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CONNECTING READER-RESPONSE THEORY, TEACHERS, AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

By

Susan Elizabeth Steffel

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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1993

ABSTRACT

CONNECTING READER-RESPONSE THEORY, TEACHERS, AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

By

Susan Elizabeth Steffel

Dr. Marilyn Wilson, Dissertation Director

Most previous research involving reader-response theory has centered on the theory itself or on how it influences student performance. My study uses the triangulation of three primary sources: professional journals, and modified case studies, including teacher questionnaires and follow-up interviews with ten secondary teachers. I traced the presence of reader-response theory in the journals Research in the Teaching of English, English Education, and English Journal. My questionnaire was based on the 1981 Purves study which found that classroom practices of teachers were greatly influenced by their own past experience and training. Through the teacher questionnaire and interview, I looked at individual reading, school, and professional histories, attempting to determine how these areas impacted their teaching. Additionally, I wanted to discover what, if any, external factors entered into this equation and how the teachers responded to them. Finally, I attempted to merge all of this information, discovering to what extent reader-response has influenced the secondary classrooms and what factors help to implement or impede its use.

Results showed that reader-response theory is appearing in these journals, although most articles focus on students. For those teachers not reading these journals, the reasons vary. Most apparent was a lack of concern on the part of school systems and the journals for the needs and continued professional growth of the teachers. Still, these teachers are finding ways to incorporate reader-response theory in their classrooms.

Overall, teachers felt frustrated, isolated, and pulled in different directions. Few were confident in their own teaching and indicated conflicting beliefs. Though aware of their students' need for continued learning and reflection, few were able to apply these to themselves. Forced to teach in a system that does not acknowledge their needs, I found, as did Purves, that these teachers fall back on those behaviors most comfortable to them and often model their classrooms on those they experienced as students.

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1993

To my husband, Andy,
who continuously provided the
support, encouragement, and understanding
I needed.

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Introduction

There has always been a continuing discussion over the teaching of literature in secondary classrooms involving a set of central issues. The crux of the disagreement seems to focus on three basic questions: what should be taught? how it should be taught? and why?

These central issues include discussion over the content of English classes. Should we teach literature as texts to be studied, and should those texts include the canon or non-canonical literature? Do we focus on the literature alone or include author biographies and historical settings? How should we teach literature? Options range from teacher lecture and student recitation to combined methods of teacher-directed and small group work, to completely independent study tutorials. Should teachers provide a plan of study, or should students be allowed to develop their own? Should literature be taught according to genres, chronology, or theme? Finally, why should we teach literature? Are our goals motivated by social, political, or religious agendas? Is our purpose to create better citizens, promote critical thinking, foster personal growth, or simply prepare students for college?

My interest in this study originated in my own twenty-year teaching career. Throughout these years I remained in a constant state of turmoil, never feeling quite comfortable or able to answer these questions for myself. I began my teaching of literature by following as a syllabus the table of contents provided in the twenty-year-old classroom anthology.

This particular text began with the short story and moved genre by genre through poetry, nonfiction, drama, and the novel. And so I "taught" literature, using the historic overview introductions and author biographies provided in the text. I was particularly grateful for the study questions which followed each selection. "Check for Understanding" questions focused on plot understanding and critical analysis, and I remember struggling to teach symbolism and allusion to students who really didn't care. There had to be a better way. Even I was bored.

As I continued my professional studies, seeking answers or at least information to help resolve my uncertainty, I changed my instructional methods. One of the biggest changes for me was in the teaching of literature. My introduction to the research on reader-response theory allowed me for the first time to define my goals for teaching literature, to re-evaluate my purposes in the classroom and to align them with my purposes of personal reading. In teaching literature, my focus was often on the text--talking about the meaning, the structure, the author's intent and background. Seldom did I consider the role of the reader, so my students remained divorced from their reading.

On the other hand, my personal reading reflected quite a different attitude. I was not concerned with the critical analysis of the text, although it often emerged. Most important was how my reading related to me, because what I enjoyed most in my personal reading was responding to it. I recognized myself in the characters. I compared myself to others. I escaped into unknown worlds, and I felt connected with them.

Reader response theory focuses on the relationship between the reader and the text. Louise Rosenblatt believes "the reader counts for at least as much as the book itself" (Literature vi). Further, she believes we read because of our desire to relate to others. Applying reader response theory in my classroom allowed me to resolve this personal dichotomy. If my purpose in teaching literature was to kindle a love of literature and reading in my students, then my approach to literature in the classroom should allow students to experience for themselves the joy of reading that drew me to teaching in the first place. My attitude changed, my methods changed, and I saw positive results in my classes.

On the other hand, the more I recognized my own change, the more I became aware of lack of change in other teachers' classrooms. My question, of course, was why? Was this research in reader-response effective? Were current teachers informed on it? Where and how was it transmitted? If teachers were aware of it, why weren't they applying it in their classrooms? My study was a search to discover the answers.

The answers to these questions give insight and provide further understanding of the complex issues involved in the teaching of literature in hopes that teacher educators, administrators, and the teachers themselves can work together more effectively. Because I believe that the teacher's classroom reflects a variety of input, including personal reading, high school experience, teacher education, and professional affiliation, my study attempts to discover what role each of these plays. Although there have been a number of studies that deal with reader-response in the classroom, most focus on its

effect on the student. A few look at one aspect of the teacher's role such as teacher education or teacher as reader, but none combine them, tracing as I have the teacher as reader from her preschool experience through her present role in the classroom.

My study is based on the triangulation of the data from three primary sources: professional journals, and modified case studies, including teacher questionnaires, and follow up teacher interviews. Through the journals Research in the Teaching of English, English Education, and the English Journal, I attempted to identify trends, cycles, or specific topics specifically related to reader-response and the teacher connection. Through the teacher questionnaires and interviews, I looked at individual teacher histories, including their personal reading, their experience as high school students, their professional education, and professional affiliations in an attempt to determine which of these areas had the greatest impact on their teaching. Did they read the journals? Which ones? What was the impact of their journal reading on classroom instruction? In addition, I wanted to discover what, if any, external factors entered into this equation and how the teachers responded to them. Finally, I attempted to merge all of this information, drawing conclusions and implications.

I have chosen the modified case study method in an attempt to solicit the teachers' own perceptions of their situations. It is my belief that the practitioners bring as much insight to the issues as do the theorists, and I wished to hear their stories. As Elliot Eisner says in The Enlightened Eye:

> It does not seem particularly revolutionary to say that it is important to understand how teachers and classrooms function before handing out recommendations for change. Yet so much of what is suggested to teachers and school administrators is said independent of context and often by those ignorant of the practices they wish to improve. If qualitative inquiry in education is about anything, it is about trying to understand what teachers and children do in the settings in which they work. (11)

I recognize the limitations of my study are numerous. The information I received from my teachers was through them. I did not observe their classrooms, so I am limited to what the teachers said about what they did, not necessarily what actually goes on. Another limitation involves the journal review. In limiting my survey to the three National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) publications, I am most likely missing some of the professional sources that also impact these teachers. Third, my study, because of confidentiality requirements, did not allow for my teachers to interact with one another. It would have been interesting to observe how these individuals related to reading and to each other in order to see if they applied the same collaborative strategies they encourage with their students. I rcognize that my findings are limited to those ten teachers and that from them it is impossible to generalize aboout all teachers. Given these limitations, I still believe that my study provides important insight and begins to draw connections among various areas of research.

The study begins with the related research that parallels portions of my study and an historical review of the teaching of literature, providing context for the present day teachers and their classrooms. Next is a study of three professional journals: English Journal, English Education, and Research in the Teaching of English, all published by NCTE, over a twenty-year time span, that looks at issues in reader-response. The journal review is followed by case studies of ten current classroom teachers of literature. Finally, I describe findings and implications for schools, teachers, and teacher educators.

Chapter One: Review of the Literature

Part A: Theory and Related Research

Reader-response is a complex, multifaceted term that needs considerable explanation before using it throughout this dissertation. The following explanation provides the reader with a better understanding of this complex theory.

Reader-Response Theories

Perhaps more than any other, with the advent of Louise Rosenblatt's work, Literature as Exploration in 1938, the transactional theory of reading has helped to define the goals of the language arts classroom. Rosenblatt defines her transactional theory of reading in the following way:

> Through the medium of words, the text brings into the reader's consciousness certain concepts, certain sensuous experiences, certain images of things, people, actions, scenes. The special meanings and, more particularly, the submerged associations that these words and images have for the individual reader will largely determine what the work communicated to him. (Literature 30)

Reader-response theory is a critical theory that places more focus on the stance that the reader takes toward the text. It values what the reader brings to the text and how the dynamic interplay between the reader and the text creates meaning. Response theory views the meaning each reader constructs as growing out of an

emotional as well as aesthetic response to the text but is also dependent at many levels on the reader's critical analysis of the text.

Unlike the Romantics who focused exclusively on the author's intent, ignoring the reader and the text, the New Critics turned their focus entirely on the text, ignoring both author and reader. Rosenblatt suggests that both of these approaches are incomplete because neither recognizes the reader's role in the process. Instead, Rosenblatt's transactional theory recognizes the importance of all three elements in the creation of meaning.

For Rosenblatt, the reader is actively involved in the process of meaning making, not just a passive recipient. She is quick to note, however, "emphasis on the reader's role does not in any way minimize the importance of the text" (Rosenblatt, The Reader 34). Rather, transactional theory "recognizes the text as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for any literary work of art" (83).

In transactional theory, the text serves a dual role. "First, the text is a stimulus activating elements of the reader's past experience--his experience both with literature and with life. Second, the text serves as a blueprint, a guide for the selecting, rejecting, and ordering of what is being called forth" (11). Rosenblatt's transactional theory combines both objective and subjective response. New Criticism takes an objective stance, and because of Rosenblatt's recognition of the reader's role, her theory is often incorrectly criticized as being entirely subjective. It is perhaps this simplistic view of her theory that creates the greatest misunderstanding. Rosenblatt suggests her theory be called

"transactional criticism" to differentiate it from either objective criticism or subjectivism (174).

In reality, transactional theory recognizes both the efferent and aesthetic stances of the reader and, in fact, sees the reader as operating on a continuum between the two. Rosenblatt cautions that the aesthetic stance is not "a simple revery or train of free associations" (29). Instead, "the concept of transaction emphasizes the relationship with, *and continuing awareness of*, the text" (29).

Rosenblatt defines her theory of reading in the following manner :

> In broadest terms, then, the basic paradigm of the reading process consists in the response to cues; the adoption of an efferent or aesthetic stance; the development of a tentative framework or guiding principle of organization; the arousal of expectations that influence the selection and synthesis of further responses; the fulfillment or reinforcement of expectations, or their frustration, sometimes leading to revision of the framework, and sometimes, if necessary, to rereading; the arousal of further expectations; until, if all goes well, with the completed decoding of the text, the final synthesis or organization is achieved. (54)

The context guides the reader in selecting appropriate responses (75) but the reader must be prepared to act of those cues, not just reflect them (83). "The reader's creation of a poem out of a text must be an active, self-ordering and self-corrective process" (11), and it is "the text itself [which] leads the reader toward this

self-corrective process" (11). Critical to this theory is the issue of validity. In order to be valid, the response must be based on the text. In this sense, transactional theory, as with the New Critics, involves close reading of the text. Transactional theory, however, involves close reading in conjunction with close attention to reader-response, which must be justified and text-based. Reader's interpretations must have a verbal basis in the text, may not be contradicted by anything in the text, and may not ignore portions of the text (115).

In addition to text-based validity, transactional theory also offers the potential for unlimited examination of the text. "With the aesthetic transaction as his fulcrum, the reader-critic can range as far as he wishes, bringing to bear ever wider and richer circles of literary, social, ethical, and philosophical contexts" (174).

Certainly, reader-response theory is a legitimate critical stance that involves the successful merging of reader and text. It combines objective analysis of the text with the subjective response of the reader. Meaning is created as reader and text transact with one another, and is based on the reader's awareness of this process. According to Rosenblatt, "The reader's attention to the text activates certain elements in his past experience--external referents, internal response--that have become linked with the verbal symbols. Meaning will emerge from a network of relationships among the things symbolized *as he senses them*" (11).

Rosenblatt, however, is only one of the many theorists who have been labeled reader-response, although Mailloux notes that "reader-response was a label somewhat belatedly applied to the

work of such theorists as Holland, Wolfgang Iser, David Bleich, and Stanley Fish rather than one adopted by the theorists themselves, and that this term disguises considerable differences and inconsistencies among the many writers to whom it has been attached" (qtd. in Cahalan and Downing 305). Michael Riffaterre, Iser, Fish, Holland, and Bleich, along with Rosenblatt, all believe in some way the importance of response in the reading process. Though each has ascribed to a specific point of theory, none has merged the variant theories together as successfully as Louise Rosenblatt.

Richard Beach categorizes reader-response theory according to five various perspectives: textual, experiential, psychological, social, and cultural (Teacher's 8). He describes these perspectives as "moving from the specific to the global" 9), concerned with the immediate response of the reader to the influence on meaning of society and culture. Beach also set his five perspectives within an historical framework, showing how the various approaches have spawned others, and how they collectively add to the whole.

Beach sets the *textual* perspective in the 1920's with the works of I.A. Richards, Michael Riffaterre, and Wolfgang Iser. This perspective focused on the reader's knowledge of text conventions and how this knowledge assists in making meaning. Richards believed that through their reading, readers acquire an intuitive knowledge of how to read certain types of literature. By reading a lot of mystery stories, or drama, or poetry, etc., the reader will absorb a knowledge of conventions and eventually apply that knowledge to the reading of the text. For Riffaterre, "competent

readers go beyond surface meaning" (Selden 119), and although meaning still resides in the text, it cannot be described without allowing for response. Iser sees the reader as an active participant with the text. His reader is a "co-creator" who supplies what isn't written (Tompkins vv) and fills in the blanks deliberately left by the text (Cahalan and Downing 307). According to Ramon Selden, Iser feels "the critic's task is not to explain the text as an object but rather its effect on the reader" (112).

Rosenblatt's own *experiential* perspective appeared in the 1930's and shifted attention to subjective experience. Concerned with both cognitive and aesthetic reading, she is interested in describing the process of engagement and involvement in composing meaning and the implications for the classroom. Although formulated in 1938, Rosenblatt's work did not begin to impact the field until the 1960's for several reasons, according to Carolyn Allen. First, although Rosenblatt's primary interest was in literature, she was also concerned with how it applies to education, unlike the other theorists. Second, her theory was based on American thinkers (Dewey, James) rather than European. And finally, "that as a woman perceived to be dealing primarily with feelings, she was not given the credibility in the literary critical establishment that even male theorists were afforded" Beach, Teacher's 50).

The 70's saw new developments as the work of Rosenblatt began to influence others, including Norman Holland and David Bleich, whose *psychological* perspective looked at how the developmental cognitive level affects response. From a psychoanalytical stance, Holland considers "the ways in which readers' subconscious

fantasy themes shape the meaning of their experience" (Beach, Teacher's 94). He took the basic Freudian analysis of subconscious elements of literary characters' actions and shifted it to the reader (94). For Norman Holland, readers deal with literature the same way as they deal with life, by developing a coping system which he calls an "identity theme" and using this as a filter through which they assimilate knowledge (Tompkins xix). Text is the other, and meaning is created when the reader's self merges with the other.

In David Bleich's theory of "subjective criticism," meaning isn't created by the individual or the text but through a negotiated agreement of collective response (Tompkins xx). Bleich believes that cognitive understanding is the result of subjective response, based on the assumption that the ultimate motivation for readers is to understand themselves (Selden 124). According to Beach, Bleich has done the most to promote the value of emotional response (Teacher's 53).

The *social* perspective looks at how social roles (teacher-student, individual-group) shape response. For Stanley Fish, the reader's individual responses throughout the reading collectively merge into a larger response. Meaning is not extracted from the text but is the experience the reader has while reading (Tompkins xvii). For this interpretive community, "the meaning of a text is a product of one's own reading strategies operating in specific social contexts" (Beach, Teacher's 106). Although the interpretive communities may reflect different literary perspectives of feminism, Marxism, or deconstructionism, Fish believes individuals buy into the belief system of the group without doubt or reflection (Beach 107). They

operate in the here and now without attention to history or opposing viewpoints.

The *cultural* perspective recognizes that cultural attitudes, including gender roles and attitudes, class, community, interests, attitudes, and beliefs, shape response (Beach, Teacher's 125). Where the social perspective reflects the immediate social context, the cultural perspective responds to the larger, historical context, though both reflect the different contemporary literary perspectives (125). David Bleich argues that "readers' responses reflect their *membership* in these competing cultural communities" (125).

Louise Smith notes that both Holland and Bleich began as prominent psychoanalytic critics (7) and have now moved on to the idea of cultural criticism (Cahalan and Downing 309) where knowledge is a negotiated agreement of collective responses, and interest is more on the collaborative group than on individual response (309). In spite of this shared belief in the community of readers, Smith points out that neither Holland nor Bleich looks at "how past readers might have experienced text" (74).

Though each of these perspectives concerns itself with different aspects of the reader/text relationship, they all have in common their ultimate interest in how readers make meaning. Despite their different assumptions about meaning, these separate theories intersect and overlap (Beach, Teacher's 9). Whether or not they acknowledge the influence of Rosenblatt's work, looking from the outside it is difficult to deny the contribution she has made since the '30's. I will focus on Rosenblatt's transactional theory because I feel it is most compatible with my study.

Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory

Literary criticism has gradually shifted its focus from author to text to reader (Cahalan and Downing 6). The recent focus on reader includes not only the theory of reader-response but other contemporary theories of formalist, historical, psychoanalytic, and feminist criticism. More than any other, it is Rosenblatt who sees the link between the readers' real life experiences and the work and encourages them to bring these experiences to the reading. For many reader-response theorists, Louise Rosenblatt has been the anchor or spokesperson, though not all acknowledge her role. Recognizing the contribution of Rosenblatt, others have sought to clarify her theory.

D.W.Harding in Response to Literature has clarified three conditions of reader-response. He states that it is "not passive but active," that it "includes not only immediate but later effects," and that "overt response (verbal, etc.) may indicate very little of the inner response" (Squire 11). For the teaching of literature, this implies that the focus of the study should be on the reader as well as the text; however, the reader's response to reading may not be immediately apparent, if ever.

Walter Slathoff in With Respect to Readers discusses this complex relation of reader and text. He states that it is important to recognize that responding to literature involves emotional transaction, and that these transactions do not exist separately. He describes the reader in a dual role of spectator and participant, recognizing that "even the most limited reader is capable of

maintaining several simultaneous states of relation and feeling toward a work . . ." (39).

Slathoff justifies the need for emotional response to literature rather than just critical response by pointing out that one of the purposes of literature is to affect the emotions. "For one thing, literary works, unlike natural objects, are designed to affect the emotions and to compel various sorts of involvement" (36). He continues, "Moreover, the very meaning of a literary work depends on emotional responses" (37).

Slathoff further argues the importance of reader-response and the need for teachers to recognize that meaning does not exist solely in the text. He goes on to point out that reader-experienced meaning is a dynamic, changing entity that is not exact. He states, " . . . literary works, however firmly designed, can exert only limited and inexact control and guidance over even the most docile and sympathetic reader," and that "whole areas of response can scarcely be controlled at all" (60).

Working Party Number Three of the Dartmouth Conference best stated the purpose of teaching literature when it wrote, " . . . the study of literature can in itself be a part of the ultimate education experience, for it is ultimately about human beings, what they are like, what their values are, and how they behave; the study of this dimension of English should form a central part of the experience of teaching" (Squire 75).

Therefore, the purpose of teaching literature should reflect this reader involvement. Slathoff states that nothing engages consciousness in so many ways as reading (7), and D.W. Harding

states that "it is literature, not literary criticism, which is the subject" (Squire 26). Slathoff forcefully states, "To limit our concern to literary history or formal analysis . . . , to ignore problems of values and human response, is to ignore the very qualities of literature which have led us to be concerned with it in the first place" (Slathoff 24).

