confidence as readers, indicating their reading skills and knowledge as support. Three students, however, Carl, Scott, and Jose discussed little change in their perceptions as readers or gave conflicting examples of improvement. The students, as a group, communicated a strong change in their perception as writers. All of the students voiced confidence and improvement. Students, again, cited their writing skills and knowledge to exemplify this change. Scott expressed the greatest equivocation

as to his writing identity. As learners, however, the majority of the students described little change as to how they perceived themselves as class members. Students continued to feel positive about group work, class participation, and their ability to express ideas, thoughts, and opinions. Several students discussed changes in their roles as leaders, helpers, and workers. Students, also, related what actions they took to be successful in the mainstream class, as well as what teachers did that facilitated or inhibited their ability to be successful.

In contrast the students' overall perceptions of their literacy theory did not change over the course of the study. Their perceptions of what counts as literacy, how one becomes literate, the qualities that are admired and/or respected as a reader and writer; what counts as text, and how literacy functions in one's life remained basically the same. However, there were subtle shifts with more comments about their self-expression during project discussions as to what counts as literacy and a greater emphasis on practicing reading and writing as strategy use to become literate at the end of the study. Two students broadened their theoretical definition of how literacy functions with a greater reference to demonstrating their competency. Carl, however, showed a decrease in his discussion in four of the five theory categories. His change was unique and represents an anomaly as compared to other students' theoretical perceptions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

This study examined the ways the transition experience from support reading class to a mainstream content English affected the students' perceptions of their sense of being literate. The impetus to investigate this transition was grounded in the dissolution of a high school support reading class and how the experience would influence these students as readers, writer, and learners. The students, six boys and five girls, were transitioning into mainstream content English classes at the beginning of the school year after a district-level decision to eliminate the English credit reading support class. The theoretical framework encompassed a pluralist position of multiple literacies and literate practices that is socially constructed (Beach, 1994; Heath, 1983, 1986, 1991, Scribner & Cole, 1981) across sociocultural settings embedded within discourses or social practices (Gee, 1992, 1996) where the teacher and the students interact in social mediation to bring other students into the literacy practices of the context (Vygotsky, 1978; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Wertsch, 1991). The theoretical framework was also informed by the notion that the support class students have an identity of who they are as literate individuals within their social world and how they relate with others in a literate society (Young & Beach, 1997), what Heath (1991) termed a sense of being literate.

Phenomenological inquiry was used as the strategy to investigate the essence of the students' experience (Cresswell, 2003). Data sources included semi-structured audiotaped interviews, personal notes, and the students' retrospective discussion of assignments. During the semester, students participated in three semi-structured face-to-face interviews, eliciting students' perceptions of their experiences in the reading support

class, the mainstream content English class, and their own identity as readers, writers, and learners. Students wrote personal notes to express their spontaneous feelings, reactions, and reflections about their mainstream class that might be lost between or unspoken during the interviews. Also, during the interviews, students discussed three different artifacts as an opportunity for them to explain what they do and how it influenced their literate identity at the time.

Data were analyzed in three phases. In the first phase, open coding, I coded each transcript, using the rephrased interview questions to develop the categories, grouped similar student responses, defining and clarifying these specific coding categories in the process. The second phase, I applied codes to all interviews and personal notes. For the third phase, I created three matrices for each student using the code list categories within the broad areas of theory, identity, and self-efficacy to consolidate, organize, and express students' coded perceptions across time, noting commonalities or if change took place. Students were grouped by similarities for each interview which permitted me to look for change in group membership between the first and final interviews and examine why this shift occurred or did not occur.

The study revealed that the support reading class students' sense of being literate was reshaped. Several major themes emerged as to the ways the transition experience affected the students' perceptions of their sense of being literate. One major theme that emerged was the students' change in self as being literate. In this study at the conclusion of the semester, the majority of the participants described themselves as being better readers who were continuing to improve. Even more so, this group of adolescents communicated a more emphatic change in themselves as writers upon completing their

semester in mainstream content English. As learners, however, the majority of the students expressed little change as to how they perceived themselves as class members and continued to feel positive about group work, class participation, and their ability to express ideas, thoughts, and opinions.

In contrast, overall the students' literacy theory was not reshaped over the course of the study. Students' understandings of what counts as literacy, how one becomes literate, the qualities that are admired and/or respected as a reader and writer, what counts as text, and how literacy functions in one's life remained unchanged.

It is important to note that two students, Carl and Jose, showed different outcomes than the other members of the study. Carl's descriptions of himself became more negative during the course of the study, not only as a literate person, but also within his peer group. He saw his learning disabilities as an obstacle in being successful in school. He also had behavioral problems at the end of the semester that resulted in his being suspended. Carl's beliefs in his ability to control his own learning and to succeed academically defined his expectations. Jose also met with little success in school. He expressed little interest in participating in class activities or working with others. He stopped attending school and became truant during the following semester. In his responses at the end of the study, Jose expressed a disconnect with his classes, as if there was nothing about school that related to him personally. For both students, their sense of self-efficacy did not support success in school.

Why Did Students' Literate Identities Change?

Relationships

Relationships played a key role in the reshaping of the students' sense of who they were as readers and writers. The majority of the students talked about their relationships with teachers, friends or classmates who helped them be successful with the more rigorous demands of the mainstream English class. This had been students' concern at the beginning of the study as to the availability of having someone to help with the literacy demands the support reading student faced in content class. Also at the onset of the study, students expressed concerns about meeting teacher's expectations; however, they discovered that for the most part, the mainstream English teachers cared and supported their success in class. This change in their perceptions strengthened the student's reading and writing confidence. The teacher-student relationships helped the students to feel good about themselves and their ability as readers and writers and, therefore, reshaping the students' literate identities. This study supports Dillon's (1989) and Moje's (1996) findings on teacher-student relationship's importance to literacy learning and academic achievement. However, Dillon and Moje looked at the teachers' perceptions of how they built relationships with students that supported students' literacy processes and learning. While this study extends the understanding of teacher-student relationships from the students' position because the students recognized the effort that teachers made to help them be successful in their mainstream English class. Also, students responded to these relationships not just in terms of learning but telling us as literate people.

Teacher-student relationships build on trust and respect cultivated during the learning experience, and it is what the teachers do that supports this relationship building. Teachers make time and space for opportunities to develop relationships. All students, adolescents in particular, look to teachers to understand who they are and provide experiences and support to build them into better readers and writers. Students, in this study, recognized that the decisions teachers make are in their best interest.