Importance of Reader Response

If, then, the purpose of our teaching of literature is to reflect this belief in the importance of the combined emotional, aesthetic, and analytic response of the reader, we need to examine our classroom methods in order to evaluate to what extent our methods reflect our goals. In the traditional classroom, Harding identifies three basic modes of approach:

1. Each child having his own individual book
2. Literature as a group experience
3. Teacher presented material followed by discussion (Squire16).

This standard format of all students reading the same selection from an anthology, and the teacher explaining it to the class is precisely what most of today's teachers experienced, including those I interviewed. For them there was no connection between school reading and personal reading. In his foreword to Opening Texts, Tom Newkirk states, "The critical tradition, as applied to the classroom, left too many students by the wayside. Students were expected to adopt the formal style of argument without access to an informal language of exploration; they were expected to make bricks without

straw" (Andrasick XI). He asserts that to advocate reader-response doesn't necessarily mean we must reject critical inquiry (X).

Squire encourages the use of individualized reading, as opposed to the entire class reading the same works, especially for the early adolescent and beyond "because research has demonstrated that most children during this period will read more books than at any other time during their school careers" (18). Therefore, he continues, "close reading and wide reading should not be thought of as quite separate activities" (8), but experienced side by side.

In her book, Opening Texts, Kathleen Dudden Andrasick points out that most frequently we ask students to read in isolation, and "rarely do we concentrate on teaching students how to compose meaning as readers" (4). She sees the role of the teacher as two-fold: "As literature teachers, the core of our enterprise is to first help students recognize and value their personal connections and initial readings. Next, we must help them acquire the strategies that foster critical thinking" (6). We should design our literature curriculum to encourage students to become responsible for their own reading and meaning making. Instead, Andrasick states, "Many of us unwittingly keep students dependent on us, rather than teaching them how to operate independently" (34). She argues that teachers should strive to make students aware of their own responses in reading and then use those individual responses as the basis for analysis and discussion. "By helping students examine their individual encounters with texts and then compare them among themselves, we help them develop some general principles of literary operation" (33).

Recognizing the emotional aspect of reading is critical if we expect students to further their involvement with texts. Andrasick believes that ignoring emotional responses produces readings that are inadequate, because they recognize only half the literary transaction (72). Andrasick further states, " . . . our reading and our teaching become clumsy if we plunge into literary analysis before first allowing students (or ourselves) full opportunity to recognize highly personal, often emotional, experiences with texts" (72).

If the response of the reader is crucial in her fully experiencing the benefits of literature, how, then, should this response be encouraged? For D.W. Harding, the role of listening is a key element. "Since young children learn literature from hearing it, classroom discussion of their responses should start from those activities that arise from listening" (Squire 12). Reading-writing connections are very important. Andrasick views them as similar processes used to compose meaning, connect knowledge, and create order from chaos (43). Writing is a powerful tool to help students not only understand the texts they read but also their own responding process (43). She further notes the additional value of reader-response. "Because reader-response accepts hostility, boredom, and confusion as legitimate reactions to texts, it diffuses the power of such negative emotions. Students are free to operate more analytically once their emotions have been released" (71).

Oral discussion also is important. The value for a reader, in comparing her response to another's, is that it helps her formulate or clarify her original response (6). Oral interpretation used in the classroom also helps teachers identify problems and differences in

individual responses (19). Andrasick agrees that in hearing the responses of others, students clarify and validate their own feelings (80). James Britton is quick to note, however, that in an oral discussion, silence does not always indicate lack of response (Squire 5).

In looking at literature response, it is also important to note the role of creative response. Response to reading shouldn't be limited to expository writing. Creative writing assignments used in conjunction with literary study not only work to improve students' expository writing but also improve their reading. According to Andrasick, "Operating creatively as writers and readers, they begin to transfer the structure and technique for one process to the other, often unconsciously" (Andrasick 133). Creative response to literature should not be limited to writing activities, but often ignored drama, poetry, and fictional narratives should also be incorporated into our literature classrooms as means to teach critical inquiry (13). Dramatic response can take many forms, ncluding readers' theatre, chorale reading, or role playing.

In his 1964 study, The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories, James Squire discovered in studying over time the responses of students to short stories that the more the students were personally involved with the works, the more likely they were to respond to their literary qualities. (64). What is the most effective way to get them involved? Working Party Number Three of the Darthmouth Seminar states, "If any single reform is needed in English, it is the reintroduction of pleasure into what is done in the English period" (74). Pleasure remains, however, a commodity that is

often in limited supply in the context of most classrooms. Students must be encouraged to respond to literature and know that what they bring to their reading is important. They must learn that literature is not some dead medium but a living text brought to life by their active participation with it.

Sadly, for many students this is not the case. Seldom are they asked to respond personally to their reading or to connect their experience to the work. "Many have learned to remain almost entirely untouched by what they read" (Slathoff 170). Instead, they have developed vocabularies for analysis and attitudes about literature that discourage their response.

Andrasick acknowledges this flaw but offers possible solutions, suggesting that we adopt classroom contexts that are collaborative and social and more representative of the real world (21). In life, we learn from one another. It is a mutual, active process, not a solitary, passive one. Collaboration provides support, various viewpoints, validation, and clarification.

Although in 1970, Slathoff felt that little had changed in the way we think and talk about literature (169), I feel that in the twenty years since, there have been some positive changes, a point that I will address in my later chapters.

Steadily, Rosenblatt's theory as she applied it to the classroom has been seeping into actual practice. No longer do some teachers feel that the meaning of a literary work exists solely within the text. Transactional theory acknowledges that readers with their past experience interact with the words on the page in order to create for themselves unique meanings.

In order to do this, classroom methods must change. Andrasick warns that we must not only make our classrooms collaborative but also experiential. She feels that teachers who are driven to cover a certain amount of material in a period of time rather than to provide meaningful, thought provoking experiences with it encourage their students to respond superficially. Instead of viewing literature as something worthy of reflection, students read only to acquire the facts and information so necessary on objective tests (185).

In order for experiential classrooms to be effective, it is necessary for their teachers to be participants, not simply directors who stand on the sidelines. Teachers must also be readers and writers who model their personal involvement with literature for their students. "Students trained by teachers who are not themselves readers and writers are likely to be limited by their instructor's lack of experience" (Andrasick 186). Teachers must see their own literacy as a requirement of their profession. "Teachers must not neglect personal literacy in their dedication to student competence. One informs the other" (186).

Andrasick urges teachers to continue their professional training, especially in the areas of reading and writing theory. It is not enough for them to know the literature with its historical background, author biographies, and conventional interpretations. "Teachers also need to know how readers make meaning, how texts instruct readers on how to read and write them, and how readers and texts are the products of cultural contexts for reading and writing" (Andrasick 33). She continues, "If we are going to help students join our club [of critical inquiry], we must change their old

beliefs and habits. We must teach them to accept variant readings of the same text. We must show them that critical inquiry requires both personal connection and critical distancing and that shortchanging one limits the potential of the other" (40).

The importance of reader-response in the classroom is well argued. Many have called for change and suggested how we might effect that change. Success for that change seems to lie in the efforts of the classroom teacher to merge personal attitudes toward reading with professional approaches to literature.

Related Research

In searching the dissertation abstracts back through 1980, I found only ten studies that somehow related to my own research. Five of those studies focused on reader-response theory and how it applied in the classroom, and five of the studies looked at the teacher's role in the literature classroom, or how the teacher's personal attitudes toward reading affected the classroom. None of these ten studies combined the various aspects.

In 1986, Holt wanted to see if using a response-based approach to literature would result in greater student involvement than the traditional analytical approach. Her study used The Pearl by John Steinbeck with 121 tenth graders split into a control group and an experimental group. Holt found "the experimental group wrote a significantly higher percentage of engagement/involvement responses than the control group. The attitude scales show that the experimental group was motivated to read, discuss, and enjoy the novel more than the control group was" (3963).

Monseau, in 1986, studied a group of students and teachers from two different schools who met outside of school for ten weeks to discuss reading. Her study supports reader-response theorists in their belief that literary appreciation begins with engagement. She suggests an effective approach to literature that combines responsive dialogue and Young Adult (YA) literature (816). Both Holt and Monseau confirmed the positive motivational effect of student engagement with text. While Monseau's study, unlike mine, included the element of YA literature, it did find that outside of school, both teachers and students responded to the same elements: character, plot, theme, setting, and point of view (816), although their vocabulary differed and the students were less sophisticated in their responses.

These findings both concur with those of Gross, who in 1983 examined the relationship between public and private responses to literature both in and outside of the classroom. She used four 11th and 12th grade teachers and sixteen students and made tapes of their responses to poems read outside of class. Although the responses were done outside of class, Gross found that both students' and teachers' expectations shaped the readings. The school and the classroom communities set a context for individual reading that unfortunately serves to separate the readers from their own experience and response (773). Gross later concluded that neither teachers nor students are aware of this artificial approach to response. "Few students reflect on what they do when they respond to a poem; most teachers are unaware of their students' responses. Class discussions do little to further awareness" (773). If this study

is representative, reader-response theory is not making its way into the classroom.

Another study in 1983 looked at the discrepancy between responding to reading outside versus inside of the classroom. Hopp found that the sharing of responses which occurred outside of school did not occur inside of school and argued that the gap that exists between the two needs to be bridged. "The underlying assumption is that responses--a connection-making process between readers and books--should be shared in a school setting and that sharing may result in heightened awareness of both the complexity and richness of the portrayed human experience and the self" (3589).

Hogarty, in 1988, like Holt and Monseau, found that reader-response practice in the classroom encourages students to communicate, a skill which he points out is important to society, but "Conversely, student-participants affirmed that silent classrooms and classrooms that dictated one-directional communication hadn't invited them into a social experience with literature" (2955). He further discovered that this social experience was especially sacrificed with poor readers whose reading focus was often reduced to reading for facts or what Rosenblatt describes as efferent reading.

All of these studies address the benefits of using reader-response theory in the classroom. They also support my observations that how we read in school differs from how we read outside of it. Neither students nor teachers are making this connection. One study (Gross) even acknowledged that teachers were unaware of this discrepancy, and Gross also asserted that the artificial in-class response is carried over into our students'

approaches to their outside reading. Clearly, the role of the teacher is critical in the literature classroom. The following studies look at that role and how the teachers' own perceptions influenced their methods.

In 1980, Webb made a year long holistic study of literary responses of tenth graders with four teachers in a suburban senior high school observing the effects of a newly designed response theory curriculum. In her study, experimental and control groups used the reader-response approach and the traditional approach, respectively in their literature classes. Her findings assessed the effects on both students and teachers. In terms of students, Webb found no significant difference in reading achievement between student control groups but found that those students in the experimental classes developed more positive attitudes toward literature (929). In evaluating the effect on the teachers, the results were more dramatic. She discovered teachers "became aware that spontaneous response is often personal and associative; however, it was not as digressive as they anticipated" (929). The teachers recognized that personal response is valuable for more than just pre-reading activities, and they also became more aware of how their own responses to the literature they taught differed from those of their students (929). Apparently, teachers are more convinced of the powers of response theory when allowed to experience it for themselves over an extended period of time.

Another factor influencing teachers' performance was considered in 1988, when Walker looked at the connection between teachers' personal reading habits and their classroom approaches to

teaching literature. He looked at what kind of readers they were, how these characteristics were revealed in their teaching, and what, if any, were the apparent relationships among their traits as readers and as teachers. From his data, Walker identified three theoretical types of teacher-readers: the escapist, the pragmatist, and the intellectual adventurer. He also identified three archetypal teaching stances: the nurturer, the instructor, and the co-learner. He found in his case studies of three high school teachers that "teachers are primarily summer readers," and there is "an apparent dichotomy between private reading and public duty to teaching the canon" (1935). Walker found that his teachers often acknowledged the connection between reading and writing but seldom modeled it or applied it in their classrooms. Although these teachers differed in their personal reading habits, the requirements of curriculum and their shared perceptions of the profession made their teaching differences less noticeable. Walker's study relates to my own in the area of teacher as reader and points out that not only students but teachers separate their school reading from their personal reading.

In another study focusing on teacher as reader, Atwell found significant themes from reader response theory in teachers' autobiographies as she studied three secondary English teachers and the relationship between their personal reading and their literature curriculums. Atwell concluded in 1988 that teachers were primarily solitary readers and rarely shared private reading with others. Their most pleasant memories of reading in childhood were outside of school, and they had few memories of school reading except for negative ones. Teachers did one thing on their own (response) and

practiced another in their classrooms (objective interpretation). Atwell's research concluded that teachers were "fearful of reliving conflicts [such as being told their interpretation was wrong] from their own reading lives and of dealing with emotion and confusion in reading responses in their own classrooms" (61). They used a structured approach as a defense against feelings they experienced themselves as readers. She also concluded that in addition to personal reasons, there were cultural reasons such as standard curriculum guidelines and traditions that encouraged teachers to stick with the structured approach. In addition to discovering a discrepancy between teachers' personal reading and school reading, Atwell discovered that the teachers were unaware of the apparent contradiction until this study. Their lack of awareness did not appear to be by choice, for they all indicated that they were interested in exploring it further. Atwell's study parallels mine in a couple of ways. Like Walker, Atwell discovered a discrepancy in teachers' approaches to reading. What I found also relating to my study was that the teachers were unaware of this difference, although Atwell did not attempt to discover why. She also looked at those outside constraints that influenced teachers' classroom methods. I will also look at this issue in my study.

Also in 1988, Zancanella concluded that teachers' personal approaches to reading had only slight influence, if any, on their teaching. Rather, teaching methods were dictated by external forces. He stated, "The majority of time spent in the literature classes was spent on comprehension and on the learning of literary terms and concepts. The imposition of standardized tests was found to be an

important influence on teachers' literature teaching which tended to limit their ability to draw on their personal approaches to literature" (3293). Again, this study reflects on the outside forces which dictate curriculum.

My last study focuses on teachers' inability to incorporate response theory in their classrooms, reflecting a personal approach to reading that is in direct conflict with the New Criticism approach learned in their own school experiences. In 1987, Kearney observed a seventh-grade literature classroom as the teacher attempted to use a response-centered approach. In her study of one teacher and four students, Kearney found that philosophically, the teacher was closely aligned with Rosenblatt and response theory, with the students favoring an analytical stance "more consistent with more radical reader-response critics: Fish, Bleich, and Holland" (52). She found her students made little or no distinction between themselves and the text, concluding, "The teacher found developing and teaching a reader-response curriculum to be in conflict with her previous literary training and often felt unprepared to evaluate responses that challenged her concept of the text" (52). Kearney points out two concepts, which I also address in my study. The teacher's previous training did not reflect the current reader-response theory, and her current grasp of theory was too recent and not sufficient enough for her to comfortably apply it in her classroom. What Kearney does not do is look at the issues that prevent or discourage the teacher from staying current in the field.

From these studies, I draw the following conclusions: 1) Although teachers view classroom and outside reading differently,

they aren't aware of this discrepancy; 2) Teachers are relying more on critical analysis than response theory, probably because they aren't adequately trained in response theory or at least don't feel confident about their training; and 3) There are outside constraints that influence a teacher's choice of classroom methods. Although these ten studies support my hypotheses, none of them explores the connections among the teachers, their education, and the outside influences that affect them.

It is apparent that many of today's teachers are uninformed or uncomfortable attempting to implement response methods in their classrooms, but why? Historically, various curriculum models have been espoused and practiced. Much of the problem exists because literature's role in the curriculum has not been defined (Probst 195). In order to understand literature's identity problem, it is necessary to look at how we got here.

Part B: History

According to Arthur Applebee in Tradition and Reform, literature has only been included in the curriculum since the late nineteenth century. Prior to the turn of the century, the focus on English was dominated by the churches and society and then by the colleges. Three instructional traditions were in place: the ethical tradition, the classical tradition, and the non-academic tradition (1).

The ethical tradition linked religion with the teaching of reading (11), and the chief aim of the early grammar schools was to prepare clergy (Evans and Walker 2). The purpose of these schools was socio-political in nature, serving to provide "unity to colonists

with a common tradition, common spirit of citizenship, and common language" (Applebee, Tradition 3).

The classical tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries was influenced by colleges, and the secondary schools used this model to prepare their students for college and higher education (3). The trend was to prepare the mind for college by developing "mental discipline" by focusing on the rigors of Greek and Latin (5).

The non-academic tradition was designed for all those "others" who would not be attending college and had no need for secondary preparation. English was taught at home or in "dame schools" conducted by housewives in their homes (Evans and Walker 3). In the early 1800's, Finishing Schools were in existence and focused on an appreciative study approach, considered, however, second class and not worthy of college (Applebee, Tradition 11).

When literature was added to the curriculum, approximately 100 years ago, the classical studies approach was applied. Literature was studied with an emphasis on information, valuing both its historical significance and its use in developing mental discipline. From this approach of mental discipline came the switch to viewing literature as a source of knowledge of our literary heritage (11). It was believed that students would somehow profit from the study of great traditions. Literature would have a positive effect on both the students and society.

Although the schools approached literature from the perspective of classical studies, many of the early socio-political goals were continued and still exist today. Anne Ruggles Gere identifies six primary reasons for teaching English, all related to the teaching of

literature, that people most frequently name: "to improve morality, to prepare good workers, to create an elite, to produce good citizens, to foster personal growth, and to offset inequality" (2-3). These purposes or themes are found throughout the history of the schools. Although consistently present, these purposes are almost impossible to categorize chronologically because they occur in cycles. One or several may take precedence over the others for a time, eventually replaced by some others. Often, these purposes piggy-back one another and almost cease to exist separately.

Gere states, "Protestant religious groups have connected literacy with piety and devotion" (2). Religious texts offered particular power, and the ability to read the Bible was essential to salvation; therefore, reading represented a way to improve one's moral standing. Later, the power of the Bible was transferred to literature in general, and English took on the role of building character and adding moral fiber.

With the onset of the Industrial Revolution, society changed from a rural to an urban setting. People needed to be retrained to meet the needs of the cities and the manufacturing jobs, and English classrooms focused on function, including writing of business letters, forms, and reading direction manuals and newspapers. Grammar also became an important aspect of English, for in this new business world, correctness mattered.

Preparation for college has always been a part of American schools, and this concept was furthered by the standardized curriculum developed by the Committee of Ten in 1894. Preparation

for college included college-like courses of lectures, literature analysis, etc.

With the promotion of a democratic society came another purpose of education. In order for a democracy to function effectively, it is critical for the voting electorate to be literate. To meet this need, classrooms promoted democratic themes which focused on what it meant to be "American," and activities emphasized decision making and the literacy skills needed to vote.

The study of English also fostered personal growth. Studying English, specifically writing and the reading of literature, allowed people to find themselves, become self-fulfilled, and lead happy lives. Reflection, self-awareness, and connections with literature were frequently used methods.

The final purpose was to offset inequality, and education is the great leveler. In addition to the goal of raising education levels towards that of the elite by promoting a common literary heritage, the curriculum also included the politics of education and how to interact with the world outside of the classroom.

To further clarify these multiple views and functions of literature, it would be helpful to look at their development over time. Terry Eagleton states that there are three stages of modern literary theory: the Romantic, the New Critical, and the Response stages (qtd. in Beach, Teacher's 1).

The Romantic (or Old Criticism) concerned itself with matters outside of the text and how they influenced meaning, and, in particular, had a "pre-occupation with the author" (1). For the Romantics, literature became "a reservoir of cultural values and a

source of moral strength" (Applebee, Traditions 22). The writer was seen as having a higher knowledge and was, therefore, worthy of greater attention. The influence of this period led to the development of the high school canon (24), and preoccupation with the question, "What does the author mean?" still affects our schools today.

The New Critics also focused on meaning but believed that meaning resided solely within the text, and considered the author extraneous. A universal reader strove to arrive at the one true reading of a text without the influences of time, society, or personality.