Teacher use of discussion is one way to build trust. Students need opportunities to talk to express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Teachers implement large group discussions to expose students to a wide diversity of positions helped by fellow classmates and stimulate conversations (Dillon, 1986). Teachers use discussion to scaffold and build talk so as to inform students (Moje, 1996; Ruddell & Unrau, 2004). Also, teachers use small groups to encourage student collaboration on projects and discussion to promote understanding necessary to complete the tasks (Alvermann, et. al, 1996). In this study, students recognized these instructional decisions as representative of good teaching, and this built students' trust in the teacher. When students experienced acceptance of their ideas and opinions, as opposed to ridicule, they felt safe with classroom talk. They enjoyed the opportunities to talk and had less discomfort when expressing personal or unsure thoughts. Such, discussions, enabled students to make new friends and learn new ideas that contributed to a restructuring of their literate self with a new found security.

Not only are relationships with teachers important, so are connections with students that build acceptance and credibility as members of content classroom. In this study, adolescents who struggled with literacy admired and respected classmates who had

always been members of mainstream content classes. They looked upon those classmates as being more knowledgeable in reading and writing and pursued them as a resource through relationships to support their success in school. This support not only informed the participants reading and writing knowledge, but also cultivated acceptance and the identity of being a member of the classroom community. Such is the case as shown in Sandra's comments discussing how working with students' who were good writers influenced her ability to write. "Like, they make [your] confidence boost, boost your confidence, like they push you to you know, go harder so you know, if they can do it, you know you feel like you can." (Interview III, 1/20/2005, lines 104-105). This form of relationship building reshapes adolescents' literate identity and puts aside beliefs of being a struggling reader and writer. Adolescences seek an identity of being just another student like everyone else in the class.

The findings of the present study are similar to Alvermann, et al.'s (1996) research examining talk and class discussion as a way to understand how talk impacts adolescents' identities as readers and writers. Like the students in Alvermann, et al.'s study, these students preferred small group discussions that afforded more opportunities to talk and less risk expressing opinions. Additionally, this study noted similar findings in that students see discussion as helpful in understanding what they read, especially by listening to each other, and voicing opinions (Alvermann, et al). The findings of the present study also revealed that there are consequences when teachers do not provide students with opportunities, a finding consistent with Broughton and Fairbanks (2003). Broughton and Fairbanks (2003) found that a decrease in opportunities to talk, express

personal thoughts, and explore literacy in personal ways impact students self-perceptions negatively in both their sense of being literate and their personal identities.

Relationship building can be equally as important as the strength of literacy practices and strategy use to foster content English knowledge, as well as reading and writing skills (Moje, 1996). The students in this study acknowledged strategies as effective and useful and continued to use them as a part of their ways to be successful as readers and writers. The students discussed how their teachers encouraged strategy practice. Furthermore, they also described how their teachers incorporated strategy instruction that enhanced the content knowledge of curriculum and facilitated their understanding. In the same way, the teacher in Moje's study cared deeply about her students' successes and searched for literacy strategies to promote her students' success in her class. She modeled and encouraged the use of specific literacy activities. The students in both studies recognized their teachers' support and implemented the strategies as a part of their literacy practice in the content classrooms.

The building of trust also occurs with the writing experience in the classroom. By teachers providing different and greater opportunities to write, students in this study reflected and reshaped their sense of who they are as writers. Also journal writing, personal and class-assigned, gave students a venue to express their personal thoughts and practice the process of writing to convey them. The student's viewed journal writing as more forgiving in the reshaping of who they were as writers because grammar and spelling ability was not valued but their ideas were. It also gave these adolescents the opportunity to connect with themselves and express from their own personal base. Similarly, Oates's (2001) findings showed that students' beliefs, understandings, and

meanings informed their written language as well as relationships that influenced, were influenced by their literacy practices, or a combination of both.

Writing projects and longer formal assignments are also opportunities for the adolescents to express themselves, but the demand and expectations of writing can be overwhelming if students do not feel secure. For students in this study, being able to use writing strategies for specific purposes, organize and develop essays, and integrate and defend their own ideas in writing, reshaped their perceptions as writers who previously saw themselves capable of only single sentences or short paragraphs. As writing assignments and projects became more complex and demanding, students were more willing to face the rigor and take risks with their writing when they knew they have teachers' support. When teachers provided opportunities to students to use newly acquired strategies, have conversations about their ideas, and express their feelings and knowledge in writing, students continued to pursue these academic experiences and feel better about who they are as literate people. O'Brien et al. (2001) similarly found that students willingly engage in activities that help them express, construct and affirm their literate identities, especially in an environment looked upon as being safe to reveal themselves and take risks with their literacies.

Reflective, planful thinking

The reflective, planful thinking that led to the students setting and achieving the goals, reshaped students' identities in a cyclical manner. The conversations themselves between the interviewer and the participants provoked the process of goal setting and generated personal interest and focus. This metacognitive activity of asking questions about goals was set up because of the interview experience. As goals were achieved,

students experienced success and their literate identity was reshaped. As part of the interviews at the beginning of the study, students established goals to do the work to be successful in the mainstream class even though they had expressed concerns about the perceived difficult content, increase in work quantity, insufficient time to complete tasks, greater teacher expectations, and limited access to network support. Not surprisingly, they expressed concerns about the unknown mainstream English class experience in general. During the course of the study, students talked about what they were doing and not doing to be successful. Maintaining their goals were facilitated by the reshaping of the literate identities, and recursively, their perceived stronger literacy abilities fostered the achievement of their goals.

Like the children in Young and Beach's (1997) study, the adolescents, in this study described themselves as being literate, capable readers and writers. Both the children and the adolescents had an analogous perception of their literate identities as a sense of competence. This self-perceived competence is an integral part of self-efficacy and students' engagement in goal setting (Bandura, 1993). Students' feelings of competence were enhanced by how they viewed themselves as members of the class. In this study, the students conveyed a sense of comfort and identity with the other students who had always been members of the mainstream class—just another student like everyone else in the class. For the seniors in this study, this was a remarkable reconceptualtization of personally not identifying themselves as struggling readers and writers because most had been in support classes for two to three years. As shown in Young and Beach's study, just as the children's views of their literate identity included a

sense of themselves in relation to the social world of the elementary classroom, so too, did the adolescents' perceptions as literate members of the mainstream English class.

Understanding Adolescent Literacy in Their Own Lives

Overall, the students' perceptions of their literacy theory did not change during the course of the study. However, subtle shifts in several areas of the students' theory supported their change in literate identity. The students' literacy theories embodied a resiliency and adaptability necessary to meet the ever-changing contexts of the English classrooms during the transition. The students' beliefs and knowledge as to who they are as readers and writers was impacted by their different experiences in the material and social world of school (Gee, 1996). Each of their literacy acts was embedded in a network of social relations with teachers, students, and friends that was specific to the context of the two English classes, thus explaining the important role relationships played in the students' transition experience to attain their goals. This social construction of literacy occurred as students used literacy in the specific contexts of the support reading class and the mainstream English class for specific purposes (Scribner & Cole, 1981). Their beliefs and understandings explained and supported the literate activities they engaged in as a way of mediating their world (Wertsch, 1991).

The students' subtle shifts in their literacy theory, even though small, continued to explain and support their literate identity. First in reference to what counts as literacy, students commented more frequently about their abilities and opportunities to express themselves during the interview discussions of the mainstream class writing artifacts than during those talks about the support class projects. Secondly, as to how one becomes literate, students' beliefs in strategy use shifted to a greater emphasis on reading and

writing more which reflected the increased amount and rigor of writing demands of the mainstream English class and their ability to succeed in those writing tasks. Lastly, at the end of the study, students conveyed an increase in their belief that literacy functions as a way to demonstrate their competency through the connection of attaining their goals and the reshaping literate identity. Like the students in Young and Beach's (1997) study, these adolescents discussed their literacy theories as social, strategic, and requiring active participation in their literacy learning. Their literacy theory was personal, complex, and adaptable to the fluidity of both English classrooms. Therefore, the students' sense of being literate also worked for them, both in their literacy practices and achievement of their goals.

Implications and Future Research

The implications from this study are significant for the adolescents' sense of being literate and their academic success. Because transition experiences reshape a student's sense of being literate, those who structure the transition and participate in the transition have a responsibility and vested interest in how the transition transpired, especially in the case of struggling adolescents who are at risk of failure. Therefore, the implications of this study involve several groups, beginning with teachers. As revealed in the study, relationships were an important in the reshaping of the students' literate identities. What teachers do and do not do to support students, influences students' perceptions of their abilities to achieve academic success. It is important for teachers to look at how their literacy practices build relationships. Future research is needed to investigate what teachers do to respond and adjust their teaching practices beyond extended time or shortening assignments to support these diverse students' successes in

school, as well as what happens to the student if support is removed. Further staff development is needed to create networks to facilitate literacy success for those struggling readers and writers within content classrooms.

Also, it is important to find out how students' practices impact literacy education by asking them. Students need to have opportunities to set goals and to discuss these goals with teachers as to what is needed to achieve them. These goal setting conversations contribute to students' reshaping of their literate identities, which in turn, supports the attainment of the goals. Staff development is needed as to how to find out students' identities and interests as well as recognize and incorporate them within the course content and curriculum.

Because site administrators are responsible for local decisions impacting teachers and students, they, too, influence the relation building that is so important to student's identity and success. How administrators value literacy, beyond mandated testing, determines school-wide attitudes and beliefs about reading and writing. It is important for school administrators, specifically principals, to recognize and implement literacy support for students who struggle with reading and writing, especially those students who support network is changed. Hiring and encouraging the support network provided by literacy coaches, English language learner coordinators, and special education coaches, as well as communication systems between content teachers is one way to foster relationships that build trust and success.

The same holds true for district administrators. As in this study, changes in curriculum, even when a product of federal mandates, administrators need to consider how such changes may impact students' perceptions as readers, writer, and learners. It is

important for district administrators to be aware of their district-wide literacy agenda, especially as to how it impacts students as readers and writers as they move up from school to school. They also need to take into account what is necessary to facilitate any restructuring of students' literate identities that may take place so that the end is positive and fits into the adolescents' perceptions of who they are in the world and their literate lives. In this study, student said that relationships, opportunities to talk and express their ideas, and opportunities to practice their multiliteracies as a means of demonstrating their competence and personal thoughts reshaped their literate identities in positive ways, most importantly, as academic achievement. Administrators, both local and district level, need to consider class size and contact time so teachers and students can develop relationships and jointly construct and participate in a social action perspective of reading, writing, and talk that are immersed within shaping influences of school (Moore, 1996).

This research focused on the adolescences' perceptions of their sense of being literate in the academic context. In this study, students did not discuss their out-of-school literacies. Instead, academic literacy was the most important. Out-of-school literacy needs to be recognized and incorporated into the school, so as to expand students' opportunities to express and validate their sense of being literate (Alvermann, 1998).

Limitations

It is important to address the limitations of this study. One such limitation was the length of the study. Student's perceptions were collected over one semester. Identifying and comparing students' perceptions in the mainstream content English class during the entire two semesters of the academic school year, would permit more opportunity to see how established the identity changes were. Also students' perceptions

of their support reading class and their sense of being literate were collected after the summer recess. Students' recollections were not as detailed and rich as those expressed during their participation in the content English class. Because experiences in the support reading class would have just been ending, an interview with students at the end of the preceding spring semester may have been more informative.

Another area of interest is students' sense of being literate in other disciplines. This study looked at English classes. If the discipline itself influences how a student defines reading and writing, it may also impact how students think about literacy. Content courses vary greatly in vocabulary, textbook construction, and the comprehension skill used with each discipline. Educators would benefit from understanding if students' literacy theories and identities differ from discipline to discipline and how this impacts teaching practices.

Another limitation of the study involved looking solely at students' perceptions. Observations of the students while participating in the content English class could support or explain contradictions in students' literacy perceptions. This also would give the opportunity to observe the teacher-student and student-student interactions that impacted the students' sense of being literate.