From this New Criticism emerged two views. One viewed literature as a work of art. I.A. Richards, however, believed in developing a "psychology of literary judgement" (Corcoran 10) and realized that in order to do so, it was necessary to study readers' responses.

New Criticism put the text at the center of study but also made the teacher the center of the classroom. With the role of explicator of texts' meanings, the teacher had considerable power and authority. There were other advantages, as well. The subject matter was seen as an objective body of knowledge. There were clearly right and wrong answers, and the material was easily tested and measured. This paradigm still influences most of the secondary curriculum today.

Other influence from New Criticism remains with far-reaching negative consequences. New Criticism's quest for the true reading by the perfect reader only served to create and promote a feeling of

inadequacy. The reader was always deficient and could never achieve the perfect reading. "It is this sense of inadequacy of personal felt response that has been the unintended but nevertheless inevitable effect of four decades of teachers' emphasis on the reader as critic as an appropriate role for pupils in school" (Corcoran 11). Sadly, this feeling of inadequacy now affects both teachers and students, since, at least sometime in their educational careers, virtually all teachers today were students of New Criticism.

The next paradigm shift moves attention from the text to the reader. Best clarified by the Dartmouth Conference in 1966, this movement promoted a curriculum based on personal growth. Although not without its turmoil and disagreement, "the emphasis in educational thought shifted gradually away from knowledge of an academic discipline toward the process of knowing and the dignity of the individual" (Applebee, Tradition 236).

From this focus on the individual reader came the response theorists who were concerned with making explicit how readers make meaning. Teachers were now asked to somehow integrate the three critical theories of the Romantic, the New Critic, and the Transactional movements. The function of literature continues to operate from this multiplicity of theories and goals.

Trends change along with the times. Social needs are addressed, and the practice of teaching English changes to meet those needs. At any point in time, several underlying reasons may be in play. One reason may dominate, followed by another. The confusion occurs because old trends don't disappear. New trends are simply added to the old, and the result is a cumulative hodgepodge. Schools

and teachers bear the brunt of this confusion. Eager to answer society's demands and to meet the needs of the students, teachers often feel pulled in all directions and end up frustrated, trying to do all and be all for everyone.

Regardless what the purpose of literature may be at any given time, the determining of its function remains political. How it is taught is determined by the agenda of those who make curricular decisions about the role of literature. The moral focus was determined by the churches. The business community wanted good workers. Colleges determined what was considered elite, and government wanted good citizens. The personal growth model assisted people in enriching their lives through the process of self-discovery, offsetting their unhappy working conditions, while the quest for equality fought the status quo.

Not surprisingly, the ability of the schools to meet the demands of these various political forces is further dictated by the administrative decisions made outside of the classroom. Funding, staffing, and scheduling all impact the success of the schools.

Funding for the schools has fluctuated dramatically in the last fifty years, resulting in tougher times and more pressure. The availability of money for schools is certainly affected by the economic conditions, but not all decisions are economic. Funding also falls prey to the political arena, and politicians have been accused of using education and English education (literacy issues) specifically as re-election issues. Literacy is awarded much lip service but little money.

Since the Dartmouth Seminar of 1966, curriculum planners attempted to balance the focus on intellectual discipline with the concern of the emotional well-being of the student. Some questions have been resolved, but many remain. There has been a change over time in what we see as the function of literature; it no longer is limited to utilitarian uses. Tompkins states, "The first requirement of a work of art in the twentieth century is that it should *do* nothing" (Tompkins 210). Art need only exist for its own sake. Once again, discourse is viewed as power, and language is the ultimate form of power. Therefore, literature again is recognized as having the ability to influence human behavior. With the acknowledgment of the power of literature, it is logical that attention would also shift to the role of the reader.

Given the history of the teaching of literature with its multiple goals and paradigm shifts, it is no wonder that teachers feel conflict. How do they sort out for themselves a working theory from this fluctuating collection of thought? What have they drawn on and what have they rejected? What role does reader-response play in this process?

The purpose of my study is to determine the impact of reader-response theory as reflected in twenty years' publication of reader-response articles in selected professional journals. In addition, I will also study two other dimensions through modified case study, the teacher's personal reading history and professional education, and the roles all three play in the teachers' approaches to literature in the classroom. The theory of teaching of reading in the classroom has changed dramatically over the last twenty years, recognizing the

interaction of reader and text. But has the evidence of that change in the secondary schools been as dramatic?

Chapter Two: Research Design and Methodology

Reader-response theory and its implementation in secondary English classrooms as the focus of this study raises several questions that form the basis of this inquiry: 1) how do the current journals in the field of English education support the concept of reader-response theory and its implementation? 2) do teachers implement reader-response theory and how do they accomplish it? 3) what difficulties do these teachers face in their efforts to incorporate reader-response theory? I have examined the instruction and beliefs of ten individual teachers and the extent to which reader response theory has been implemented in their classrooms.

Part A: Journal Review

I have chosen a modified case study approach, using a combination of historical research and personal interviews. First, I have traced the writing on reader-response theory in the current professional journals, looking at what the literature says about response, and what it says about teachers themselves as they operate with reader-response approached to literature. Because I was looking at how reader-response theory impacted the English classroom, I limited my search to the journals published by and for the National Council of Teachers of English, the major professional organization for English teachers. Of those NCTE publications, I chose English Journal, English Education, and Research in the Teaching of English

Research in the Teaching of English (RTE), with its focus on classroom research, represents the latest research in the field. English Education (Eng.Ed) focuses on the training of teachers, and English Journal (EJ) represents the concerns of the secondary English classroom teacher.

I have traced the articles over the last twenty years and have attempted to discern patterns. I chose a twenty-year time span for two reasons. First, my own teaching career spans twenty years, and second, the average number of years' experience for all teachers in the United States is fifteen years, according to a current National Education Association study.

Tracing the appearance of reader-response theory in the three specified journals over this extended period rendered 291 articles: 29 articles in RTE, 12 in EngEd, and the remaining 250 in EJ. However, these numbers are somewhat influenced by the journals' various publication frequencies and other limitations which I will discuss in the next chapter.

In looking for patterns in the journals, I asked many questions. How many articles deal with reader-response theory, and what are their main concerns? How many focus on theory and how many on practice? What, if any, patterns emerge in the number and focus of reader-response articles in professional journals? I attempted to further categorize the articles according to five purposes: original research, explanation or discussion of research, description of method or general application, classroom practice, including specific activities, and reviews/replies of professional and classroom literature.

Part B: Teacher Case Studies

Knowing, however, that even with a membership of over 100,000 members, the main organization of the English teachers, NCTE, represents less than 5% of all those teaching English, I also felt it necessary to go to the actual teachers to gather firsthand reflections. I have balanced my data from print sources with that gathered from case studies based on interviews in three schools. Through my interviews, I have compared what the literature says about response with how the teachers view literature and how their backgrounds impact this view.

My choice of the modified case study approach to these questions was based on my own experience as a secondary teacher and the problems I went through developing my own theory of response. From this experience, I see a need for deeper understanding of what actually happens on the high school level as teachers attempt to merge conflicting theories in their teaching of literature.

Seldom as a teacher did I have the opportunity to reflect, discuss, or voice my opinion on issues related to pedagogy. Therefore, I felt very strongly that it was important for me to go directly to the classroom teachers and allow them to tell their own stories.

I've chosen basic qualitative methods out the the belief that questions are best studied in the context in which they occur. Case studies have been done for a number of years, as many researchers have successfully shown (Taylor, 1983; Graves, 1983; Rose, 1989; Zancanella, 1991).

I've chosen the case study approach for a variety of reasons and benefits. Not only does this method provide access to teachers' personal approaches to reading, but also to their goals for the teaching of literature and their definitions of literature, as well as their methods and their insights about how they reflect on their roles. It allowed me to see with greater understanding the reasons for what I could only observe superficially. A basic assumption underlying the case study approach is that one can best understand the purposes and beliefs a teacher uses to structure her class by using a combination of methods, one being direct discussion with the teacher (Bogdan and Biklen 2).

The interviews were more thorough and personal and allowed the teachers to provide their own contexts for their answers. Teachers' own words provide a look into their own perception of their teaching and learning processes that with other methods wouldn't be available.

There has been much of research looking at how readers think about their reading (Squire, 1964; Purves, 1968; Beach, 1983), but these studies have focused on the student. These same questions need to be asked about teachers. My study does not generalize for all teachers but only for my select group, comparing and contrasting these ten teachers in an effort to learn from what they've shared with me.

Participants

In my study, I conducted personal interviews with ten members of the English departments of three mid-Michigan public

school systems. The systems chosen for close study include a large, urban high school, a suburban middle school, and a small rural school which combines both junior and senior high. I chose the three types of schools in an effort to sample a variety of locations which are reasonably representative of schools everywhere.

The large, urban school is one of three high schools in a city with an approximate population of 250,000. The socio-economic background is varied with all groups represented from low to high. This school has fifteen English teachers and an enrollment of 1415 students with the following ethnic breakdown: 0% American Indian, 5% Asian, 45% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 43% White.

The suburban middle school is currently the only middle school in a city with a population of 20, 216. The socio-economic background of this city is primarily middle to upper-middle professional. The school employs fourteen English teachers and has an enrollment of 969 students. Although the city's census figures indicate a population that is 90% White, the school's enrollment represents a more varied ethnic mix, including 0% American Indian, 6% Asian, 4% Black, 21% Hispanic, and 69% White.

The rural school chosen is also the only junior-senior high school in a town with a population of 1523. This town is primarily a low to middle-class, blue collar/agricultural, bedroom community. There are four English teachers and a student enrollment of 350 students. The ethnic makeup of both the community and the school is virtually 100% White.

Before contacting the schools, I first had to submit my proposal and questionnaire to the University Committee for Research

Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) at Michigan State University whose function is to protect the confidentiality of the participants and to insure that the research is ethically based. Copies of the Human Subjects approval letter and my interview consent form are included in the appendix. After UCRIHS approval, I contacted the individual schools.

I began by submitting an application along with multiple copies of my research proposal and questionnaire to the director of the Office of Research and Evaluative Services for the large, urban district. Once I received approval, I was free to contact the teachers personally.

I began with a teacher in my selected school who agreed to distribute my proposal and request for teacher participation. All teachers were given the opportunity to respond. I then personally contacted those interested teachers by phone and further explained my study. If they agreed to take part, I distributed my questionnaire with cover letter and signature form and set up appointments for individual follow-up interviews.

In the urban school from a list of six names, four people agreed to participate. Because of a medical emergency, one was forced to drop out. The remaining three teachers were each interviewed outside of school during their summer break. Two were interviewed in their own homes, and the other in a local restaurant.

The procedure and selection process was somewhat less formal in the other two schools. I contacted the principal of the suburban middle school, who granted me permission over the phone. I then spoke with one English teacher who also agreed to distribute my

proposal and collect names of interested teachers. From five interested parties, four agreed to be interviewed. Three interviews were conducted in the school at the end of the spring semester during the teachers' planning periods, and the fourth took place at a local restaurant over summer break. For personal reasons, one of these participants found it necessary to withdraw from the study.

I also contacted the principal at the rural junior-senior high school who granted permission over the telephone and agreed to distribute my material and collect names. Four teachers (the entire English department) agreed to participate. In this case, I went to the school and met the teachers personally and scheduled interview appointments. All four of these teachers were interviewed in their school building but outside of their teaching duties.

Questionnaire

Gathering data from the schools included a questionnaire/ attitude survey completed by the individual language arts teachers. This questionnaire included more specific questions relating to the teachers' personal history and current classroom practice. These surveys were followed by personal interviews, delving further into their own informed thoughts and opinions which I will discuss further in the following section.

My questionnaire is based on the 1981 study of Alan Purves, Reading and Literature. In this study, Purves found that the classroom practices of teachers were greatly influenced by their own past experience and training. He discovered that the majority of secondary teachers had been trained in English but not reading (19).

He also discovered that in addition to lacking this original training in reading theory, "a large proportion appears not to keep up with the latest trends in their field" (20). He found that compared to the practice in the elementary school, in the secondary school, "the variety of instruction becomes increasingly constrained" (24). The secondary English classroom is dominated by whole class instruction, recitation, and discussion (24). Purves also discovered that how teachers approached the teaching of literature was influenced by their own responses to it, as well as what they saw as their goals for teaching it (38). Classroom practices were also affected by outside constraints of the school curriculum brought about by school policy, including imposed curriculums and the necessity of standardized testing.

Based on Purves' findings, I divided my questionnaire into three categories: teacher background, present values and methods in teaching, and external pressures. I looked at the teachers' own experience as secondary school students, their personal reading habits, their professional affiliation and education, as well as what they see as their goals in teaching literature. Also important to my interview was their listing or clarifying of what, for them, are the external pressures affecting their success. Copies of my questionnaire, cover letter, and letter of agreement are included in the appendix (Appendices B-D).

Interviews

The interviews, done in person, were relatively informal and averaged about one hour in length. These interviews were designed

to follow up the questionnaires. All ten of the participating teachers agreed to the interviews and participated enthusiastically.

The interviews took place during the late spring and early summer and were completed within a four week time span, when most teachers were either just finishing up the school year or just beginning summer. I chose this particular time because the end of the school year is often a time of reflection. People are tired but often less rushed than in the fall or mid-year. I also didn't want to wait until mid-summer when teachers tend to distance themselves from the real frustrations of the classroom.

The settings were varied, but most interviews took place in the teachers' own classrooms. Two interviews were done in the teachers' homes, and two were done in a secluded area of a local restaurant. Realizing the importance of fitting in with the teachers' regular routine (Hammersley 49), all times and settings were the choice of the individual teachers.

Interviews were also scheduled several weeks after the teachers completed the questionnaires to allow the participants time to reflect on their responses. According to Hammersley, this time to reflect is an often neglected element of research (46).

In my interviews, I used a combination of directive and non-directive questions, attempting to distinguish what aspects of reader-response these teachers may be using. Are these teachers encouraging students to respond on a personal level to their reading? Are the concerns of the teacher focused on the students or on the texts? Do teachers attempt to merge emotional response with critical inquiry? Which response based methods are being used? Why are

these being used? How are they being used? If they aren't being used, why not? What are the factors that impede their use?

Through my interviews, I gathered additional information on specific approaches and techniques used by these teachers in their classrooms. I wanted to discover what, if any, aspects of reader-response theory have found their way into actual classroom practice, primarily in literature classroom settings. I worded the questions in such a manner that allowed me to identify the issues that prevent teachers from implementing research. I also looked at ways selected teachers are able to use research on response. The general categories of questions included some of the following:

What kinds of ways do you have kids respond?

How much?

In school? Out of school?

In what ways do you encourage them to respond to what they've read?

How do you assess that response?

On what theory do you base your practice?

What factors dictate your practice?

If you could, what changes would you make?

What factors inhibit those changes?

What positive changes do you see taking place?

What unique and innovative ways have you found to continue in spite of surmounting problems?

What have you tried that worked?

What hasn't worked? Why not?

Does your district have a curriculum guide? Objectives? How has your district been affected by the State of Michigan guidelines (PA 25)?

Sample interview questions and a transcript of a sample interview are included in the appendix (Appendices E and F).

The design of this study, therefore, looked at reader-response theory through the publications over a period of time that had the potential to affect the understandings and instructional practices of classroom teachers. It investigated the extent to which reader-response affected the classrooms of selected teachers through questionnaires and interviews they completed. The purpose of this interview was to give voice to those classroom teachers. For some, I hope this study provides insight into some of the constraints that affect them and other teachers like them. Through the compilation of their answer and suggestions, I hope to provide a document that will give credence to their opinions, help reduce those external pressures, and allow them to be the most effective teachers they can.

Chapter 3: Journal Analysis

In my analysis of reader-response articles included in three of the professional journals published by National Council of Teachers of English, Research in the Teaching of English, English Education, and English Journal, I had expected to find a logical transmission of theory from RTE through Eng.Ed. to EJ. Unfortunately, I did not. What I did find forced me to re-examine my assumptions and look for new reasons.

I chose to analyze the professional journals for a number of reasons. First, reviewing their content over a period of twenty years, provided a context for what has been going on in the profession. Second, because journals are the one thing that can be consistently available to all, I wanted to determine how and to what extent they were impacting the profession.

I was looking for several things. I wanted to see just how much the topic of reader-response was addressed in these journals. Did it appear, or was there a problem with it not being recognized? I wanted to try to determine if there was a breakdown in the information chain from researcher to classroom teacher. Question one was "Is reader-response being written about, and is it appearing in these professional journals?"

Question two involved looking at what types of articles appeared and who were their intended audiences. Did the articles discuss reader-response abstractly in terms of theory and research, or did they focus in concrete terms on classroom application? Who

were the authors of these articles? Did most of the writing generate from the university or secondary level?

Question three involved the classroom teachers themselves. How much do teachers rely on journals? Did they read the journals? Which ones? Were they aware of and informed about the current theory? And then, if they were aware, how did they incorporate their knowledge into their classrooms? If not, what were some of the external pressures preventing them from doing so? Questions one and two will be addressed in this section. Question three will be addressed in the chapter four case studies.

Tracing the appearance of reader-response theory in the three specified journals rendered 291 articles. Twenty-nine articles were in RTE, 12 in Eng. Ed., and the remaining 250 in EJ. I attempted to further categorize the articles according to purpose. The categories used were original research, explanation or discussion of research, description of method or general application for classrooms, classroom practice including specific activities, and reviews/replies.

1. The category of original research included those articles describing primary research done by the author involving some aspect of reader-response. Authors included researchers, scholars, teacher educators, and classroom teachers. Articles included descriptions of the studies, the results, and often implications for teaching.

2. The second category, discussion of research and theory, was comprised of those articles written by a third party not involved in the original research project whose purpose was to further explain or clarify the findings of the research. Sometimes these articles simply

reworked earlier findings in less technical language. Others debated or questioned the validity of the findings, and still others took the original research and attempted to discuss its relationship to other research or its implications for the classroom.

3. The third category, description of method or application, looked at the research and how it might be applied in the classroom. Usually, these articles spoke in more general terms, discussing how the research findings might impact curriculum, teaching methods, teacher education, etc. Although these articles did discuss ways in which reader-response research/theory could be or is being applied in the classroom, they usually didn't offer specific activities or lesson plans which demonstrated concrete application.

4. Hence, my fourth category was classroom practice, which provides for the classroom teacher specific lesson plans or activities that could be immediately tried in the classroom. Many of these articles focused on specific units or titles and described actual lesson plans and their results.

5. The final category of reviews and replies was created to include those articles which didn't seem to fit in any of the other four categories. These included reviews of books and articles dealing with various aspects of reader response theory, or replies to earlier letters, etc.

Frequency

By far, the majority of the articles were in English Journal with a total of 250 articles. This represented 86% of all articles published.

Forty-one articles, or the remaining 14%, were found in RTE and Eng.Ed. combined.

In both RTE and Eng.Ed., the largest number of articles found in any year was five. For each, the yearly average of articles was low. RTE averaged 1.5 articles a year, and Eng. Ed. averaged only .6 articles per year.

In contrast, English Journal averaged 12.1 articles a year. I feel it is important in making this comparison to point out the difference in frequency of publication among the three journals. English Education and Research in the Teaching of English appear four times a year, while English Journal appears eight times. Even accounting for the difference in frequency, EJ still had at least five times more articles than either Eng.Ed or RTE.

In addition to the differences in frequency of publication are other factors. RTE and Eng.Ed tend to publish fewer but longer articles. RTE and Eng.Ed both average 4-5 articles per issue. In addition, Eng.Ed is limited to a maximum of 64 pages. EJ, on the other hand, carries a larger number of shorter articles, averaging approximately 20 articles per issue, and has no page limitation.