Summary

In conclusion, a transition experience from a support reading class to a mainstream content English class affects students' perceptions of their sense of being literate. It is necessary for educators to be aware and understand how adolescents perceive their complex literacy processes and practices as they develop and change in multiple contexts, times, and spaces. Adolescents' sense of being literate is complex,

dynamic and far from constant in terms of confidence, relationships, and as members of the community of literacy (Young and Beach, 1997). In an era of externally mandated reforms, this study informs educators who want to help struggling adolescents who are at risk of failure, by looking at what support the student sees as effective and what happens is support is removed. This study increases the understanding of the student's sense of being literate and perception of being successful in school especially in classes with high literacy demands. This research shows the diverse ways students perceive their sense of being literate in different English classes and the need to address the implications of adolescent's multiple literacies for classroom instruction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Interview Questions I, II, III

Interview I Questions

Background and retrospective class experiences

1. What learning experiences in English-Reading were the most enjoyable for you? Why?
   (Possible probes: helpful class environment; oral vs. silent reading; projects, individual writing vs. small group; texts, fiction, nonfiction, plays, discussions)
2. What about the English-Reading class did you not like? Why?
   (Possible probes: the teacher; English as a course; necessary reading; class environment, students)
3. How did English-Reading contribute to your being successful in school?
4. How would you describe yourself as a member of the English-Reading class? What did you contribute?
5. If you could have changed one thing about English-Reading, what would it be? Why?
6. How were you able to express who you were and your personal thoughts, opinions and beliefs in English-Reading class? *(McCarthey & Moje, 2002)*
7. Are you a reader outside of school? If yes, tell me about it? If no, why not?
8. How do you feel about changing from English-Reading to regular English class?
9. How would you describe yourself as a reader in the English-Reading class? What characteristics do you have? What characteristics are you lacking? What do you need to have to achieve those characteristics, skills, and abilities? (*McCarthey & Moje, 2002)*
10. If you consider anything you write down during class as writing, how would you describe yourself as a writer in English-Reading class?
11. Who do you admire or respect as a classmate that could help you with an English assignment? Why? *(McCarthey & Moje, 2002)*
12. Describe your experiences working with other students in a group to do an assignment in English-Reading?

13. If you were told that you would have 30 minutes of free time in English class the next day, what would you bring or plan to do during this time?

Expectations

1. What do you think will be different about your English class this year as compared to English-Reading? Why?

2. What do you think will be the same? Why?

3. What concerns do you have about being successful in English class? (Possible probes: Think about the stuff you're having to read? About the stuff you will have to write about?)

Goals

1. What are your goals for your English class? Why

2. Are they the same or different than those you had for English-Reading? Why?

3. What are you going to do to be successful on a daily basis; weekly? (Probes: organization; studying; listening; participating; effort)

4. You are in ___ grade. What do you see yourself doing after high school?

5. What will you do to help you be able to do what you just described?

Artifact selection and discussion

Here is what I am going to say to the student: Pick out a project from your English-Reading portfolio you would like to talk about.

After they choose the artifact, I will ask:
1. Tell me a little about this project?

2. Why did you choose this project to share with me?

3. So tell me how you went about doing this?

4. What do you think is the best part of this project? Why?

5. What did you learn by doing this project?

In preparation for the next interview, I will ask the students:
Before our next interview, please pick out a project from your English class you can talk about and bring it with you. I will send you a reminder.

Interview II Questions

Class experiences

1. What learning experiences in English class are you enjoying the most? Why?

2. What learning experiences are the most meaningful to you right now in

3. English class? Why?

3. What don't you like about the class? Why?

4. What is the most frustrating? Why?

5. If you could change one thing about English class right now, what would it be? Why?

6. How would you describe yourself as a member of the class?

7. What do you contribute?

8. Who helps or contributes to your understanding? Why is that important?

9. How are you able to express your personal thoughts, opinions and beliefs in English class?

10. Are you reader outside of school? If yes, tell me about it? If no, why not?

11. How would you describe yourself as a reader in English class? What characteristics do you have? What characteristics are you lacking? What do you need to have to achieve those characteristics, skills, and abilities?

12. Think about yourself writing in English class. How would you describe yourself as a writer?

13. Whom do you admire or respect as a classmate that could help you with an English assignment? Why?

14. Describe your experience working in a group to complete an assignment?

15. How does it compare working in a group in English-Reading?

Expectations

1. How is your English class different from English-Reading? Why?

2. What is the same? Why?
3. What concerns are you having about being able to be successful in English? What are you finding hard or difficult?

Goals

1. In the last interview you mentioned _____ as goals for English class; have they changed? If yes, what are they now? Why did they change?

2. What are you doing to be successful on a daily basis? Weekly basis?

Artifact discussion

1. Tell me a little about this project.

2. Why did you choose this project to share with me?

3. So tell me how you went about doing this?

4. What do you think is the best part of this project? Why?

5. During the last interview, you said that _____ was the best part of your English-Reading project. How do these two projects compare as being successful for you?

6. What did you learn by doing this English class project?

7. During the last interview, you said you learned _____ by doing your English-Reading project. Tell me how these two learning experiences compare?

8. You mentioned _____ as some of your life goals after high school. How have these things you have learned doing the projects helped you to get closer to your future goals?

Before our next interview, please pick out a project from your English class you can talk about and bring it with you. I will send you a reminder.

Interview III Questions

Class experiences

1. Now that the first semester is over, give me one word that would best describe the transition from English-Reading to regular English?

2. What about the transition do you feel was good, or it worked for you? Why?

3. What didn't work for you? Why?

4. Did you have to do anything differently this semester as compared to English-Reading to be successful? Tell me about it. Will you continue to do it? Why or why not?

5. What advice or recommendations could you give the school administration to make this kind of transition better for you or for future students who face a similar change?

6. During the previous interviews, you described yourself as a member of the English-Reading class and as a member of the regular English class in several ways. How has this transition affected your feelings about being in a regular class instead of a support class?

7. During the previous interview, you talked about contributing to the English-Reading class and the regular English class? How has this transition affected your feelings about contributing in a class like English-Reading as compared to regular class like English?

8. Did your reading outside of school change? If yes, tell me about it? If no, why not?

9. During the previous interviews, you described yourself as a _____ reader. Have any of these characteristics changed? If yes, why do you think this change occurred? What about the characteristics you said you were lacking?

10. During the previous interviews, you described yourself as a _____ writer. Have any of these characteristics changed? If yes, why do you think this change occurred? What about the characteristics you said you were lacking?

11. During the previous interviews, you mentioned you admired or respected _____ because he/she could help you with an English assignment. What characteristics about this person made you feel this way?

Goals

1. Did you meet your goals for English class? If yes, what was the easiest to do? What was the most difficult? If no, why not?

2. During previous interviews, you mentioned that you were doing _____ on a daily basis to be successful? Did those plans work? If yes, why? If no, why not? What about on a weekly basis?

3. Now that you have finished a semester of regular English, do you think you could have made the transition sooner, as your own choice instead of school policy? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Artifact discussion

9. Tell me a little about this project?

10. Why did you choose this project to share with me?

11. So tell me how you went about doing this?

12. What do you think is the best part of this project? Why?

13. What did you learn by doing this English class project?

14. During the discussions we have had about your projects, you have said that you learned _____things from each project. How will these things help you next semester in English? Why?