Distribution Among Journals

Although the distribution was so uneven, I'm not sure that the lack of articles in the college level journals necessarily indicates either lack of research or lack of interest. If the intent of the researchers is to put their finding in the hands of those who would use it, the classroom teachers, then publishing findings in the English Journal is the best choice with its primary readership made up of

secondary classroom teachers. RTE has a smaller readership, primarily from the university level. English Education has an even more limited readership than RTE, its audience being the segment of university professors who deal directly with teacher education.

Authorship

Interest in reader-response theory on the university level is further indicated by its authorship. Of 280 articles who had authors and affiliations listed, 158 or 56% were written by university people. Secondary classroom teachers were not far behind, authoring 122 articles or 44%. When looking only at English Journal, I found that university and secondary authors were evenly represented with nearly a 50-50 split. Clearly, both university and secondary educators are involved in reader-response. I feel it is important to note, however, that this university involvement is not necessarily campus-wide. These authors represent only that portion of the faculty directly involved in teacher education, which is not unusual, considering the nature of these journals.

Distribution Among Categories

Moving from authors to topics, I attempted to discern what areas of reader-response represented the largest interest. To do this, I sorted all 291 articles according to the five categories previously described. Original or primary research accounted for 32 articles or 11% of the total. Explanation or discussion of theory represented 23 articles or 8%, and reviews and/or replies to books or earlier articles accounted for 13 articles or 4%. Not surprisingly, the two categories

having the largest number of articles were those that attempted to translate theory into method. Description of method or general application had 84 articles or 29%, and classroom practice including specific activities numbered 140 or 49% of the total.

Separating journals and looking at their individual articles by category rendered some interesting results. English Education showed a relatively even distribution among the categories of explanation of research, description of methods, and classroom practice (Fig. 1).

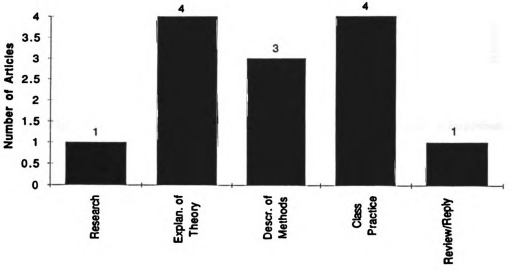

Figure 1. English Education: Reader-Response Articles by Category

Research in the Teaching of English fulfilled its emphasis on research, with the clear majority of articles falling into the research category. Interestingly, in spite of its singular focus on research, RTE did publish several articles dealing with secondary discussion of research and even classroom practice (Fig. 2).

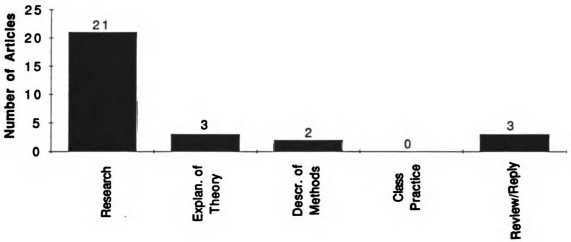

Figure 2. Research in the Teaching of English: Reader-Response Articles by Category

Also keeping with its readership and focus was English Journal. In an effort to disseminate research among practitioners, the majority of EJ's articles fit the categories of description of method and actual classroom practice (Fig. 3).

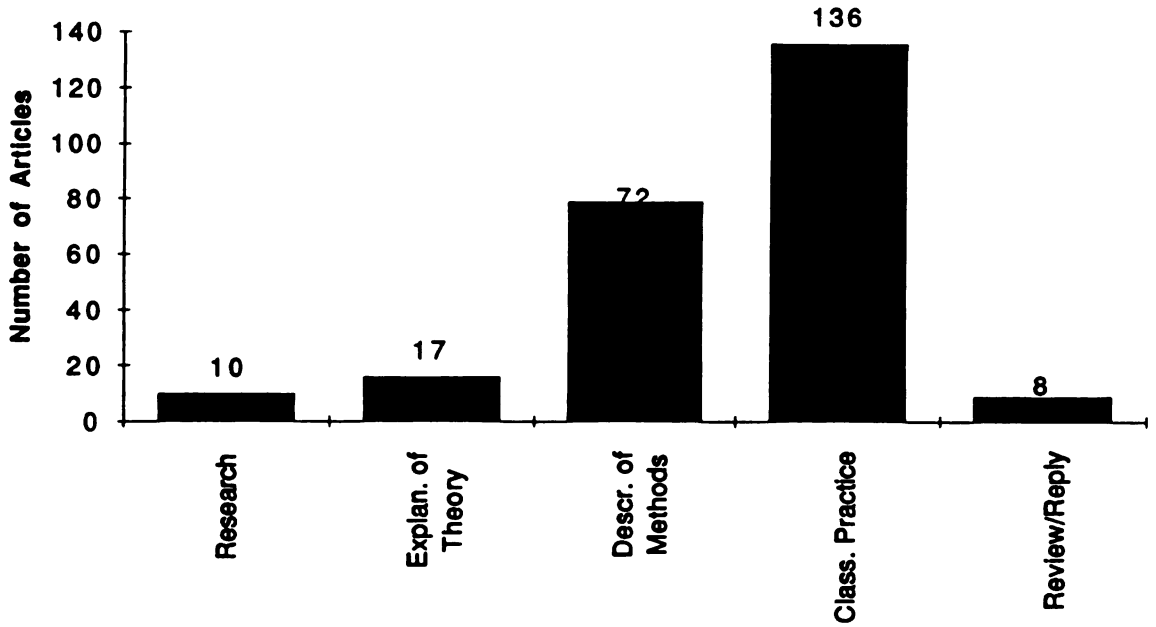

Figure 3. English Journal: Reader-Response Articles by Category

Annual Distribution

In examining the number of articles published according to the year they appeared, I could draw no conclusions regarding similarities among the three journals. Strong years did not coincide with each other. In fact, in some cases, one journal's all time high was another's all time low. Because English Education published so few articles over the period from 1970 to 1991, it was impossible to draw any conclusions about it, other than reader-response being a low priority. The highest number of articles published in any given year in Eng. Ed. was two, and that occurred three times, in 1972, 1984, and 1988. Six years each produced one article apiece, and the remaining thirteen years contained no articles at all.

Research in the Teaching of English showed more definite fluctuation in the number of articles published per year. Although the highest frequency of articles numbered only four and five per year, 1976 and 1985 were the peak years, respectively.

English Journal showed the most defined surges in terms of numbers of articles per year. Rather than showing moderate fluctuations as the other two journals, EJ experienced dramatic highs and lows, swinging from 2-5 articles per year all the way to 20-26 articles per year. Interestingly, the lowest year, 1976, with only two articles was immediately followed by the highest year, 1977, with 26 articles. Other peak years were 1973 with 22 articles and 1988 with 21 (Fig. 4).

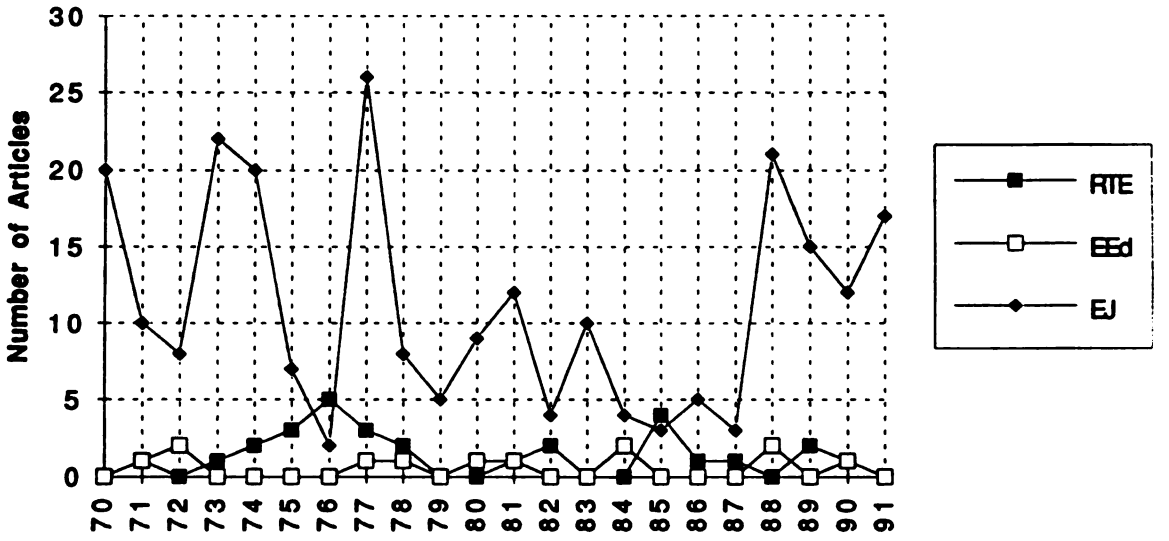

Figure 4. Frequency of Reader-Response Articles by Journal

Although there is no exact yearly correlation between Research in the Teaching of English and English Journal, it does appear that EJ is influenced by RTE. Both of RTE's major peaks in 1976 and 1985 were followed by significant peaks in EJ in 1977 and 1988 respectively (Fig. 4).

What were some of the factors that influenced this pattern? Social trends, the economy, education programs, and even journal editorships may have played a role. The seventies showed an interest in promoting reading. During this decade, 150 articles appeared, 128 of them in the English Journal. The eighties, however, saw only 103 articles (86 in EJ). This represents a drop in numbers of 32%. Part of the reason for this drop may be explained by the shift in educational priorities from a focus on reading to a focus on writing. Although I only analyzed two years of the nineties, 1990 and 1991, the numbers may indicate a returned emphasis on reading. Seventeen articles appeared in 1991, but it is certainly too early to make a prediction, and the increase is probably due to an increased interest in literature reading and whole language programs.

Category Review

In order to get a closer look at what was happening in these three journals in the area of reader-response, I'll cover each of the five categories separately. Because of the large number of total articles, I have chosen only those which serve as representative studies in each category and will limit my discussion to them.

Category 1: Original Research

Original research maintained a low but steady profile in professional journals throughout my twenty-year survey. As earlier stated, this category accounted for thirty-two articles. English Education published one, English Journal published ten, and not surprisingly, Research in the Teaching of English published the remaining twenty-one (Fig. 5).

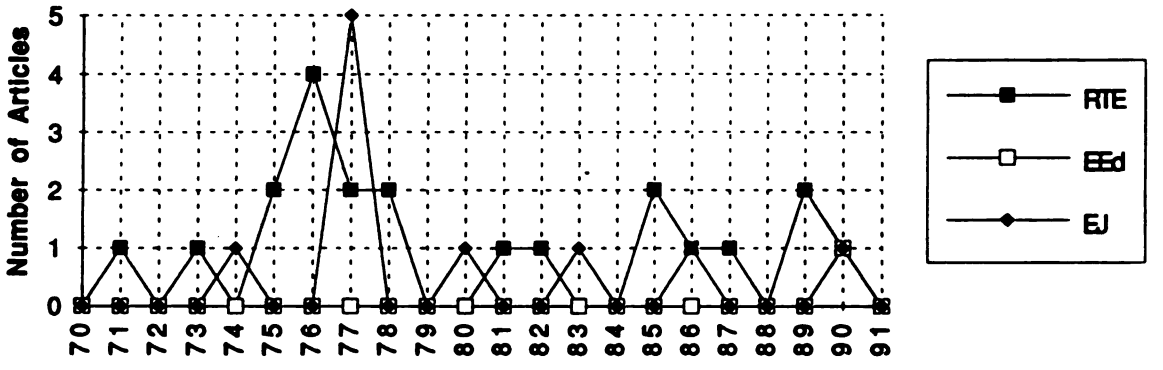

Figure 5. Category of Original Research: Frequency of Reader-Response Articles by Journal

Although most years averaged 1-2 articles a year, the mid-seventies showed a real surge in numbers for both EJ and RTE. In 1976, RTE published four articles dealing with research, or 20% of their total, and in 1977, EJ published five research related articles or 50% of its total. Interestingly, Eng.Ed's one article appeared in 1990. I hope this may signal a new trend for this journal. The concept of teacher as researcher is an important one, not only to encourage classroom teachers to see their roles as active researchers but also to give more credibility to the new methods. If teachers know and

understand the research behind the methods, they'll be more apt to practice them.

The nature of the research addressed in the three journals divided into three basic subcategories: 1) the nature of response and how readers make meaning, 2) the effects of applying reader-response theory in the classroom, and 3) a discussion of the research itself, including how to's and historical overviews.

Category one includes sixteen articles or 50% of the total number of research articles. As one might expect, the majority of these (14 of 16) appeared in RTE. The first division focuses on metacognition, or how readers make meaning and how their own awareness of the processes they use affects that meaning. These studies worked with the students, spanning junior high through college. All five of these studies concluded that the more aware readers were about the steps they went through in their reading, the deeper their understanding. All five studies also used some form of oral response, either think alouds, interviews, or discussion to assist the readers in exploring their own process.

Judith Langer (RTE 1990) in working with seventh and eleventh graders focused on how readers make meaning rather than what the responses are. She discovered that students take four major stances: attempting to make contact with the world of the text, being caught up in the narrative of the story, reflecting on previous knowledge, and distancing from the story and reacting objectively to the content or reading experience itself. Langer suggested:

> . . . that meaning develops at two levels simultaneously. First, student readers have different assumptions about

> responding to literary versus non-literary texts, and these affect the ways in which they orient themselves toward creating their momentary understanding as well as their views of the potential of each piece as a whole. At the same time, the similarities in the processes involved in responding across the different text types indicate that the four stances represent a range of meaning making options that underlie developing understandings in general--regardless of text type. (253)

Durrant, Goodwin, and Watson (EngEd 1990) concluded that it is important for students to discover what they've learned and how they've learned it. They also found that students saw their initial writing in response to literature as their final response rather than a means of exploring or deepening their reactions, and although the students used most of the reading strategies at one time or another, they may not have been aware enough of them to use them when reading alone. These authors suggest:

> A clear pedagogical implication of this would seem to be that teachers need to give pupils adequate time for reflection. This means somehow overcoming the pressure of the classroom, including having to rush to "cover" the curriculum, which are all too often used by teachers as an excuse for demanding premature formulation of response. (Durrant et al. 217)

Susan Hynds (RTE 1989) found that "bringing interpersonal constructs to literature was strongly related to the tendency to read outside of the classroom for personal reasons" (31). Hynds found, as

did the other researchers, that students perceived personal reading to be much different from school reading. They saw themselves as "story-driven in their personal reading and information-driven in much of their school-sponsored reading" (56). Furthermore, their perceptions of school "influence not only their stances toward texts, but their ability to respond in a variety of modes as well" (57). Hynds concluded that kids saw reading as a practice for something else, and that teachers must not only help them become better readers, but also help them make personal connections with reading and life.

Eeds and Wells (RTE 1989) also found that "children and teachers built meaning by working together" (26), and also emphasized the need for teachers being informed of theory and process. In their study, college students worked with small groups of fifth and sixth graders in literature study groups which discussed the literature together as opposed to the teacher asking questions for understanding. The college students became co-learners but not without some frustration at having to give up the traditional teacher-questioner role. They found, however, that the younger students were able to discuss the books and raise the issues on their own. The success of these younger students even with the relatively untrained college students as leaders raises the question of how much better would the discussion be if the leaders are experienced and knowledgeable?

Both teachers and students need to be aware that they respond differently to different texts. It is this awareness of their own reading processes that foster growth. Teachers need to work with

their students, helping them to reflect on their own reading and to make connections.

The second strand of the research articles looked at ways responses are affected and reasons for differences. A variety of studies considered ways response was affected by physical, geographic, and psychological input.

Petrosky, for example, (RTE 1976) concluded that a reader's deep sense of identity influences her responses to the literature. Campbell Ross (RTE 1978) looked at whether students responded more favorably to literature from their own geographic region than to literature from another area but found that the "argument for regional locality as a literary starting point was not supported in any clear-cut manner" (305), and Angelotti, Behnke, and Carlile published an interesting study in 1975 relating emotional response to literature with physical response.

Teachers, therefore, must be aware of the many external factors that influence response and the role that the reader's sense of identity plays. These various factors will influence individual readers differently, and teaching methods should take into account this diversity.

The third strand of research looked at developmental differences in readers and how these differences affect response. Beach and Brunetti (RTE 1976) found that the age of the character in the reading selection as well as the age of the reader affected response. In 1978, Beach and Wendler later found that as readers matured, they showed a shift from immediate surface feelings to long-range social or psychological beliefs and goals.

Jane Zaharias' study (RTE 1986) of 166 college students confirmed Applebee's findings of 1977 "that students' preferred patterns of response are strongly influenced by the nature of the texts they read" (64). Her study suggests that most research so far has been students' response to one work and that more needs to be done in looking at how genre influences response.

In addition, developmental factors affect how readers respond, both in terms of maturity and sophistication of response. Teachers should keep in mind that student response is affected by their maturity levels, as well as the nature of the texts they are assigned.

In the second research category, applying research techniques in the classroom, there was a broad variety of topics, including looking at one specific title, to a particular genre, to exploring the use of the workshop approach. One study by Freimuth and Jamieson used response technique to analyze the impact of the film "The Lottery" on eleventh and twelfth graders in order to determine whether the film versions had a desensitizing effect toward violence. The study concluded that it did not, but the fact that the community wanted to ban only the film, not the story, suggests that "the medium may be more significant than the message to some individuals" (243). Teachers should keep this in mind when selecting various media.

Other studies (Vardell '83; Lucking '76; Cooper and Odell '76) looked at how students' responses and particularly how teachers' questions broaden students' responses. Vardell found that "traditional teaching practice does not provide opportunity for carryover of the literary response to the composing process or vice

versa . . . As a corollary, constant opportunities to compose stories, filtering the literary experience through an individual view, may provide for greater understanding in responding to literature" (51).

These studies all indicate that the level of reader involvement affects response and again indicate the need for informed teaching. Lucking (RTE 1976) specifically concluded, "The nature of teachers' questions has a significant impact on the manner in which their students respond to literature" (275).

The third and final category of research articles includes discussion of the topic of research itself, including how to's, problems of, historical overviews, and international comparisons. Also included in this miscellaneous category was a list of suggestions for possible future research and an argument for its need. These articles all maintained the need for more research in reader-response and offered convincing arguments through their variety of approaches and information.

Alan Purves, for example, (EJ 1974) examined the emphasis on literature of ten countries and charted them according to teaching method approach. He found that the United States was primarily impersonal and content-based in focus. Candida Gillis (EJ 1977) in a study of English classrooms in the U.S. concurred with Purves. She found that classroom activities included study questions, teacher lectures, interpretation and analysis, and rarely included response creative activities.

It is interesting that the majority of articles dealing with classroom research appeared in the English Journal. Also interesting

is that the call for more research (mostly 1971-78), coincided with the most research articles (1976-77).

In summary, most of the research stressed the importance of meta-cognition, or how readers make meaning. Teachers need to be aware of their own reading and how they make meaning for themselves. Then they need to share that process with their students, assisting them to reflect on their own meaning making. It implies the need for being informed of theory and process and allowing for reflection. Teachers not only need to reflect, but they need to model this reflection for their student, providing within their classrooms sufficient time and incentive to do so. Readers need to make personal connections with their reading, and these articles described the interpersonal nature of the reading process and how meaning is made collaboratively.

Category 2: Explanation or Discussion of Theory

My second major category, explanation or discussion of theory, roughly subdivides into seven issues, including the role of literature, discussion of transactional theory, historical overviews, satire of present methods, other theories, defense of theory in response to opposition, and introduction of a new paradigm.

Discussion of theory contained 18 articles, 13 in English Journal, 2 in English Education, and 3 in Research in the Teaching of English. There was no real pattern of frequency (no year had more than another). Only 1-2 articles appeared any given year. I think it is significant that 13 of 18 (72%) appeared in the English Journal, disseminating the primary research into practice (Fig. 6).