15. Since learning these things, how could you help a classmate with an English assignment? What do you see as your best qualities as an English student that could help others with their assignments?

Appendix B
Personal note format

Date

Dear

Thanks for your help with my interviews last week. How are things going in English class this week? What did you read or write about during your last class? Tell me about something that was interesting or funny in the class? If it happened to you or another student, let me know also? Please leave your note for me in the folder on the wall in the front of the English-Reading classroom (S612) or give it to Ms. Billie Scott and ask her to put it in my mailbox. Please put it in the envelope that I have included with this note. You can write your message to me on the bottom of this page or use your own paper. Remember, you can also email me at (kakey@norman.k12.ok.us) if you want use a computer instead of writing a paper note.

I'm really looking forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Ms. Akey

Appendix C
Recruitment memo

To:

From: Ms. Akey, Literacy Resource Teacher and Ms. Perry, Counselor

You are invited to participate in a research project that is looking at your understanding of the way you read, write and talk in your current English class and your class last year, English-Reading. A brief meeting to discuss the study will meet Wednesday, September 15, 2004 at 11:40 a.m. during overtime in the Literacy Resource classroom S612 (the old English-Reading classroom). This meeting will last approximately 15 minutes. I would appreciate your help in doing this study because of your special knowledge of being in the English-Reading course last year. Thank you

Appendix D
Script for participant recruitment

I am _____, a counselor here at North. I am representing Ms. Akey. Your change of English class from English-Reading to regular English is an event that only you, as a previous English-Reading student, can explain as a student's experience. You are invited to participate in the study called "English Class Transition and the Adolescent's Sense of Literacy." Literacy in this way is referring to the way students read, write, and speak. This study will look at like how students, like yourselves, who experience two different types of English classes, talk about reading, writing and speaking.

As part of the project, Ms. Akey will interview students three times about their reading and writing experiences. Interviews will take place in this room, S612. Interviews will usually last about 30 to 60 minutes. Ms. Akey would like to audiotape interviews so that what you say can be looked at more closely. No one, but Ms. Akey will listen to the tapes. You will have the opportunity to choose three projects that you would like to talk about during the interviews (one from English-Reading and two from regular English.) You will also be asked to write or e-mail her a personal note on each Thursday between interviews to give you an opportunity to express your feelings, reactions, and reflections about your mainstream class for that specific day. It is important for you to understand that if you choose to participate you will agree to be interviewed at the choice of being audio taped. You will also be agreeing to let her keep copies of your projects, including class work from your regular English class.

Your participation is voluntary. This means you have a choice to do the interviews or not. You also have the choice to not answer any question that you don't want to answer. You may refuse to participate without any penalty or loss of any educational privileges that you now experience which means you will not lose any opportunity at school if you decide you do not want to participate.

Protecting your rights and privacy is extremely important to Ms. Akey. Your name will only appear on the agreement form you will receive from me, the counselor. If you choose to participate, you will choose or be given a pseudonym that will be used to track all your information. Pseudonym means a false name or a name to disguise what your real name is. In any reports of this research, there will be no mention of your real name, or the school's real name. Confidentiality will be maintained in all reports of this study, which means Ms. Akey will only know your true identity. Pseudonyms or made-up names will be used in any and all reporting of the information collected during the study.

Please read this silently as I read it aloud to you. (The counselor will read the parent/guardian cover letter and permission form.) This form must be returned to me, _____ at Student Services in the next two days.

If you have any questions, I will be happy to answer them. Ms. Akey appreciates your time and wants me to thank you.

Appendix E
Forms

PARENTAL/LEGAL GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM FOR RESEARCH BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Kristine Akey. I was your student's English teacher at Norman North last year, and this year I am the Literacy Resource teacher. I am also a doctoral student under the direction of Professor Sara Ann Beach in the Department of Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum at the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus. I would like to invite your student at Norman North High School to participate in a research study called "English Class Transition and the Adolescent's Sense of Being Literate". I am trying to find out in what ways your student sees himself or herself as a reader, writer and speaker in two different English classrooms. In particular, I am interested in how your student describes his/her experiences as a reader, writer, and speaker as a member of the English classroom.

BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The change of English classes from English-Reading to regular English is an event that only your student, as a previous English-Reading student can explain as a student's experience. Current research describes adolescents as having multiple literacies and multiple ways of knowing and understanding. Your student's description of this experience of changing classes as a reader and writer is important to me both as a teacher and researcher to give him/her the opportunity to express his/her feelings in the form of research.

As part of the project, I will interview the students in the Language/literacy classroom (the old English-Reading classroom) three times during and at the end of the fall semester about their reading and writing experiences in English class. Interviews will last between 30 to 60 minutes. Interviews will be audio taped so that I can analyze data more closely. Your student will have the opportunity to choose three projects that he/she would like to talk about during the interviews. I would like to collect and keep copies of the discussed projects: one from English-Reading and two from regular English. I will also ask your student to write me a personal note on each Thursday between interviews to give the student an opportunity to express his/her feelings, reactions, and reflections about the mainstream class for that specific day.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Your student's participation is voluntary. Your student may refuse to participate without any penalty or loss of any educational privileges that he/she now experiences. Also, your student may stop his/her participation at any time without any penalty or loss of privileges. If your student chooses not to participate or to withdraw from this study, no other data will be gathered on him/her.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Protecting your student's confidentiality is extremely important to me. Every effort will be made to provide complete confidentiality for your student. Your student's name will only appear on his/her assent form. Each participant will choose or be given a pseudonym that will be used to track all data. This made up name will protect your student's confidentiality. In any reports of this research, there will be no mention of your student's name, the teacher's name or the school's name. Confidentiality will be maintained in all reports of this study. Further, all data will be kept in a locked place. All identifying marks will be removed from the data and pseudonyms will be used in any and all reporting of the data. All tapes and other data with your information on them will be destroyed at the end of the project, or within three years, whichever comes first.

AUDIO TAPING OF INTERVIEWS

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews will be recorded on an audio recording device. Participants have the right to refuse to all such taping without penalty. If your student does not consent to audiotaping, he/she still will be interviewed and notes will be taken.

RISKS/BENEFITS

There is no perceived physical or psychological danger to your student that would result from his/her participation in this study. The benefit is that your student will have the opportunity to express how he/she sees himself/herself as a reader, writer, speaker, and member of two different English classes over time.