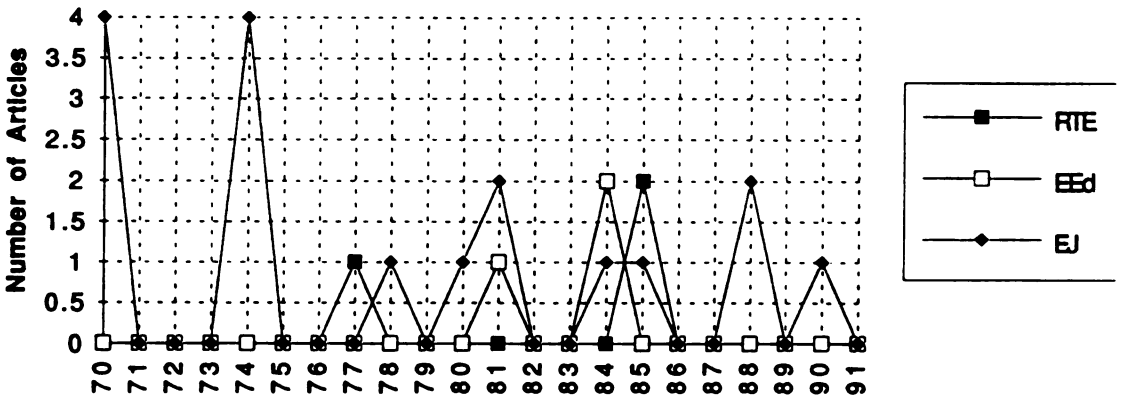

Figure 6. Category of Explanation of Theory: Frequency of Reader-Response Articles by Journal

The first issue focuses on the role of literature. There were four articles (all in EJ) which argued the power and purpose of literature in humanizing us. G. Robert Carlsen (EJ 1970) discussed the stages of reading for young people and how literature "can excite them . . . give tangible expression and form to their rebellion . . . [and] can confront them and force them to consider the perennial dilemma of being alive" (657).

This same year, Walter Loban (EJ 1970) further defended literature as "the only contemplative art that is required by the schools" (1086). He contended that many teachers and even critics have "purged themselves of emotional involvement" (1086) and argued that this detachment leads students to reject literature. He stated three purposes of literature: self-understanding, imaginative illumination, and a balanced perspective of life.

Bryant Fillion (EJ 1981) further argued that one must interact on a personal level to derive benefits from literature. For Fillion, the purpose of literature is also measured in the humanizing of its readers. He stated, "To paraphrase James Moffett's seminal comments about language, learning literature is not learning about literature but learning how to use literature, as a source of experience and as a resource for personal growth" (39-40).

Six articles continued this discussion, specifically focusing on transactional theory and the work of Louise Rosenblatt. All of these articles discussed how the use of response theory improves both reading and writing. In his ERIC/RCS report, Karl Koenke (EngEd 1984) found Louise Rosenblatt to be the recognized authority by most.

Louise Rosenblatt (RTE 1985) herself authored one of the articles, clarifying the differences between the terms "transaction" and "interaction," which she said represented different paradigms. She was bothered by the use of the terms interchangeably and somewhat heatedly argued they are not synonyms. She stressed the scientific background of "interaction," where objects act separately on each other with the scientist looking on, and offered as an example billiard balls. On the other hand, she defines transaction as "an ongoing process in which the elements or parts are seen as aspects or phases of a total situation" (98). Rosenblatt argued that the research design of the old paradigm needs to be changed from linear to non-linear and endorses an ethnographic method of research.

Several articles looked at the theoretical impact reader-response theory has had in the classroom. Deanna Bogdan (EngEd

1984) discussed the question of "what do we do with literary criticism now that we have engagement with the text?" (67). And Steve Judy (EJ 1978) suggested we return our focus to the drama of literature, "as Louise Rosenblatt has reminded us, literature is a performing art, by which she means that not only does literature 'perform' for us, we perform on it--creating meaning, creating our own drama--as we read the printed page" (7).

Three articles gave historic overviews of theory and discussed what we have learned from it. They spoke to the issues involved in this changing view of reading. Vinz and Kirby (EJ 1988) discussed the current research on response and how it has transferred focus from the writer and the text to the reader and the text. They referenced Rosenblatt, Holland, Bleich, Richards, Purves, Corcoran and Evans, Moffett, and others, concluding, "We are led to admit that the text does not carry hidden messages or puzzles for us to solve. Rather, text represents only a small part of the total experience that the reader creates through collaboration with the writer in a shared experience" (91). Based on the implications of the research, they asked three central questions:

1."What are the traditional and habitual ways in which students respond to literature?"

2."What evidence do their responses signal about the cumulative influence teachers have on student response?"

3."Can we encourage a wider range of response and still help students make meaning out of the text?" (91)

Arthur Applebee (RTE 1977) answered their second question in another ERIC/RCS report by quoting a 1968 dissertation by James

David Weiss that stated, "the approach to literature adopted by the individual teacher does affect the content of the response from that teacher's pupils" (256). Applebee concluded:

> Literary response is an extremely complex phenomenon; when it is combined with the complexities of the classroom situation the pitfalls for even the most sophisticated investigation are many. As Purves and Beach (1972) found in their general survey of research in response to literature, reading interests, and the teaching of literature, virtually every study can be faulted, but as a body of research the findings converge to allow generalizations stronger that any one of them. (264)

Several other articles continued to dispute response theory, defending alternate theories of reading and the importance of content knowledge. And finally, in contrast to the arguments over which old paradigm is right, Constance Weaver (RTE 1985) offered the possibility of an altogether new paradigm. She discussed a new, emerging scientific paradigm, that of an organism, a process, one that is transactional and non-linear. Weaver compared this new scientific paradigm to the new paradigms in reading and literary theory and connected the two through the metaphor of dance used by quantum physicists:

> Just as the universe may be viewed as fundamentally a dance of transient forms that sparkle in and out of existence, so meaning, the poem, may be viewed as an ever-fluctuating dance that occurs more or less simultaneously on and across various levels: letters,

> words, sentences, schemata; writer, text, reader; text, reader, and context; the present reader with other readers, past and present; and so forth; all connected in a multi-dimensional holarchy, an interlocking network or web of meaning, a synchronous dance in which there is no clear distinction between what is and what happens. (313)

Weaver argued that the mechanistic metaphor and model has dominated Western thought for the last three centuries and has served us well. It now needs to be changed to allow for new thoughts and evolutions--the organic model. She also offered the possibility that both metaphors are simultaneously true. "The universe itself is seen as fundamentally an organic process within which mechanism operates . . . both are necessary dancers in the universal dance" (314).

What is apparent in this second category is the argument over the changing view of reading and the various paradigms. In this discussion of theory, authors agree that response to literature is affected by not only the genre and choice of literature, but may be even more affected by the individual teacher's approach to it. If a teacher believes that the value of literature lies in authorial intent and further views the purpose in teaching literature as the passing on of literary cultural heritage and creating sophisticated literary critics, her classroom approach will likely be more textual-based. If, however, she believes that the power of literature lies in its connection with the reader, her approach will be more experiential or response-based, an issue that I will look at in my teacher

interviews. My next category looks at some of the response-based approaches being implemented in classrooms.

Category 3: Description of Method and Application

My third category, description of method or application, also maintained a steady presence in the journals, accounting for a total of 84 articles. RTE included two articles, EngEd had three, and as one might expect because of its purpose, EJ published the remaining 79 (Fig. 7).

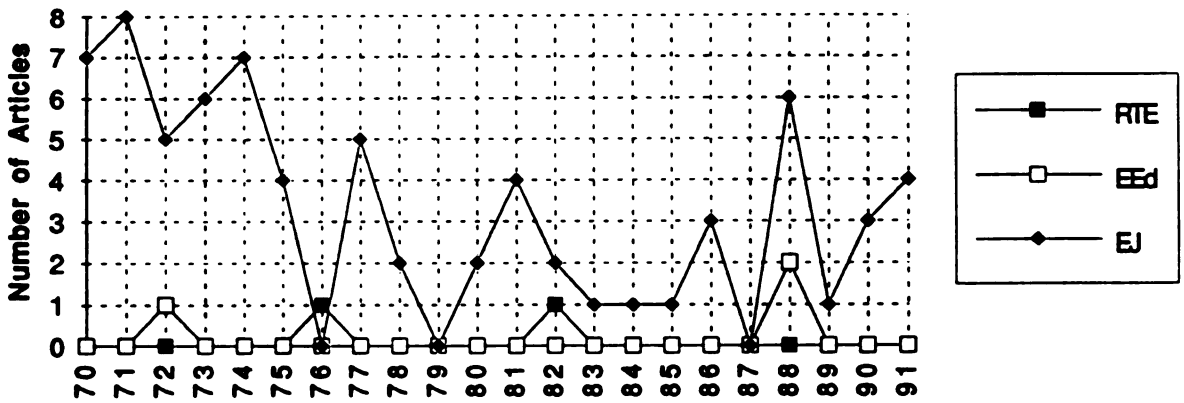

Figure 7. Category of Description of Method: Frequency of Reader-Response Articles by Journal

Overall, the seventies had the largest trend with 48 articles or 57% of the total. The eighties showed a tapering off with 29 articles or 35%. Although the eighties were somewhat flat, the last half of the decade showed a slight increase in numbers into the early nineties. Still too early to predict, this may signal a return in trends.

In this category of talking about response, the articles divided into four areas of focus: the changing role of the teacher since coming to the classroom and the transfer of authority to the student, discussion of response theory and the benefit of reading workshop approach, the history and development of response theory within the profession along with reasons for confusion and disagreement, and finally a discussion of why reader response has failed to play a bigger role in the English curriculum coupled with pleas for change.

The first area contained 12 articles discussing the changing role of the teacher. Many focused on the need for the teacher to see the student, not the subject matter, as the focus. The teacher should relinquish the traditional teacher control and allow students the authority to shape their own discussions. As Robert C. Small (EngEd 1972) states, "In the traditional English program, so often condemned but so often still encountered, the teacher spoke as school-system appointed authority on all matters of English" (151). This demands a shift from a skills or knowledge-based curriculum to one that is student-centered and requires training for both the teacher and student.

John Rouse (EngEd 1988) described a teacher as "one who gives not instruction but provocation" (88). This shifting role requires some groundwork on the part of the teacher. It is neither normal nor comfortable for teacher or students. Students must be trained in the theory and vocabulary of response. They must also be convinced of the value of their opinions and often trained in their ability to form them.

Both teacher and students must view discussion of literature as a collaborative and infinite process. Perhaps Phyllis A. Muldoon (EJ 1990) said it best in reflecting on her own experience in restructuring her courses in order to teach students to think. "I have had to change my role from that of a leader always on center stage to that of a prober, guide, problem-poser, resource person, and strategist. In these roles I help students increase their competence as learners--not as parrots, empty pages, sponges, or quiet stenographers. I, too, have become a learner" (35).

The second and largest area was on promoting response theory and extolling the benefits of using a reader's workshop approach in the classroom. Building on those articles which discussed the transfer of authority from the teacher to the student, these articles sought to further expand our understanding of response theory. They further attempt to convince the reader (teacher?) of the importance of restructuring the traditional curriculum. Because of the effort required on the teachers' part to effect this change, those arguments must be convincing.

Roderic Botts (EJ 1971) also felt that what we want our students to be able to do and how we conduct our classes doesn't match, believing the traditional classroom design makes students too isolated and dependent on teachers. "The high school student likewise learns that literature has nothing to do with life outside of school--in spite of our efforts to relate literature to life. More often than not he learns that literature is something contained in a book too heavy to carry home at night" (Botts 90).

Carol Kuykendall (EJ 1972) in a further discussion of James Moffet's student centered approach and its importance to curriculum design stated, "it is the structure of the subject that must be adjusted to the structure of the learner, not the other way around" (716).

Jerome McGovern (EJ 1972) discussed how we beat the joy out of our students by having them read and discuss books and topics before they're ready to or before they've experienced similar situations themselves. He stated, "teachers seem intent on destroying the idea of reading for the fun of it" (1190). He further urged:

> We must stop assuming that it is an absolute good for the intelligent student to discuss the symbolic representation of what he's experienced in reality, to manipulate the concept of tragedy before he had a concept of his own self. We must stop making young people sound as if they have the wisdom of the ages. We must give back to them what are the prerogatives of the young. (1190)

Other articles further endorsed the use of response as a humanizing tool. "This human touch is much needed in our classrooms; the relaxed comfortable atmosphere that real laughter suggests and engenders is a significant element for the nurturing of learning" (Milner 34). Joan Kelleher (EJ 1975) further argued in favor of individual instruction to counter the effect of a de-personalized, high tech society. "If teachers encourage students to question answers, rather than answer questions, the students quickly see that learning is primarily their own responsibility" (30).

Clearly, authors of these studies feel that the role of the teacher and the traditional concept of classroom must change. Twenty-two of the articles in this category were directed at assisting the teacher in accomplishing this overwhelming task (47%). New techniques emerged including individualized reading, small groups, learning centers, student/teacher conferences, problem solving, and role playing. Response activities included projects, journal writing, response logs, readers theatre, and other activity alternatives.

Suddenly, in incorporating response theory, the teacher is faced with meeting the needs of thirty students at a time, all of whom are at different levels of reading development and sophistication. The teacher, to meet these individual needs, finds it necessary to juggle a huge repertoire of techniques.

The confusion within the profession resulting from the influx of all this new material was inevitable, and in this third area, fifteen articles spoke to it. These articles represented a variety of viewpoints, but most sought to lower the anxiety level of the classroom teachers caught in the midst of this change.

James E. Miller, Jr. in his NCTE Presidential Address of 1970 called for the profession to drop their debates over teaching approaches to literature:

> In literature, English teachers have been joined too long in the battle over critical method, over whether to use a historical-biographical approach or to use a critical-analytical--or Freudian, or archetypal, or sociological. All approaches are wrong: there should be plunges ahead --immersion and total experiencing. English teachers

> have kept their eyes trained too long on a series of classic texts constituting the tradition, and have felt it their duty in the preservation of the tradition to pound it somehow into the heads and the hearts of their students; and very little has penetrated the heads and even less the hearts. The problem is where we have fixed our gaze. We must turn from the text to the student, and we must consider our primary task the education of his imagination--or, in the Emersonian sense, the bringing of robust health to his imagination (197). Let the "new kind of communication" commence; let the "continuing dialog" begin. Let us start our work together to restore health to the individual and the collective imagination. (Miller 198)

The early seventies saw the profession less than united in its methodologies and theories. Two years after Miller's address, Douglas Frame (EJ 1973) responded to the despair of those in the profession. After attending a conference in Britain, he was dismayed by the lack of focus and purpose in the profession:

> It's just that if what I saw and heard is a representative sample of what went on, teachers of English as a group have lost any sense of identity; they can no longer explain even to one another what it is they suppose themselves to be doing or why. Worst of all, there seems to be considerable reluctance even to admit the existence of this identity crisis; many have simply given up. (231)

Vernon Smith (EJ 1979) offered his personal perspective on the English profession but apparently had also fallen victim to the

encroaching despair. "The 1977 NSSE Yearbook The Teaching of English confirms for me that there has been no revolution in the teaching of English, nor is one expected in the remainder of this century" (84).

The eighties found other professional leaders attempting to identify reasons for lack of success. Dwight Burton (EJ 1980) stated that despite the traditional dominance of literature in the curriculum, schools have never been very successful in teaching it (30). He continued, "The major reason for these failings, I think, is that few programs in literature are based on clear rationales, clear theories of literature" (31).

In the mid-eighties, James R. Squire (EJ 1985) discussed the current lack of agreement in the purpose of English and the kind of literary experience that students should have. He offered suggestions for what teachers should do while waiting for a redefinition, including a close look at the traditional literary canon:

> What these illustrations suggest is the need for re-examining the vast body of literature, established and contemporary, to identify for young people living in our post-technological age those works of the past and present most likely to elicit rich literary response. The selection taught to all children should not only meet criteria of excellence, but should be those works likely to speak most directly to all of our children. (Squire 210)

The end of the eighties continued the discussion of teacher goals versus student goals. In 1988, Robert E. Probst claimed that teachers still viewed their goals in terms of teaching skills and

strongly reasoned why those goals should be modified to reflect the theories of Rosenblatt:

> If we accept the idea that literature ought to be significant, that readers have to assimilate it and work with it, that transforming it into knowledge is more significant than memorizing the definitions of technical terms, then we need to find some ways of bringing readers and the text together, and of forcing upon readers the responsibility for making meaning of text . . . But if meaning is a human act rather than a footlocker full of dusty facts, then we must focus attention on the act of making meaning rather than simply on the accumulation of data. ("Dialogue" 38)

This most recent twenty year period was certainly a time of turmoil and challenge.

The final area included nine articles which attempt to define what are the roadblocks to professional change. Interestingly, all but two articles accepted failure as a foregone conclusion.

Theodore W. Hipple addressed the roadblocks in his article, "Eliminating the Negative in English Teaching" (EJ 1971), stating:

> Literature is too rich, has too much to offer, to permit our sacrilege by reducing it to the irreducible and then testing on that. Let's focus our evaluative efforts on broad ideas and, by doing so, allow students to make differing responses to literature which we selected, after all, because we wanted the literature to affect our students. (375)

Charles Cooper (EJ 1971) blamed both the collegiate discouragement of personal response and also the secondary teachers' basic misunderstanding of the adolescent audience. Because of this misunderstanding of audience, Cooper felt secondary teachers have attempted to teach their students as upper level college students by using critical analysis. "Regrettably, many of them have ignored their own intuitions about their audience and about response to literature" (1063).

Other articles cited lack of training, lack of reading materials, administrative control, and basic differences in teachers' views of the purpose of teaching literature based on their professional preparation and personal schooling experience. Suzanne Howell (EJ 1977) stated, "Whether or not you accept the idea that student response should play a greater role in the teaching/study of literature depends on your concept of learning, of literature, and of the human being" (42).

One article was a personal testimonial from Gary L. McLaughlin (EJ 1981) who found Rosenblatt's response theory helped him connect and make sense of his own teaching theory. He stated that response theory allowed him to sort through and make sense of what he called a "shotgun approach to teaching" (22).

Although McLaughlin's testimonial was high praise, there was an equally passionate article at the other end of the spectrum. Philip Sbaratta (EJ 1978) discussed his experience of teaching an extension class in a local high school and his being dismayed at discovering a set of grammar tests, objective literature tests, and a set of compositions graded only on correctness. His perception that the real

profession was reflected in the pages of English Journal was shattered. He described himself transported back to his high school experience of 1958. "I had been through this course myself--the endless grammar tests, the pointless compositions, and the formulaic literature tests. But so much has happened since 1958. The English Journal said so" (15). He continued, "And now I wonder how indicative English Journal is of what is going on in the average English classroom. Maybe this classroom in a suburban high school is the real world. Maybe not that much has really changed in the teaching of English afterall" (15).

Sbaratta was distressed by this possibility and admitted that he may have been overreacting based on one experience, but he was clearly disillusioned and joined the ranks of those questioning the profession.

In summary, the role of the teacher is clearly changing. The classroom is slowly becoming collaborative. There is a shift in authority from the teacher to the student, as well as a shift from a knowledge or skills based to a process based curriculum. These major shifts do not come easy. They require retraining of both students and teachers. It takes time and requires risk. Goals do not always match practice, and for many in schools, there is no connection between literature and pleasure reading. All this change creates disagreement, fear, frustration, and dismay, a point to be discussed further in the interviews with teachers.

Category 4: Classroom Practice (Specific plans and activities)

My fourth category, classroom practice, included those articles which provide specific lesson plans and activities for teachers to implement in their classrooms. This category was by far the largest in the study with 140 articles. English Journal published 136 of those articles, English Education published 4, and Research in the Teaching of English published none. I was not surprised to discover that EJ accounted for 97% of the articles, given the journal's focus on secondary classroom methods and pedagogy (Fig. 8).