Your student's participation will provide valuable insights into how students feel about reading, writing, and speaking as a member of different English classes. I will share my findings in research papers with others who are interested in understanding how students see and describe their ways of being readers, writers and speakers in different English classes and maybe this will help educators design future classes and curricula.

Please complete and return the permission form on the next page as to your agreeing or not agreeing to your student's participating in this project. Please keep these first two pages for your information.

If you have any questions about this project, you can contact Ms. Kristine Akey (366-5459 or christinelakey@ou.edu or my advisor, Dr. Sara Ann Beach (325-1498) or sbeach@ou.edu. Questions about your rights as a research participant or concerns about the project should be directed to the Institutional Review Board at the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus as (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

I thank you for considering your student's participation in this project.

Sincerely,

_____

Kristine Akey
Dept. of ILAC
University of Oklahoma

Parental/Legal Guardian Permission Form
for participation in research that is being conducted
under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus
page 3*

_____ I give permission for my student to participate in the project called "English Class Transition and the Adolescent's Sense of Being Literate" that is taking place with Ms. Kristine Akey at Norman North High School.

_____ I give permission for my student to be audiotaped for interviews.

_____ I don't give permission for my student to be audiotaped for interviews.

_____ I do not agree to participate in the project called "English Class Transition and the Adolescent's Sense of Being Literate" that is taking place with Ms. Kristine Akey at Norman North High School.

Student's Name: _____

PLEASE PRINT

Your Signature: _____

* Please have the student return this page to _____, the counselor after you have filled it out.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH THAT IS BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

Dear Student:

I invite you to participate in a study called "English Class Transition and the Adolescent's Sense of Being Literate" that is taking place with me, Ms. Kristine Akey during the 2004-2005 school year at Norman North High School. I am trying to find out in what ways you see yourself as a reader, writer and speaker in two different English classrooms. In particular I am interested in how you describe your experiences as a reader, writer, and speaker as a member of the English classroom.

BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Your change of English class from English-Reading to regular English is an event that only you, as a previous English-Reading student can explain from a student's perspective. Current research describes adolescents as having many kinds of reading and writing experiences called literacies and multiple ways of knowing things and understanding things. How you describe this experience of changing classes as a reader and writer is important to me both as a teacher and researcher to give you the opportunity to express your feelings in the form of research.

As part of the project, I will interview students in the Language/literacy classroom (the old English-Reading classroom) three times during and at the end of the fall semester about their reading and writing experiences in English class. Interviews will last between 30 to 60 minutes. Interviews will be audiotaped so that I can study what students say more closely. You will have the opportunity to choose three projects that you would like to talk about during the interviews. I would like to collect and keep copies of the discussed projects: one from English-Reading and two from regular English. I will also ask you to write me a personal note on each Thursday between interviews to give you an opportunity to express your feelings, reactions, and reflections about your mainstream class for that specific day.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary. This means you have the choice to do the study or not to do the study. You may refuse to participate without any penalty or loss of any educational privileges that you now experience. Also, you may stop your participation at any time without any penalty or loss of privileges. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from this study, you will not be audio-taped, and no other data will be gathered on you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Protecting your confidentiality is extremely important to me. This means your privacy and what you say to me. Your name will appear only on this consent form. Each student will choose or be given a pseudonym that will be used to track all your data. A pseudonym is a false or made up name to protect a person's identity. None of your teachers will have access to anything you say. In any reports of this research, there will be no mention of your name, teacher's name or the school's name. Confidentiality will be maintained in all reports of this study. Further, all data will be kept in a locked place. All identifying marks will be removed from the data and pseudonyms will be used in any and all reporting of the data. All tapes and other data with your information on them will be destroyed at the end of the project, or within three years, whichever comes first.

AUDIO TAPING OF INTERVIEWS

To help me with accurate recording of what you say as a participant, interviews will be recorded on an audio recording device. You as a participants have the right to refuse to all such taping without penalty. If you do not consent to audiotaping, you still will be interviewed and notes will be taken.

RISKS/BENEFITS

There is no perceived or real physical or psychological danger to you that would result from participation in this study. The benefit is that you will have the opportunity to express how you see yourself as a reader, writer, speaker, and member of two different English classes over time.

Your participation will give me an important picture how students feel about reading, writing, and speaking as a member of different English classes. I will share my findings in research papers with others who are interested in understanding how students see and describe their ways of being readers, writers and speakers in different English classes and maybe this will help educators design future classes and curricula.

Please complete and return the form on the next page and mark whether you agree or not agree to participate in this project. Please keep these first two pages for you information.

If you have any questions about this project, you can contact Ms. Kristine Akey (366-5459 or christinelakey@ou.edu or my advisor, Dr. Sara Ann Beach (325-1498) or sbeach@ou.edu. Questions about your rights as a research participant or concerns about the project should be directed to the Institutional Review Board at the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus as (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

I thank you for considering being a participant in this project. I value your ideas and experiences.

Sincerely,

_____

Kristine Akey
Dept. of ILAC
University of Oklahoma

Informed Consent Form for Student 18 Years Of Age or Older
For participation in research that is being conducted
Under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus
page 3*

_____ I agree to participate in the project called "English Class Transition and the Adolescent's Sense of Being Literate" that is taking place with Ms. Kristine Akey at Norman North High School.

_____ I agree to be audiotaped for interviews.

_____ I don't agree to be audiotaped for interviews.

_____ I do not agree to participate in the project called "English Class Transition and the Adolescent's Sense of Being Literate" that is taking place with Ms. Kristine Akey at Norman North High School.

Your Name: _____

PLEASE PRINT

Your Signature: _____

* Please return this page to _____, the counselor after you have filled it out.

Appendix F
Spanish translation of cover letter and permission forms

Permiso legal dirigido a tutores y padres de familia para llevar acabo una investigación supervisada por el Campus de la Universidad de Oklahoma

Padres o Tutores:

Me llamo Krstyne Akey. Fuí maestro de inglés de su hijo el año pasado en Norman North, y este año soy la maestro de Literacy Resource. También estoy estudiando el doctorado bajo la dirección y ensenanaza de la Profesora Sara Ann Beach en el departamento de dirección instruccional y plan de estudios academicos de la Universidad de Oklahoma en Norman. Me gustaria inviter a su hijo a participar en un estudio de investigacion llamado " Clases de inglés, transición y prespectiva del adolecente del saber leer y escribir". Mi trabajo es analizar la manera en que el estudiante refleja a si mismo sus conocimeintos como lector, escritor y parlante en estas dos clases diferentes de inglés.
En particular, me interesa ver como los estudiantes describen sus experiencias al ser escritores, parlantes y lectores dentro de la clase de ingles.