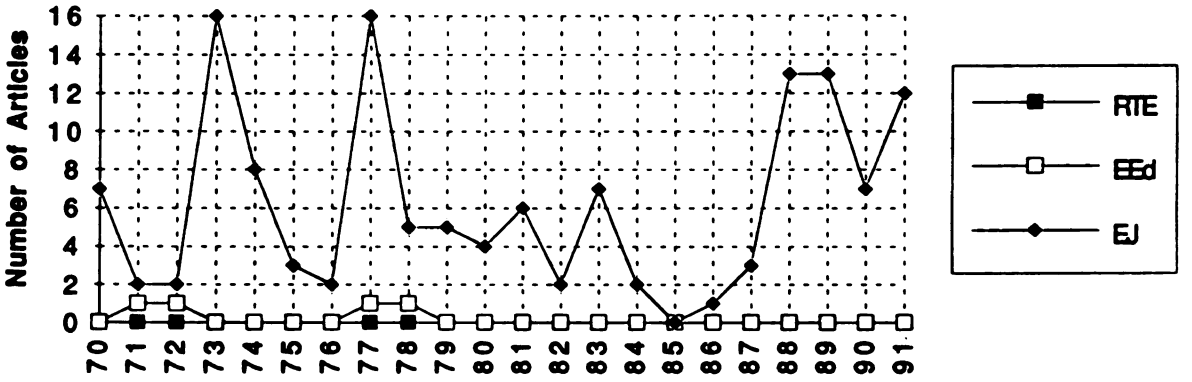

Figure 8. Category of Classroom Practice: Frequency of Reader-Response Articles by Journal

The timeline again showed the seventies out producing the eighties. The seventies included 65 articles; the eighties dropped off to 52. Even though there was an overall decrease, the drop was less significant than that in the category of research. Also, if the last two

years of the decade (1988-89) are dropped with their 19 respective articles, there remain 25 articles which may be more indicative of the decade.

The resurgence of articles in the last two years of the eighties continues into the early nineties, with 1990 and 1991 producing 19 articles. I don't feel that this shift toward reader-response is cyclical as many others have suggested about other educational trends. Rather, I believe it is a slowly growing theory which may have growth followed by a drop off, though never losing completely all the ground gained. Despite its ups and downs, reader-response is steadily growing, and only time will tell if my hypothesis is correct. I hope these last four years indicate a positive trend and reflect a renewed interest on the part of the profession in reader-response theory.

Although all articles in this category focused on classroom application of response activities, there were several topics that emerged. In addition to describing specific activities, some authors included their rationale for reader-response, still trying to convince their doubting colleagues. There were 32 articles in this first group. The second classification was the largest with 105 articles. These included specific lesson plans and various activities. The third classification discussed the topic of evaluation and assessment when using response activities. Ironically, there was only one article that addressed this topic.

Let me begin with the articles that combined activities with rationale. Eleven articles promoted the need for subjective response and encouraged the teacher to focus on the student rather than the

text. In an article entitled "Exploring Response to Literature" (EngEd 1972) Stephen Judy attempted to allay the fears of the classroom teacher regarding the loss of critical analysis skills. He said, "I also found, interestingly enough, that as the students became more skilled at making personal responses, they tended to come back to the matters of criticism that many teachers fear may be lost if one emphasizes subjective reactions" (36). Ten other articles also promoted beginning with personal response in responding to literature and discussed the various advantages.

Larry Andrews (EJ 1977) stated that any critical consideration of the text must be considered in reaction to the reader:

> Too much emphasis upon the text can leave little room for a fifteen-year-old to become engaged in the experience of literature . . . If we can accept our students' overt responses to literature as statements of tentative belief, as means of giving voice to the thinking process, then discussions in literature classes become a setting for the gradual shaping of responses. (60)

Alan C. Purves (EngEd 1971) continued discussing the importance of subjective response. "The raw, dumb response is not to be shunned, but to be recognized as the well-spring of all that could come from it" (119).

Most of the articles in stressing the importance of developing a student's voice also mentioned the benefits of a growing mutual respect between the teacher and the student.

The next subset included 17 articles that somehow emphasized connections. Literature connections mentioned included those to self,

to others, to community, to history, and to other literature. They stressed that encouraging students to reach out and connect with the world makes literature come alive, and students see a purpose to it. Many of these authors recommended starting with the familiar and moving to the unfamiliar, and their literature activities were often designed in thematic units to represent their intended connections.

Five articles focused specifically on the dynamics of the reading/writing connection that are so adaptable with response. "I realized that, in my classes, my students had been readers of literature, but rarely had they been writers of literature" (Warawa 50). As Warawa implies, reading literature from a totally objective approach can make for some dry reading. Reading and writing should be integrated in order to derive the most benefits from each.

The second classification included those articles which simply shared activities and lesson plans without providing rationale. As I said before, these accounted for the majority of articles with 105 in total. Fifty-five articles included plans with lists of multiple response activities. These activities were often done in tandem with others, and students were allowed to choose from possible offerings, including small groups, individual reading, personal research, fiction writing, journals, and creative dramatics.

Several other articles focused on a single response activity. Small group work was the topic of four articles. Individualized reading accounted for three, extended personal research, two, and original fiction writing, two. The use of journals and reading logs was discussed in twelve articles. I was most surprised in the area of creative dramatics. Five articles focused entirely on the benefits of

reading aloud, and twenty articles decried the benefits of role-playing, chorale reading, and readers theatre.

The final classification in this category dealt with the problems of evaluation and assessment when using the reader-response approach. How does a teacher translate a subjective response into objective measurement? Sarah Snider (EJ 1978) described her use of a Likert Scale to measure affective response after her poetry unit, although she admitted she uses it primarily to evaluate her own future planning of lessons (38). The absence of articles dealing with this topic do not indicate a lack of concern, but rather a lack of answers. Again, the problem of assessment may stem from teachers' incomplete understanding of the complex theory of reader-response.

In summary, the number of articles was greater in the seventies than the eighties. Though less frequent, the articles dealing with classroom practice were still heavy with rationale in an effort to convince fellow colleagues of the value of reader-response. Most articles also stressed subjective response, developing student voice, and making reading and writing connections. The problems of evaluation and assessment persist.

Category 5: Reviews and Replies

My final category, reviews and replies, includes reviews of literature published both for professionals and students. This category included only thirteen articles in the three journals over twenty years. Although the frequency of articles was low, their numbers were equally distributed between the two decades (Fig. 9).

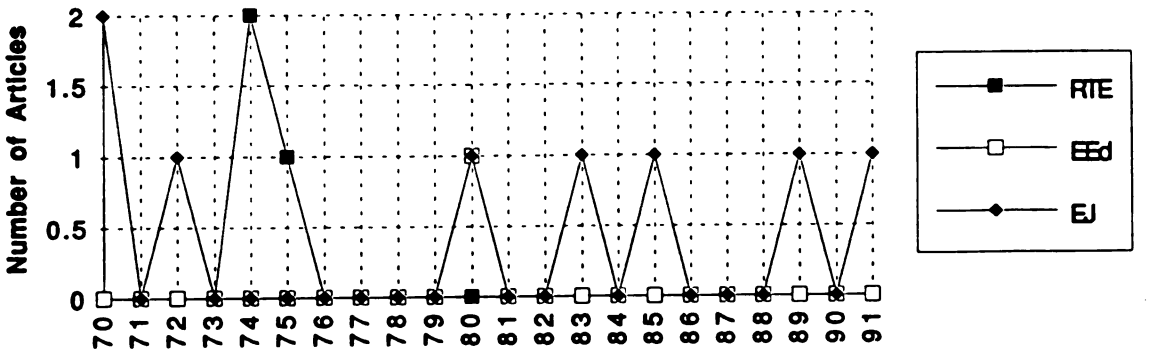

Figure 9. Reviews and Replies:
Frequency of Reader-Response Articles by Journal

The articles fell basically into four areas: reviews of Rosenblatt, reviews of Purves, reviews of other selected professional literature, and reviews of student literature, including anthologies and young adult titles.

I created the first area for those authors who reviewed Louise Rosenblatt's work directly. There were two reviews, both appearing in 1980. The first review, written by Hugh Agee, appeared in English Education for The Reader, The Text, and The Poem (1978), and the second, by Linda Shadiow in English Journal, reviewed Literature as Exploration (1976). This third edition of Literature as Exploration marked the anniversary of almost forty years since its first appearance in 1938. Both reviews included high praise for her work and its significance in the educating of teachers in the reading process. Both reviews mention her going beyond the theoretical and showing how her response theory translates into the classroom. Shadiow (EJ 1980) stated, "There are certain books in my personal library that I have come to personify as omnipresent teachers/

mentors rather that valued resources. Literature as Exploration, Louise Rosenblatt's eloquent defense of the student-reader in my classroom, is one of these" (75).

I formed a second category for the direct review of Alan C. Purves' study, Literature Education in Ten Countries. One article in Research in the Teaching of English, May 1974, contained two separate reviews by Dwight L. Burton and Margaret J. Early. Both reviews commented on Purves' surprising results which concluded the schools have less impact on the development of reading interest and ability than earlier thought.

Burton stated, "The central finding of the study undoubtedly will leave many teachers of literature shaken, though perhaps we should not be too surprised by it" (17). He continued, "Purves concludes that the ability to comprehend or interpret literature is a subset of reading ability, less the result of any particular school curricular effort than the result of a favourable home and school environment, and that interest, too, is largely the result of a conducive home environment" (17).

Early added to the discussion by quoting Purves. "Where the school has an effect is in the inculcation of a preferred set of responses" (qtd. in Early 21). Both Burton and Early suggested that we should do more follow up research in this area.

My third set included reviews of and responses to other selected professional literature. Here, twenty-one books were mentioned in seven articles, four in the early 70's, one in the early 80's, and two in the late 80's and early 90's. As with many of the other categories of articles about response, the majority were found

in the early 70's. The most interesting was a list of significant publications put together as a suggested list for summer professional reading. In May 1971, English Journal's list included twelve titles published between 1964-1970, several of which deal with response, including the work of Ken Goodman, John Dixon, Louise Rosenblatt, G. Robert Carlsen, James Moffett, Walter Loban, Ken Macrorie, James R. Squire, and others. These collected titles, perhaps ironically, remain mainstays in professional reading.

My final area of reviews included those that directly review literature for students, including literature series anthologies as well as young adult titles. In the January 1985 issue of EJ, Mark Gulesian and Stephanie McConachie reviewed the three literature series of Ginn, Macmillan, and McDougal Littel. They evaluated the eighth and eleventh grade texts for each in terms of their inclusion of response theory. Sadly, none rated outstanding. Macmillan fared the best. Although it didn't include much response, the series at least acknowledged it. Ginn also had some response activities, but the few they had were placed at the end, rather than the beginning, of the literature experience. McDougal Littel had almost entirely a critical analysis focus. It is discouraging to find that in the mid-1980's, the major publishers are still not responding to the response theory. Clearly, the textbooks' focus on analysis has impact in the field. This along with many other roadblocks will be discussed at greater length in a later chapter.

Summary

In summary, reading ability is more a result of home environment than school effort or curriculum. What school does affect is how students respond, and much of that is influenced by the adopted literature text. Sadly, literature series still do not reflect response theory in their anthologies.

What does all of this mean for the classroom teacher? What answers, if any, does this provide? First of all, in response to my initial question, "Is reader-response being written about in professional journals?" the answer is yes. Reader-response theory is being addressed both in research and application. Although the number of research articles was few (averaging 1.5 per year), they were there.

I feel it is significant that the discussion of pedagogy in the journal English Education was especially weak (.6 per year). Eng.Ed plays a larger role in teacher education, and, therefore, should reflect the concerns of the profession. Unlike the other two journals, Eng.Ed did not focus more on reader-response in the seventies and then drop off in the eighties but remained relatively consistent in its lack of coverage. Does this indicate that our teacher education programs still do not reflect the latest research? Does it indicate that Eng.Ed is more concerned with composition than reading? Or possibly, those involved in reader-response research and practice on the university level recognize the need for articulation with secondary teachers, and English Journal provides this shared forum.

Second, what types of articles appeared, and who were their intended audiences? Those articles written were predominantly

focused on classroom application. Many of the articles fell in the realms of either the textual or experiential perspectives, or some combination of both. The theory was there, but most often combined as rationale for specific activities. With the majority of articles being published in EJ, the intended audience was the classroom teacher. Authorship seemed to be evenly divided between secondary and university levels. Few articles were co-authored, and I would like to see more collaboration between professionals from both levels.

Question three looked at the primary intended audience for these articles, the classroom teachers, and how they make use of the journals. In the next chapter I look at ten individual teachers, their reading histories, education, and professional lives. I look at what impact response theory has had on their lives and their teaching, as well as what they see as their primary goals and what they perceive as roadblocks in their teaching of literature.

Chapter 4: Interviews and Questionnaires

In attempting to discover what effect reader-response theory and other factors influenced classroom methods, I completed the third strand of my research, the individual teacher questionnaires and interviews (Appendices D and E). As I mentioned before, the ten teachers I examined were from three mid-Michigan schools: one rural, one urban, and one suburban. Each of the ten teachers completed both the questionnaire and the follow-up interview.

Louise Rosenblatt, in her transactional theory of reading, believes that readers bring past experience to the reading which enters into the reader's transaction with the text in the process of creating meaning. Therefore, teachers' own reading experiences should be reflected in their teaching. Accepting this hypothesis, I attempted to determine those factors which influenced teachers' approaches to literature in their classrooms. I examined their reading histories, their teacher education, their present methods, and any external factors they felt impacted or limited their teaching. The interviews covered the same general areas but allowed the teachers to explain their answers and to tell their own stories using personal anecdotes.

In the first area of the questionnaire, Biographical Information, I asked the basic information of age, teaching experience, level of education, etc. In their reading histories, I looked at participants' own experiences with reading as secondary classroom students, including the number of years English was required, basic curriculum models, and usual methods of instruction. In addition to their

student experiences, I also looked at their present reading habits, including how often they read for pleasure outside of class, what types of reading they do, and how they approach or respond to this personal reading. In this part of the study, I was attempting to discover if their personal approaches to reading were similar to their classroom approaches, recognizing the importance of personal reading in legitimizing the emotional connections to reading that are often not acknowledged. It is these emotional connections that allow us to develop attachments, to love reading, and to become lifelong readers.

Next, I examined their teacher education and professional affiliations. Were the theories of reading and approaches to literature that they were taught the same as those they experienced as students, or were they different? How did their high school experience compare to their college experience? If they were different, which had greater influence on their teaching? I also looked at professional affiliation, attempting to discover what effect, if any, continued professional affiliation had on teaching methods.

Next, I looked at teachers' current classroom practice by asking the participants to rate their goals for the teaching of literature. I also asked them to identify their instructional methods, typical response activities, presentation methods, and assessment methods.

Finally, I investigated possible external pressures such as lack of time, isolation, administration, parents, student demands, SAT or other tests, press and media, or state curriculum guidelines. Teachers were asked to what extent they felt these or other external factors interfered with or somehow affected their teaching.

Initially, I tallied all of the written questionnaires in order to discover if there was a typical teacher portrait. Next, I separated the participants by schools to see if there was a difference by location. First, I will describe the results of the overall tally of the questionnaire.

The Typical Teacher

Based on the results of the questionnaire, I've attempted to provide a profile of the teachers in this study. Through the use of this profile, the reader will be able to determine in what ways the individual teachers meet or deviate from the norm. What are we able to generalize about these ten teachers? Are there similarities that consistently appear? I realize that I can only generalize for these ten teachers, but hope that this provides insight for others.

Biographical Information

Survey participants ranged in age from 25-55, with my "typical teacher" being 45 years old. Of the ten teachers interviewed, seven were female and three were male. Teaching experience ranges from 3-28 years for an average of 20 years. This compares with a national average of 15 years and a Michigan average of 19 years' experience. These teachers meet an average of 5-6 classes a day. Individual student contact ran from 80-180 students per day, averaging 118. Per hour, classes ranged in size from 18-35 for an average of 24 students per class.

In addition to their regular teaching duties, teachers listed professional responsibilities, including being department chair,

foreign language dual assignment, Health, Substance, and Reproductive Health Coordinator, as well as various professional affiliations.

Interests or hobbies beyond teaching included many activities from movies to golf to fishing. The number one named hobby was reading, named by nine out of ten participants.

In determining which factors influence teaching, I looked at several areas, including the teacher as student. My hypothesis was that teachers teach as they were taught. I also looked at their personal reading habits to determine if they approached literature in the same manner in and out of their classrooms. Professional involvement and education became another focus. Did level of education or professional involvement affect teacher performance? And finally, what are the external pressures that enter into our classrooms?

Teacher as Student

My average teacher's experience as a secondary English student included class sizes of 27 in an English 9, 10, 11, 12 curriculum. This typical student was required to take four years of English for which the primary focus was literature and grammar, with composition running a close third. For most, literature and composition were taught separately, and required literature classes generated a short canon of 25 titles, six of which were Shakespeare. Interestingly, three of the interviewees couldn't recall any titles. They knew they had read several books, knew they had been "classics," but couldn't remember anything about them.

Literature covered in class was most often found in class anthologies with an occasional novel or paper back used as a supplement. Rarely were young adult novels used or any other supplemental materials. The primary teaching method involved lecture, followed by teacher-directed questions and discussion.

When asked as students to respond to literature, many recalled being asked to summarize, answer study questions, and write essays. Reading journals, personal writing, or creative dramatics were rarely or never used. Occasionally, when students were directed to write in conjunction with reading, most often it was study questions related to content. Even so, in these writings, the emphasis was 50% correctness and 50% content.

Their teachers' primary method of presenting literature was to assign the material, usually with all students reading the same titles. Most often, students were required to read outside of class. Only occasionally was literature read aloud in class.

Students were evaluated on their reading most often with objective tests and essay tests. Portfolios, surveys, teacher conferences, and other alternate evaluation methods were rarely, if ever, used.

In spite of this apparent impersonal/standardized approach, the majority of teachers indicated that they had "special" English teachers and cited those teachers' enthusiasm as the reason.

Teacher as Reader

In terms of personal reading, my typical teacher regularly reads for pleasure outside of the classroom. Time spent ranges from

4-10 hours a week and averages 6.5 hours. Most pointed out that their reading increased dramatically over the summer, and many stated that they put pleasure reading on the back burner or felt guilty about reading during the school year if there were other important things to do.

Choice in personal reading regularly included novels, magazines, and newspapers. Occasionally, they chose best sellers, nonfiction, and poetry.

The reasons they gave for why reading gave them the most pleasure included gaining new ideas, hope, or escaping reality. The average teacher claims to regularly discuss pleasure reading with friends, colleagues, and students, although most of this discussion appears to be limited to the sharing of titles read rather than personal response to them. She also regularly identifies with characters, actions, or issues in her reading and relates readings to earlier readings.

The definition of literature for these teachers ranged from "any printed material" to "prose or verse of significance."

Teacher Training and Professional Affiliations

Reflecting on their professional education, all indicated an emphasis on literature. Most had methods classes but felt they were not worthwhile. Methods classes involved designing lesson plans, writing discussion questions, study questions, and literature exams. All felt that their professors and the methods taught did not reflect the realities of the classroom.

Most were not taught to teach writing, nor were they taught how to teach reading. For the average teacher, the approaches to literature learned in methods classes were not used by professors of their literature classes.

Again, in spite of the general dissatisfaction with the quality of their professional education, all indicated that they had a memorable/outstanding teacher in their undergraduate experience. At this level, the outstanding attributes were patience and personal attention.

Because of their dissatisfaction with their teacher preparation and their desire or need for realistic training, the majority have pursued degrees or education beyond their bachelor degrees. Although literature was again a major emphasis in this continuing education, reading theory and writing theory were significantly represented.

In addition to continuing their education, these teachers also maintained professional involvement. All teachers are members of a general teachers' association, in this case, Michigan Education Association (MEA). In contrast, only half of those interviewed currently belong to a subject matter teaching association, most often National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The average teacher only occasionally reads English Journal, rarely reads English Education, and never reads Research in the Teaching of English. Half of the teachers attended some form of professional conference in the last year.