Descripción e Información del Estudio

La experiencia de cambiar de clases de Inglés lectura a Inglés regular sólo nos la puede explicar el alumno que has formado parte de este cambio. Las investigaciones muestran como los adolescents hoy en día tienen diferentes niveles de redacción, lectura, y expressión también exhibien múltiples niveles de entendiemiento y conocimientos. La información que su hijo nos dé en esta clase como lector y escritor son importantes para mi como maestro, asi como el darles la oportunidad de expresar sus impresiones en este estudio.

Parte del proyecto consiste en entrevistar a los estudiantes tres veces durante y al final del semester aceraca de sus impresiones al estar escribeindo y leyendo en esta clase de inglés. Las entrevistas durararn entre 30 y 60 minutos, y estas serán audiograbadas para poder analizar los datos deltalladamente. El estudiante podrá escoger tres temas de los cúales hablaramos en estas entrvistas. Me gusaria archivar copias de los temas discutidos en ambas clases. Los estudiantes entregaran cada jueves una nota personal sobre sus impresiones, reacciones y relfexiones sobre la clase de ese día.

Condicones para Pariticipar

La participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria, el estudiante no sera sancionado por no participar. Este podrá dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin ningún tipo de represa lia y sin perder privilegios. Si el estudiante decide dejar de participar en este estudio en ese momento se dejarán de tomar mas datos sobre él / ella.

Privacidad

La proteccion confidencial de los estudiantes es estremadamente importante para mi. Haré todo lo possible para dar completa privacidad al estudiante. El nombre de su estudiante aparecerá unicamente en su forma de asentamiento, cada participante escogerá o se le asignará un pseudonimo que ser usado para mantener el anon imato de los datos, de esta manera la privacidad del estudiante será respetada. Los reportes de esta investigación no mencionarán los nombres de los estudiantes, del maestro ni de la escuela, tenga la seguirdad que la privacidad se mantendra en todos los reportes de este estudio. Además todos los datas se mantendrán en un lugar confidencial. Todas las marcas identificables seran removidas de los datos y los pseudónimos seran usados en todos y cada uno de los datos reportados. Todas las cintas y otros datos con se información se destruirán al final del proyecto o en un termino de tres años.

Grabado de las Entreviastas

Para tener mas precisión en est investigación, se grabarán las respuestas de los participantes, es decir, las entrevistas seran grabadas en cintas de audio. Los participantes tienen derecho a negarse en culaquier momento y sin ningun problema. Sis u estudiante no autoriza que se grabe su entrevista, entonces cuando él o ella sean entrevistados se tomarán notas.

Riegos / Beneficios

No se has reportado ningún daño fisico ni psicologico que pueda afectar al estubiante como reslutado de la participación en este estudio. Un beneficio es que su estudiante tendra la oportunidad de expresar como se proyecta como escritor, lector, parlante e integrante de dos diferentes clases de inglés.
La participación de su estudiante dara valiosa información sobre como se siente al estar escribiendo, leyendo, hablando en dos diferentes clases. Compartire los resultados de mis investigaciones con quienes esten interesados en aprender y comprendrer como los estudiantes se desarrollan dentro de estos cambios al ser lectores, escritores y parlantes en las diferentes clases de inglés, y quiza esto ayude a los educadores a diseñar major sus clases y sus planes de estudio en el furturo.

Por favor llene y regrese la forma de permiso en la pagina siguiente este o no este de acuerdo con la participación de su estudiante en este proyecto. Por favor conserve las dos primeras páginas para su información.

Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de este proyecto, usted puede contractor a la Señora Kristie Akey tel. 366-5459 o christinelakey@ou.edu, o a con mi consejero Dr. Sara Ann Beach (325-1498) o en sbeach@ou.edu.
Si tiene preguntas acerca de sus derechos, como participante de la investigación o acerca del ptoyecto vaya directamente al Intitutional Review Board en la Universidad de Oklahoma Campus Norman (405) 325 8110 o irb@ou.edu.

Lie agradezco la participación de su hijo/ hija en este proyecto.

Sinceranmente

_____
Kristine Akey
Dept. of ILAC
University of Oklahoma

Permiso legal dirigido a tutores y padres de familia para llevar acabo una investigación conducida por el Campus de la Universidad de Oklahoma.

Página 3*

_____ Doy permiso a mi hijo/hija de participar en el proyecot llamado " Clases de inglés, transición y prespectiva del adolecente del saber leer y escribir", que esta llevando acabo la Senora Kristine Akey en las Escuela Preparatoria Norman Norte.

_____ Yo autorizo que las entreviastas de mi hijo sean grabadas en cintas de audio.

_____ Yo no autorizo que las entrevistas de mi hijo sean grabadas en cintas de audio.

_____ Yo no estoy de acuerdo en participar en este proyecto llamado "Clases de inglés, transición y prespectiva del adolescente del saber leer y escribir".

Normbre complete del Alumno _____

Su firma _____

*Por favor, el alumno regersará esta pagina al consejero _____ después de haberla llenado.

Appendix G
Reminder note to return forms

To: Student's name
From: Ms. Akey
Date:

This is just a reminder to please return the forms concerning the study, "English Class Transition and the Adolescent's sense of being literate" that you received at the meeting on _____. It is important that your parent or guardian sign the form as to whether they will or will not agree to your participation in the study. If you are 18 years or older, please return that form. Remember to use the envelope that is provided. If you need another envelope, the counselor will provide one. Forms should be returned to _____, the counselor, in Student Services as soon as possible. If you have any questions, _____ will be happy to help. I am excited to start the study with you.