Present Values and Methods in Teaching

My average teacher meets five classes a day, better than half of those classes having a literature focus. The workload of preparing lessons and grading papers averages 15-30 hours a week outside of class.

When asked to rate eleven goals for the teaching of literature from most to least important, there was surprising agreement. It is important to recognize that although teachers rated bottom goals, it doesn't necessarily mean these goals are unimportant to them. The results are as follows:

Top four goals for teaching literature:

To teach help the students understand themselves and the human condition

To encourage students to develop lifelong reading skills and habits

To develop the critical faculties and analytic skill of the students

To encourage students to view reading as a pleasurable activity

Bottom four goals for teaching literature:

To develop the students' ability to discuss the variety of literary forms that are around them

To acquaint the students with their literary cultural heritage

To improve the literary tastes of students

To teach the students the history of literature

Clearly, the average teacher's goals are student centered rather than content centered, but actual classroom instruction showed

several contradictions. My average teacher still modeled instruction practices on personal experience (taught as they were taught) but tended to include more student centered activities and flexibility.

Anthologies are still the primary source of literature, but novels and paperbacks, including young adult material, are also regularly used. Small group activities are regular features in the classroom. Although strict lecture is used less often, still favored methods include teacher led-discussion and questioning.

Favored student responses are reading journals and discussion. Creative writing, summarizing, essays, and projects appear occasionally, but creative dramatics, readers theatre, role playing, etc. still are rarely, if ever, used.

Read alouds occur occasionally in presenting literature, but most students still all read the same assigned material, and all read it outside of class. Occasionally, students are allowed to choose from selected material but are rarely allowed free choice.

My average teacher assesses student work primarily through tests, discussion, and homework. Portfolios, surveys, and conferences rarely are used.

External Pressures

My average teacher rarely meets with other colleagues to plan the teaching of literature or just to share and discuss ideas. Students regularly offer input about materials, but administrators, parents, and other teachers rarely offer suggestions or complaints. Occasionally, the average teacher adjusts her plans to these complaints. The average teacher claims little pressure or influence

from press and media coverage, declining test scores, state guidelines, or the back to basics movement. However, individual comments, such as Leigh's comment about tests being developed by non-teachers, or Howard's contention that his professional freedom is somehow related to the school's high test scores, and that his autonomy would disappear if for any reason the scores went down, reflect an unquestionable defensiveness.

Next, I will present brief case studies of the ten classroom teachers used in my study, combining information from their completed questionnaires and personal interviews.

Case Studies

School A:

This small, rural school system is the only junior-senior high school in this town with a student enrollment of 350. The town, primarily a blue-collar, agricultural, bedroom community, has a population of 1523.

Will

My first interview was with Will, who is forty-four years old and has been teaching in this rural public school for 23 years. He described his own high school experience as fairly traditional, with the emphasis on expository writing--mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary for three out of his four years.

The single focus on skills was so emphasized that Will states, "so I really had a warped conception of what composition was when I went to college. I had a hard time at first."

Will went into teaching in a roundabout manner. He enjoyed his own high school experience and was a successful student. Beginning with special education and moving to lithography, Will zeroed in through two neighbors who happened to be English majors. "I realized that I was interested in talking about literature and reading it, and so I decided to change my major and go into English."

He discusses his early teaching years. "And I had no idea how to teach writing, no idea how to teach reading. I was mostly teaching as I had been taught, except that I was trying not to do some of the things that these people [his teachers] were doing." Will felt so frustrated, he almost left the profession. Instead, he ended up going back to school and studied the teaching of English and media. It was in these graduate classes that he finally regained the confidence as a writer that he had lost in college.

Since this additional education, Will's theories of writing and reading have changed. He believes that his school is doing a better job in teaching basic reading skills. "I think that I have seen students' reading levels get better."

He expresses his own theory of reading in the following manner. "I think when you can relate to certain texts, you can get insight on behavior. I think the more you read, the better you read, and the broader you read, the more open you become to new ideas."

In spite of his students' improved reading skills, Will acknowledges many changes in their attitudes. Students are reading

better but reading less. "I think kids are more sophisticated now in a lot of ways because they watch so much t.v. But they don't read. They don't read nearly as much as we used to. They read okay. They choose not to read."

In terms of his own reading, Will is a steady reader, spending 8-10 hours a week reading non-fiction, magazines, and newspapers. He states, "I read most of what I read with the ideas in the back of my mind for the potential use of them." When questioned about pleasure reading he admitted, "As far as pleasure reading, it's almost when I think about it, that comes last, and I feel, sometimes, guilty about it. It's like you're wasting time."

Will confesses to leaving most of his pleasure reading for summer but even then struggles with the guilt of reading for pleasure, tending to choose works that are more challenging, more work. Ironically, what he chooses as pleasure reading sometimes has the opposite effect. He tells of his recent project, reading Joseph Campbell's Atlas of Mythology. "After reading that, you don't really care about reading for a while," he states.

Will has remained professionally involved. He is currently a member of Michigan Council of Teachers of English and regularly reads English Journal. He also attends a yearly language arts conference.

Will sees many external pressures affecting the classroom teacher. He wishes more paperback books were available in the school library and admits that programs like PA 25 and MEAP steal from precious class time. He is optimistic about their intrusion, however. "You tend to become complacent if you don't have

somebody that you have to rationalize what you're doing." He feels, however, that most of his pressure is self-imposed, and that perfectionism is a characteristic trait of the profession. As a teacher, Will feels he is never totally prepared, can never do enough, and always feels somewhat lacking.

Despite these negatives, Will would probably choose a teaching career in English again. "I think it's probably more work than any of the other areas, but there is more opportunity for variety, and more control over what you're doing and how you do it. It's a challenge."

Linda

Linda is forty-nine and has been teaching for twenty-eight years in this rural public school. She also describes her own high school experience as fairly typical. Four years of English was required, and curriculum focused on literature, composition, and grammar. Although writing was regularly done in conjunction with literature, that writing was most often essays, graded on grammar and punctuation.

Linda always wanted to be a teacher. "There was never any doubt in my mind," she says. At first, she admits wanting to teach on the elementary level but soon realized she preferred older students. "Basically, I didn't want to be cooped up in a classroom all day with the same thirty kids all the time, but I still thought I was meant to be a teacher, and that's what I wanted to do. Because I liked reading and English so much, I just gravitated toward English."

Early teaching years brought Linda a dose of reality. She describes her teaching method as developing through trial and error

more than anything. "When I first started teaching, I thought I was going to stand up in front of the high school classes and lecture like my college professors had done, and I soon found out that didn't work. And then I began to find out what kinds of things did work, and so I tried different things with every class, every year."

Linda feels that students have changed over the course of her career:

> Most of my kids, the majority of them, just don't show any interest at all, no matter what I do. I could stand up here on my head, but they just don't seem to have the enthusiasm for learning, and they certainly don't seem to have the motivation to go beyond anything that I ask them to do. If I give an assignment, they do the bare minimum requirements of that assignment.

Linda admits her undergraduate education did not prepare her for teaching. "Of my thirty-hour major, I'm going to say 26 of those hours were literature, and four were grammar." Despite her recognition of this early lack of training, Linda has not felt the need for additional education beyond her B.A. She explains that she learned both subject matter and methods in her first years of teaching from her more experienced colleagues. "I would have been real happy if I could have walked into a situation and taught all American Lit. classes. I would have been in seventh heaven, but as it was, I was teaching one hour of American Lit., and the rest of the time I was studying harder than the kids were."

Linda's goal for her students is for them to become lifelong readers. Because of her own love of reading she tells them:

> One of my greatest pleasures in my life is being able to escape, sometimes the realities of life, the pain, the suffering, the hard times when you're unhappy. To escape into a novel, and sometimes just having that reprieve from whatever it is will make you able to come back and face that thing so much better, but you need to have an escape mechanism that is a positive one, and I can't think of anything more positive than reading.

According to Linda, people read for two main reasons, to be informed and for pleasure.

Although she doesn't feel that teaching has changed that much, Linda does feel that the students have changed a lot. She states that much more of her time is spent disciplining rather than teaching. "I don't teach that much differently than I did thirty years ago. I still do the same things I've always done, it's just that I'm using up a lot more of my teaching time disciplining than I ever did before, and trying to maintain classroom control and management."

Regarding her personal reading, Linda much prefers pleasure reading over all other. "If it isn't pleasure reading, I will read through it as fast as I possibly can . . . If I'm pleasure reading, on the other hand, then I just take my time and really enjoy it. She, too, saves most of her pleasure reading for summer. "In fact, I kind of resent it when school starts, and I have to give up my pleasure reading because I simply don't have time to do it."

Linda has chosen not to be professionally involved. Although she belonged to NCTE for the first 2-3 years of her career, she is no longer a member. She occasionally reads English Journal at school

but rarely reads other professional journals or materials. In the last year, she has attended several general conferences or training sessions, although she has not attended any related to English or language arts teaching. She remembers English conferences in California and states, "I don't know if Michigan has an English teachers' convention; if they do, I've never been to it."

Linda sees many external pressures affecting the profession and admits to feeling pulled in different directions. PA 25 and the emphasis on basic exit skills trouble her because they tend to lose focus on the larger life skills:

> Now, you could try to teach them as many of the basics as you can, but I still say you've go to work in those values and the work ethic and all of that kind of thing right in while you're teaching your English and hope that when they get out of here, maybe they're not going to have English skills that are very good, but maybe they'll be able to do something else and show some responsibility.

Linda has not succumbed to internal conflict and credits her administration and community. "I don't feel the internal conflict because I'm going to keep on doing it the way I want to, the way I believe, until somebody says I can't do it anymore or until I reach retirement or whatever comes first, but we are lucky here in that the administration and the community have been so supportive of anything that we've done."

She feels schools could help by reducing class size to allow for more individual instruction. "If you could work one-on-one with students more often, you are going to accomplish more." She is also

intrigued by a local professional development school system, "because they do have a day where . . . departments actually get together and say, 'Hey, this is what's going on here. How could we improve it, or how could we make it better?' There are a lot of things that could be done if we could meet by department regularly, and we don't."

Time is a critical factor, both in her teaching day and her daily life. Linda wishes universities would assist teachers in a number of ways. "I wish they would send some guidelines out to the schools showing what they expect of incoming freshmen, say in the English department." She continues:

> They might also be able to offer some seminars in different types of method instruction for particular things. Why not have different seminars around the state? Like on Saturdays where somebody could just go for one or two hours and see a presentation of a method on how to do this particular thing, and then these people could take it back to the classroom and try it.

Although sometimes overwhelmed by its frustrations, Linda has questioned her choice but is committed enough to her goals to choose teaching English again. "I would love to teach a subject that the kids took because they wanted to take it, not because they had to take it, . . . but yet I think I can teach more about life and values and things of that sort through my English classes, and I'm dedicated enough to the idea that I still want to do that."

Kathleen

Kathleen, who is forty-two years old, has been teaching for nineteen years in this rural school system. Her own high school experience was a traditional one of English 9, 10, 11, 12. The primary focus was on literature and grammar which were taught separately. Kathleen remembers enjoying the study of grammar. "I actually liked it, but I don't teach it. But I was good at it, so it was fun."

Literature consisted primarily of critical analysis of short stories, followed by "objective tests, discussion, occasional essay tests, and always the homework." She continues, "My writing background was virtually nil until I got into a philosophy class my senior year. Then I was expected to know how to write, and, of course, I didn't." She recalls, "I have a vivid memory of my high school education in general of being extremely boring and falling asleep in classes and like I said about not having any relevance to what we were talking about."

Kathleen feels she came to teaching through a limited number of choices. "In the era that I grew up, I saw girls as having three choices. They could get married and have babies, they could become a nurse, or they could become a teacher, and if they had children, both of those things went out the window. So, I couldn't really stand the sight of blood when I was a child so I went into teaching."

Early in her teaching career, Kathleen remembers, "I do remember doing a lot of grammar in the beginning, and literature was basically answer the question, which was recalling what we learned type of questions."

Reflecting on her undergraduate education, Kathleen remembers a heavy emphasis on literature, or as she says, "the study and memorization of various genres." Her methods classes did not prepare her to teach either writing or reading. She vaguely remembers discussion of lesson plans. "I remember writing these lesson plans and looking at them and at the time thinking, 'Well, this is really nice. Look how well I've written lesson plans.' And then actually being in the teaching profession and saying this is absolutely ridiculous."

Kathleen decided to return to school because as she says, "I went back because I really felt that I needed more education." She remembers being introduced to the writing process, not just in theory but also in practice. "It was like WOW! Where actually they had you doing the writing, you actually participating so that you could understand what a kid would go through in a process, or what a student would have to do, so you internalize the process so it would put you in a better position to help someone else through the process."

Kathleen described her theory of reading in the following way. "Reading enables you to look at yourself. First of all, reading gives you knowledge, which I love knowledge, and I love to know all that I can possible know about a variety of subjects . . . I think reading is fun. I think reading should be fun."

In terms of her own reading, Kathleen separates her pleasure reading from her school reading:

> I guess during the school year I need to read a lot of things that I need to read, that I have to read, that are

> either for discussion in class or material I need to maybe do this a better way or whatever . . . All that is stuff I have to do, so when the summer comes, I seriously enjoy junky stuff. Anything I can get my hands on. It is fun that I don't have to be a critical reader about, that I can just be a fun reader.

Kathleen also feels guilty about reading for pleasure during the school year, though not in the summer, when she regularly reads 6-8 hours a week. "If I allow myself to read for pleasure, something else will go, and I feel--I really wish I weren't like that--that I could just read to have fun, but during the year, I feel compelled, well, if I have 'x' amount of time, I should be doing this."

Kathleen is not currently a member of any subject matter professional association, nor has she attended any conferences, although she occasionally reads English Journal at school:

> The English Journal went through some phases. I paid my money for a few years. I belonged for, I don't know, eight or ten years, and then I just got tired of it. Some articles absolutely to me had no relevance at all to my experience, and it was a lot of people making themselves feel good by writing an article in the English Journal and getting it published. We have it here [at school], so I don't have to do that, and I don't see any benefit for me to pay all that money to belong to National Council of Teachers of English.

She has, however, attended a variety of teacher in-service and professional development sessions. She recalls the last English

conference she attended, along with some reasons for her present lack of attendance:

> I went to a conference probably in Grand Rapids about four years ago, and that was the last one I've been to. A lot of them they have during spring break and I'm not around. We have in our school, or district, we don't have money to do that. You maybe have one conference. You get one hundred dollars if you're the first one to apply, so you have to pick and choose what it is you want to do, otherwise you pay for it out of your pocket.

When asked about external pressures affecting classrooms, Kathleen is quick with a list, including lack of time and resources, pressure to provide for special needs, lack of parental involvement, and class size. She, too, feels that time for sharing with colleagues is essential. "I wish that we had time or mandatory time to get departments. What we really need is a department. We're supposed to be teaching this, this, and this, but how we do it, no one says. So, you can do whatever you want, but how I look at it is, as teachers, we are our own best resources, and we could do a lot of sharing which we really do not have time to do."

She also is concerned about the emphasis on testing and the resulting negative press:

> . . . because I think I'm very sensitive to, and I think most teachers, are, how people view education. We are obviously not in it for the money. We are in it because we feel like we are doing something that is important and relevant and useful for other people, and when you get

> media criticism, saying these kids can't read, these kids are illiterate, they can't write, they can't do this. So then you say, "All right, what is it that we are doing wrong that we could do better to make it so?" You've really got to be careful because people are really apt to criticize, and they never hear about the success stories that are when kids get out of an educational system. We only hear about the failures.

Kathleen feels that schools could help by providing teachers with more time to reflect. She is not only sensitive to the general criticism of the profession but also feels the pressure to always do more. "Yes, and that's why I don't have time to read. I do feel the pressure to do it all, and I feel the pressure each year." The biggest drawback to teaching English, for her, is the grading of papers. "To do it right takes time, and I feel like I never do it right enough. I should have assigned one more paper, or if I could have spent more time on, you know." Part of this internal struggle has resulted in Kathleen's pulling back from teaching English. Now, she only teaches English half-time. "That's why I went back and picked up an undergraduate degree in health education after teaching for 11 or 12 years, because I just couldn't do English full-time and keep my sanity."

Kathleen also suggests that universities could do more to help schools, both in their preparation of new teachers and in providing assistance to current teachers. She suggests the faculty regularly come back to the secondary classrooms in order to stay in touch with today's realities. She also suggests that universities make it easier

for teachers to come back for more education by offering more night and weekend sessions.

Despite Kathleen's criticisms of the profession, it is clear that she loves what she does, is passionately committed to it, and would choose teaching as a career again.

Jan

Jan is forty-one years old and has been teaching 17 years. She has taught in three different systems, the last ten in this rural school system.

Jan also had a traditional high school experience. Students were tracked either college bound or practical and were required to take three years of English. Primary focus in her college bound classes was literature, composition, and grammar. Jan's experience differs from her colleagues in a number of ways. Jan recalls that reading and writing were usually combined, and she also recalls small group work, projects, and individual teacher conferences, although these activities were limited to the later classes.

Jan thinks she chose to teach English because she loves literature and because her teachers modeled such enthusiasm and made the subject matter come alive.

Her undergraduate preparation for teaching "mostly dealt with facilitating discussion of literature, preparation of questions, study guides, and exams." The Elements of Style was used in teaching writing, and for reading, it was standardized tests and miscue analysis. Jan feels that she learned most of her real training during her student teaching experience.

Once Jan started teaching, she, too, felt the need to return to school. "I saw a real need as I started to teach that in junior high and high school. Kids are not done learning about reading. We just cut it off and say, 'Now we do literature.' But there's more to it than that, and some kids need a lot of help, and so I wanted to specialize in that."

Since she began her career, she sees many changes in students:

> There is a positive change in the sense that kids are more willing to be individuals and speak their minds, but I think there is more negative in the sense that kids are not willing to work really hard . . . It's like they want everything just given to them the easy way, and they are too busy to do some hard work. Of course, they can tell you about last night's T.V., but they are too busy to do the homework and you're supposed to excuse all that. It's like there is not self-discipline.

She says these changes have been frustrating. "I think that a lot of times, it's left to the schools to try to teach these kids some values of hard work and education, and I don't think we can do it all."

Jan's goal for her students is to get them to recognize the importance of reading. "Because there is so much they can learn on their own with reading, and if they can't read, they're going to miss out on the world."

In terms of her own reading, Jan says she reads because, "I love to put myself in different places around the world in different periods of time. It's just wonderful to experience that." Though she

loves to read, Jan admits pleasure reading comes last, and she ends up putting most of it off until summer:

> I'm so busy reading books for the kids, trying to decide what books to use when they come out, new and professional reading. I don't have a lot of pleasure time. It's my "before I go to sleep'" reading. And that's all it is. Now, in the summer, I tackle some real good fiction and biographies, and some non-fiction, because I can enjoy it, I have the time, and I can stay awake!

Jan insists that she doesn't feel guilty about her pleasure reading because it comes after all her other responsibilities. "That's my time, and it's not anytime until everybody's in bed, and my children are asleep. It's basically been my choice of either sleeping or reading."

Jan is not currently a member of any professional organization but occasionally reads English Journal, or the International Reading Association (IRA) journals. In the last year, Jan has also attended a statewide reading conference.

Jan often feels pulled in different directions between her goals of developing "lifelong readers" and that of teaching the elements of literature:

> I would like to concentrate in junior high on reading strategies and enjoyable reading, pleasure reading. And I try to do that as much as I can, but I feel like I'm obligated to prepare kids to get into the high school literature classes and deal with the elements of literature, and be able to be familiar with the terms,

> know how to apply those somewhat to stories, so that's the problem.

She sees a variety of external pressures, including budget constraints and lack of planning time. "Material wise, it would be wonderful to be able to run across a new book and just be able to get it." She also thinks it would be helpful for teachers to meet and discuss common goals. "That would be wonderful, but we don't do it," she says. "We don't have time."