Appendix H
Code list

Summary of Coding Categories for Adolescents' Theories and Literate Identities

Question	Category	Sub-category	Definition/examples
What counts as literacy?	Reading		Ability to read with understanding different kinds of text
	Functional reading/ writing		Everyday reading/writing of print in the environment of life
	School reading/ writing		Any reading/writing done for school, homework, coursework
	Express self		Reveal through talk/writing about one's ideas and beliefs
	Knowledge		To have personal knowledge of literacy related content and how to do writing
How one becomes literate?	Practice reading/ writing		Doing reading/writing frequently to be good at it
	Help from others		Get help from more knowledgeable others with reading/writing
	Use reading/writing strategies		Implement a procedure or plan to succeed in reading/writing
	Interest		Having an interest in what

			one is reading and writing about
What qualities are admired/respected as a reader/writer?	Confident/capable		to demonstrate confidence and capability to read/write tasks; the ability to read/write easily
	Knows how to do it		ability to do reading/writing; information about the execution of literacy activities; procedural knowledge
	Has this particular knowledge of reading/writing		Knows how it's suppose to look like; belief about the task and ones' abilities; declarative knowledge
	Help others		More knowledgeable other willing to help share knowledge
What counts as text?	Literature		Literary genres; popular culture
	Structure of text		Grammar, syntax, as well as whole text/words
	Functional print		Print used to complete a task
	School text		Any written object used for instruction
How does literacy function in one's life?	Enjoyment		Reading/writing for enjoyment, entertainment, pleasure with self or others in and out of school

	Communication		Reading/writing to share information and/or knowledge within relationships, with self, in work
	Demonstrate competency		Reading/writing to show one's abilities, mastery, maturity
	Time fill-ins		Reading/writing done to fill in time; nothing else to do
	Express self		Rdg/wrtg to express, satisfy personal needs, emotions, creativity
How does one describe self as a reader?	Confident		Expressing belief in one's ability to read
	Not confident		Expressing lack of belief of own reading ability
	Skills/knowledge that show I have to support my confidence as reader	How I know it	Evidence provided or examples that illustrate "how I know"
		Use strategies	Implement procedure or plan to succeed in reading
		Vocabulary	Accurate word recognition of meaning in text/fluency
		Pace	Read at good pace to understand what I read
		Quantity	Read frequently and/or a lot

		School related	Successful in school reading activities
	Skills/knowledge that show I do not have to support my confidence as a reader	How I don't know it	Evidence provided or examples that illustrate "how I don't know"
		Vocabulary	Inaccurate word recognition of meaning in text/fluency
		Pace	Read at inadequate pace to understand what I read
		Quantity	Read infrequently or very little
		School related	Lack of success in school reading
	Interest/purpose		Why or what I read on my own
	Lack of interest/purpose		Why or what I don't read
How does one describe self as a writer?	Confident		Expressing belief in one's ability to write
	Not confident		Expressing lack of belief of own writing ability
	Skills/knowledge that show I have to support my confidence as writer	How I know it	Evidence provided or examples that illustrate "how I know"
		Use strategies	Implement procedure or plan to succeed in writing
	Skills/knowledge that I do not have to be a writer	How I don't know	Evidence provided or examples that illustrate "how I don't know"
		Quantity	Write

			infrequently
	Interest/purpose	Personal	Writing to fulfill personal emotions, communication
		Functional	Necessary or required writing to satisfy task
How does one describe self as a participant in group work?	Why I like it	Get help	Do better in group; like it; more to help, ideas
		Collaborate	Motivate each other to get it; come together
		Give help	Assist others to get it
		Can be leader	Inspire others, rise to occasion. contribute ideas
		Validate ideas	Ideas accept and affirmed
	Why I don't like it		Don't like to work in groups because others not as capable; don't listen to me; just don't like to participate
	Indifference		Group work doesn't influence self
How does one describe self in class activities?	Competent		Sees self as knowing what to do, how to read, working hard
	Not competent		Sees self as not knowing what to do, to read, to work hard
	Helper		Describe self as a helper
	Worker		Describe self as a worker
	Non-participant		Describe self as not participating

			in class
Describe ability to express one's ideas, thoughts, and opinions	How?		How I am capable of expressing myself
	Why?	Personal values	Influence of personal values; desire to express opinion
		Family influence	Parents' influence capability to express self
		Others influence	Influence of others on ability to express self
	When?		When I am able to express myself
	Inability to express personal ideas		Why I feel negative and here's why
What concerns one has to be successful in mainstream English?	Difficult content		Personal concerns about understanding literature, words, and assignments in mainstream English
	Teacher		Concern about teacher expectations of student's personal responsibility to do work
	Work quantity		Amount of work required
	Support		Support network less or different
	Time		Pace perceived as more demanding
	Confidence		Perception of success or failure

			in class
What actions are necessary to be successful?	What I'm doing to be successful	Do work	I have to do the work; pay attention
		Use note-taking strategies	Write notes to remember, organize thoughts
		Review/ repetition	Reread text to reinforce understanding
		Practice reading	Reading more often; more in quantity in and out of school
		Understand words	Do word study to increase accurate recognition of words in text/word fluency in reading/ writing
		Use writing strategies	Rewriting, more writing, conscious quality improvement
	What's working when I'm getting help		Support from more knowledgeable other, teacher, student
	What's not working for me to be successful	Doing the work	Not doing the work; paying attention
		Remembering	Not having recall
		Understand words	Inability to do word study to increase accurate recognition of words in text/word fluency in reading/writing
		Just don't	Not

		understand	understanding reading, writing, discussion
	What teacher is doing that get in the way		Methods, explanations confusing
	What is needed to be successful	Change in what teacher is doing	Class methods and instructional practices
		Review/repetition	Reread text to reinforce understanding
		More time	Need additional time to complete tasks
What is different/ similar between English-reading class & mainstream English?	Differences	Content/class procedures	Type of literature, words, assignments
		Difficulty	Coursework, reading, rigor, more difficult
		Students	Attitudes, behaviors of others in class
		Quantity	Amount of reading, writing, class work, effort
		Teacher	Behaviors, attitudes, expectations
	Similarities	Content/class procedures	Type of literature, assignments, organization
		Students	Attitudes, behaviors of others in class
		Support	Others more knowledgeable, still helping

Appendix I

Matrices

IDENTITY	INT - I	Pers Nt A	INT - II	Pers Nt B	INT - III	*CHANGE*
Describe self as reader						
Describe self as writer						
Describe self as participant in group						
Describe self in class activity						
Expressing one's ideas, thoughts, & opinions						
Concerns to be success mainstream regular English						
Differences/ similarities between Eng Rdg & reg English						

THEORY	INT - I	Pers Nt A	INT - II	Pers Nt B	INT - III	*CHANGE*
What counts as literacy						
How one becomes literate						
Qualities admired/ respected as reader/writer						
What counts as text						
How does literacy function in one's life						

SELF - EFFICACY	Int - I	Pers Nt A	INT - II	Pers Nt B	INT - III	*CHANGE*
Actions necessary to be successful						