Jan addresses the issues of testing and PA 25:

> I think that if we're careful about what we do with these things, it will be positive for our kids coming out of high school, being able to function. However, if they just throw all these to use and say, "Do them," and then they change their minds a month or two later, which they've been doing, it makes it very frustrating. I think that there are some basics we're skipping. We're into higher level thinking skills, which is great, but so many of the kids we are working with higher level thinking skills don't seem to be functional on paper. And we need to deal with that part. So in that sense, it's making us more accountable, outcome base wise. I think that's good. I don't know how we're going to accomplish it all, but it's good.

Teacher testing is another issue that concerns Jan. She's concerned because of all she's heard about the tests being outdated and developed by people outside of the profession. "When I hear things like the teacher test that the state was coming out with that

were not even made by people in the profession, out-dated material that they're being tested on that we're not even being taught in the teacher education anymore, that's real frustrating. That's stupid."

Jan also feels that universities could assist teachers by keeping their methods classes current. "I think that any college instructor who is teaching a methods class in the school of education should spend a marking period or more every couple of years in a high school or a junior high and know what it's really like to deal with what we deal with, with different kids and the backgrounds they come from."

In spite of all the drawbacks and frustrations, Jan would definitely choose teaching again, "because I love literature first of all."

Conclusions: School A

In summary, all four of these teachers went into teaching because they personally love reading. They all strongly believe in the power and the beauty of reading, but all relegate their own personal pleasure reading to summer. Although their goals state that they want students to become lifelong readers, they insist on separating school reading from pleasure reading.

Each of these teachers had very traditional school experiences, and they seem to fall back on the familiar teacher-centered approach.

All are lacking in professional support and personal confidence, and most seem to have developed coping strategies rather than integrated, personal theories of teaching. Their professional

education focused on content and skills; therefore, it is not surprising that most felt the need to return to school to help make sense of it all. Those returning to school began their professional journeys and gained some confidence and direction, for the first time experiencing for themselves the reading and writing processes.

Though off to a good start, much of these teachers' progress was stalled because they did not have the needed support, personally or financially, to maintain the professional involvement necessary for continued growth.

School B:

This large, urban school has an enrollment of 1415 students and is one of three high schools in a city with an approximate population of 250,000. This school reflects a mix of both socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.

Warren

Warren is fifty-four years old with 24 years teaching experience. His last 21 years of teaching have been at a large, urban high school. He has also experienced what he refers to as a traditional high school experience and remembers a steady diet of literature, study questions, and objective tests:

> There are only two English classes that I can really remember, one English lit. class, and I don't remember the teacher's name, but I remember she cried each time she read Keats out loud. And then I had a course that was unusual for its time because it was a two hour block

> of history through literature. And for each period in American history, we had to read the chapter in the American history text, one biography, and one work of historical fiction. This was all group oriented, all discussion, and that was it.

Warren also describes how he entered the teaching profession in a roundabout manner. "I sort of fell into teaching. Sort of zig-zag and swerve." Positive experiences in his own education and a temporary teaching position on the college level convinced him that he'd enjoy teaching English. He remembers personal, positive experiences with literature and memorable professors on the college level.

Warren feels his undergraduate methods classes left him ill-prepared for the classroom. Teaching writing consisted of modeling essays, and the teaching of reading was not addressed:

> I've taught American lit. using an anthology and English lit. using an anthology, because pretty much that was the way I was taught. I mean we used anthologies. In terms of attitude, I probably really didn't learn to read literature until I was in the latter years of college and in the first years of graduate school. When I learned to read it myself, or at least found a different way of reading it, that's when my training, if you will, actually began.

He, too, returned to school for advanced education and continues to read on his own.

He sees the changes in the profession as positive. "I think the changes are positive. We have a lot more room as teachers to do things. One of the difficulties of teaching, especially teaching lit., is that there are so many other media that are distracting the students." He continues:

> The students tend to treat literature as fluff, or as not very important. So my goal this last year was to say, "Hey, wait a minute. There is structure here. There is meaning. There's a whole bunch of stuff that you should be aware of before you decide this is nonsense." I want them to be searchers after wisdom, and I think lit. is one of the ways we can develop this attitude.

Warren thinks his positive attitude toward literature came from college and graduate school, but questions the overall purpose of it. "I'm not sure what lit. is, and I'm not sure why we teach it, what we should be teaching about it, and I just question the whole thing. It has something to do with the imagination, and it has something to do with somehow expressing the age in which it is written." He continues, "If we teach literature to help students deal with their own lives, there might be things they should be reading instead of lit. to help them with their own lives."

In terms of his own reading, Warren discusses his choices:

> That's hard to say because what I most enjoy reading nowadays is history and biography, and I think, in some senses, the reason I read biography is that I have a history of my own, and I'm trying to see if my history matches up to anybody else's. And then the literature

> that I read, I guess I read most because I enjoy seeing how authors do things. I guess I suppose I read for escape, but I don't think I really do. In one sense, I'm always kind of not "on duty," but I'm kind of tuned in to the artistry of it all.

Warren insists that he doesn't feel guilty about his pleasure reading but confesses that his professional reading comes first. "The professional reading I do almost as soon as I get home from school, and then later on, after everything else in kind of done, then I get to do the real pleasure reading."

Warren is also professionally involved, citing memberships in NCTE, Alan, and MCTE. Although he regularly reads a number of NCTE professional journals, Warren hasn't attended a professional conference in the last year.

He sees a variety of external issues affecting today's classroom teacher. His primary conflict involves a conflict of goals:

> If we really believe in reader-response theory, then what we probably ought to do is give them [students] a bunch of books and say, "Read them, and when you think you have something to say, write an article or an essay and let me read it." And I'm committed to that. On the other hand, there is another side to me that says when a kid leaves a course called American Lit., he should know the names of ten authors and poets, and then he should be able to cite 15 titles and give you a brief synopsis, and if the only way we're going to do that is by me talking about it, then so be it.

Of external pressures he says, "We're bombarded by the public, and the press, and the media, and by Advanced Placement requirements." When asked about PA 25, he responds, "I don't think we ever left a skills based curriculum, so I don't think these things are forcing us back to anything. I think teachers like to think that we're under all this pressure, but it's pressure we've been under all along."

He sees the push to the non-traditional curriculum as another pressure. "The biggest pressure on us now, I think, is the pressure that comes from the apparent conflict between the canon and the non-canon with the tremendous pressure on us to be multicultural, etc., without any support from other departments. We're running the risk of playing a game with ourselves. I don't think literature is necessarily the way into those cultures."

Warren feels that one of the most helpful things a school can do for its teachers is to provide time for them to meet together to share and learn from one another:

> I've seen these little programs where they have a school within a school, and what I've observed was that there was tremendous benefit to the teachers involved just to sit and kind of do case management. If you had evaluated the program in terms of had these students done better, I would probably say probably not. But these teachers did a helluva lot better. They had a much better year having sat and talked and discovered I'm not the only one having trouble with Johnny Smith. I think the kind of inquiry groups running at _____ [a local

> PDS] are essential. Because in most occupations now, my observation has been that maybe teachers might be the only people who do the kind of work they do without any consultation with other teachers.

Maybe it's this lack of opportunity to share that fosters his own frustration. Warren isn't at all sure that literature can be taught. When talking to a whole class or in groups, he says, "I get this uneasy feeling that something funny is happening. I don't know what it is to teach lit. Now it seems to me, you can do well with teaching writing, but I know if ever I were to do that full-time, I'd have the same reaction. There are occasions when I think it'd be nice to teach math. Then I could do all the reading I wanted to do on my own."

Like Will, Warren questions his own success. "I don't feel I've done as good a job as I should be, because sometimes what I think has happened to me is that I've fallen between two stools."

In spite of his conflicts and doubts, Warren maintains a positive attitude and insists he'd choose to teach if he had it to do all over again. "One of the satisfying things is that the English department at any school is the heart of the school. We have the flexibility and the room to move in a variety of directions."

Anne

Anne is forty-nine years old and has taught 26 years, the last 21 at the same large urban district. Her own high school experience consisted of four years of regular English with an emphasis on literature. In fact, she doesn't remember writing in high school at all, except to answer study questions. She says of her classes, "Most of

them were simply lecture and answer the questions at the end of the literature, although one exception was a ninth grade teacher I had who got us into some project work with Shakespeare. And she had us participate in things, but after that, it was pretty much the traditional."

Anne claims she began her teaching career earlier than normal, when in the second grade her school was cut back to half-days. "I would go in the afternoon in first grade and help the teacher teach other kids to learn to read, and I just thought it was the most fun thing in the world. So I decided in second grade I was going to be a teacher. I don't know what my real reasons were, but I never changed my mind."

Anne's undergraduate degree is in history, and she spent her first nine years teaching social studies. At that time, she decided to go back to school to complete an English minor, and that's how she ended up teaching English. "Once I began getting certified in English, I found out that I really liked it."

She admits her first experience teaching English was challenging. "The first year I taught English, I really did not know what I was doing." Instead of feeling hampered by her own lack of undergraduate English background, Anne feels her late switch to English is a benefit:

> I think the thing I really believe is one of my strengths as an English teacher is that I wasn't subjected to undergraduate literature courses or writing courses or whatever, that approached it in the way that "I am the teacher, I know the answers, and you will mouth back

> my answers." I missed out on all of that, and I came at teaching English from the point of view that I was a reader, and I was a writer, and I loved reading, and I loved all of that, and so once I went back to school, I mean, I still didn't know the first year that a kid couldn't write a complete sentence.

Anne continued her own education, and it was in this graduate school experience that she first felt confidence. She speaks of a particular writing workshop course, "and that is first time in my whole life, I was about 31 when I took that course, that I ever felt that I was a writer. I got so much affirmation in that class. I had never gotten any positive stuff about writing."

Having now earned her doctorate, Anne reflects on the teaching profession and the supposed changes it has undergone. She doesn't think there has been as much change as everyone thinks:

> Now, I think the thing that's changed, especially in English, is the awareness of writing as a process. That you cannot expect kids to write perfectly the first time through. That isn't the purpose of writing, and I think we've broadened what we see literature as being. But as far as kids, I can remember from 26 years ago, there were kids that didn't care about learning, there were kids that tried to get out of doing work, there were kids who were problems. People glamorize and glorify what the old days were, and they weren't really that much different. We still have to motivate kids, get them involved in stuff, before they'll do anything.

She continues discussing changes in students. "I do feel, though, that one difference, especially with the urban poor, is that they do not see that education provides them a way out. They do not see that there's any hope through education because of the role models around them, and those kids drop out mentally a lot faster."

A positive change that Anne identified is in teacher attitude:

> I think the change in attitude about what English is a very, very positive one. And I think the part, to me, that's negative is that there's still a group of people that feel that students should perform, no matter what. That if a teacher sits at a desk, doesn't do anything to stimulate the kid, that it is the child's fault if they don't achieve. I guess it's the group of people that feel that teaching is not an interactive forum is the negative thing, but I think that, generally, the tide that's sweeping the country and looking at reform, etc., they are recognizing the interactive nature of teaching and the process of getting kids involved.

Anne's attitude toward reading came from her mother, who is also a reader and helped to foster that interest in her. Anne becomes very animated when asked about why she loves to read. "Because it's exciting to me. It's exciting to think about people and the way they respond to things. It's exciting for me to learn new things. It's exciting to get involved in other life issues, and it's just been a huge part of me ever since I was a kid."

She feels her goal for teaching literature is to help students make a personal connection with it:

> The absolute biggest reason we teach literature is for kids to make contact with the literature and to look at the impact it has on them, how they respond to the people in the literature and the ideas in literature, and I think it's a clarifying thing for them, as far as measuring themselves against other people in the world, because all of us cannot go out and be a part of gangs, or be part of upper-middle class families, or be part of whatever, and I think literature provides those kinds of experiences for kids. So, one of my biggest goals is for them to make a connection between their lives and the literature and to come away with a recognition that the literature has some kind of impact on them.

Anne is a voracious reader and insists most of her reading is pleasure reading. She's able to fit in professional, informational, and pleasure reading partly because she watches no television:

> I read all the time. Sometimes, if I get something done, then I'll allow myself to read a book, but I usually feel like it's so closely tied in with my profession, the more books I know, the more I can tell kids about books, and so, to me, it's like a part of my job, and so I just, if I get into a book, can read a book in an evening, three hours at a time. And I usually read a book before I go to bed, too, but sometimes, if I get a good one, then I don't go to sleep, so I don't like that either.

Anne has long been an active member of professional organizations, including NCTE, MCTE, ALAN, and IRA. She regularly

reads a number of professional journals, specifically English Journal, Alan Review, Signal, and English Education. She also attends and participates in a number of professional conferences, four in the last year.

Anne feels frustrated by the continued conflict of goals for those within the profession. "I have a real problem with people who feel they are teaching literature to present their point of view, to show people what literature means, instead of helping them discover what it means. You narrow what they come away with, and they see literature as a piece of content to be responded to, not something wonderful that they can make contact with and that will have an impact on their lives."

It is this professional conflict that frustrates her:

> I think the only time I feel pulled in different directions is that I realize that in my school, the way I teach, I am in a minority. Most people are not as excited about teaching as I am. Most people don't want to try new things, and I realize that there is some disapproval of what I do on the part of some members in English who, perhaps, question that I don't do vocabulary lists every week and those kinds of things. And some of them don't feel I cover things enough, like drilling literary terms in them. But I've always had really strong support from the administration and parents, so I don't feel the pull.

In spite of these daily conflicts which test her resolve, Anne remains positive. "Sometimes I think, 'Am I really preparing these kids? or am I really doing this, or am I really doing that?' and I

question it mildly but not very much because I usually can see how kids react to what I'm doing."

When speaking of external pressures affecting the profession, Anne says:

> I guess I feel that we've already been through this once. I remember in the 70's, the back to basics movement and the articles in Newsweek, and I think that was basically devastating to the English profession, and I think it set us back years because it again validated that worksheets were a good way to go, that teaching grammatical skills out of the context of writing was a good way to go, and teachers that like that structure and like the easy way out of having a daily lesson plan by opening the Warriner's books, they were affirmed.

She also spoke about the increased testing. "I really think, too often, testing drives what we teach." Anne isn't terribly concerned because she sees the tests getting better. "The way I see testing going, though, is they're not just testing little measurable increments, like what is a preface or prefix or whatever, and they're trying to test more on meaning, and I see that, especially in Michigan, the way testing is going. It's getting better and not worse."

Anne suggests schools could assist teachers in several ways. First, she says, "I think one of the things that schools can do is that the principal really has to set the tone in the building that we are really interested in learning. We're not just interested in quiet, well-controlled classrooms." She also feels that greater availability to materials, like books, would really help. Third, she feels that more

time should be made available for teachers to meet together and share professional concerns. "And I think one of our biggest problems is that we don't talk to each other, and we don't interact. That if there was a common time when we could each talk about what we're doing, what our goals are, how it's working, how we're involving kids, that would really, really help."

Without a doubt, Anne would choose teaching all over again. "Yes, I still absolutely love it. I think it's a field that's fresh every year. You can use different materials. We're not tied to a content." She continues, "I think the reason I'm still happy as a teacher is I don't feel I'm there to give information. I feel I'm there to learn as much as the kids are, and I learn tremendous amounts from them every year--and so it's still fun."

Joan

Joan is forty-seven years old and has taught 25 years, the last 21 in this large, urban district. Joan describes her own high school experience. "The teachers often used reading outloud, sometimes reading homework assignments and trying to relate the literature to the author's life. And, of course, how the literature reflects the lives of the students in the class." Her experience differs from my other teachers, possibly because Joan attended a private boarding school rather than public school. Reading and writing were taught together, and Joan regularly experienced a variety of literature and response methods, including projects such as videotaped recreations of scenes, photo essays, and dramatic presentations. She regularly wrote in response to literature and was allowed choice in what she read.

Joan discusses how she became a teacher:

> I went into teaching because when I went to college, colleges were segregated, and the college that I went to was a teacher's college. And I never thought of doing anything else. I was going to go to college, and I was going to be a teacher. Luckily, I learned to like it. It wasn't something that I necessarily planned, and I wanted to get a job when I got out of school, and I'm sure that's happened to a lot of people, and that's why we're in the mess we're in.

Of her preparation for teaching, Joan admits:

> I don't feel like I was trained to teach. The only way that I would say that my education helped me had to reflect on my high school experience, and this was things I was introduced to, and sources I was introduced to. And maybe undergraduate, some of the courses that I took that introduced me to different pieces of literature and different types of literature and how to approach that literature. But when I went to graduate school, it was more of a sharing kind of thing.

Joan, too, returned to graduate school. She says:

> I took courses that I thought would help me in the classroom, and I also took courses that were required in order to get those degrees. But I stopped, obviously, because I found out I wasn't really gaining anything. I wasn't looking for methods. I came from the South, and I noticed discipline problems when I got here, and I

> wanted courses that would confirm what I was doing, and I didn't find that. But I still had to take those courses just to get a degree, just to finish a program.

Joan said in her questionnaire, "I wanted to obtain more knowledge. I quit when I realized that I was better off than most of my professors."

Joan discusses how the profession has changed and sees those changes as having both positive and negative results. "They've [the schools] gotten away from using the grammar books so much. That's one change. Now, I don't think students are as well prepared because they have all of these electives that they can use in place of English, for example, drama instead of English, when I think drama ought to be a part of the English curriculum." Joan explained that she would prefer the English curriculum to be integrated. She continues, "This change is good for some students, but for the majority, I think that it's a detriment in many ways. They're just not prepared to go on."

Joan sees changes in the students, as well. "They're not as motivated, and I don't think it's all their fault. I think you get what you expect from students and not much is expected of them."

Joan's positive attitude toward reading came from her family, especially her grandmother. "She was a reader, and I just watched her and my mother."

Joan has multiple goals for her teaching. "My main goal is to allow students to take things from literature, some characterization from literature, and see how that's reflected in their own lives . . . I

think that if students can relate the literature to their own lives, then they're going to want to read more."

Joan's biggest disappointment in teaching is racism. "I think that most teachers are basically racists without knowing that they are. It's institutionalized. There's racism and prejudice, and the prejudice, I guess, is what I see the most because all students get that, regardless of race. The only kids that school systems seem to be concerned about are the middle class kids, and kids who have parents who care. The other kids are just falling by the wayside."

When discussing her personal reading, Joan says:

> I like to read novels that I haven't read before. I like re-reading, too. I don't have a lot of time to read magazines or [unclear]. It's usually assignments that I've given my students, or every now and then, I can start a book and go back to it a month later. I read the newspaper everyday, and that's to see what's going on. I have to read at night in order to go to sleep, so it's pretty much what's on the night stand, sometimes continuous things, sometimes it's just whatever's there. I read the journals when I get them every month.

Joan pauses for a minute and then says, "I would say it's mostly professional reading or the newspaper. That's about it."

With Joan, time is a limiting factor in her reading, and she usually feels guilty about her personal, pleasure reading. "I don't have the time," she states.

Joan has long been a member of NCTE and regularly reads English Journal and College English, although she has not attended a professional conference in the last year.

In her own career, her primary conflict is an internal one, and often Joan feels pulled in different directions:

> I teach advanced composition . . . , and the students are not advanced composition students. And I feel like I have to get them where they need to be, but at the same time, I'm told, "You teach advanced composition, and they fail. So what?" I can't buy into that. Don't lower your standards. And I feel like I'm lowering my standards if I allow these kids to fail. I know about where I want them to be, and I have to start at a place so I can't get them to where I want them to be at the end of the year. So that's a conflict--a constant worry, too. I don't feel like the standards are as high as they used to be, and I think people are too comfortable with that.

External pressures involve lack of planning time and the emphasis on testing. "I think that English teachers ought to teach three classes a day. That's not going to happen, though. Teachers teach three classes a day and plan the rest, and so you can get all the writing in so you don't have to spend the whole weekend reading papers."

When discussing the return to a skills based curriculum, Joan says:

> That frightens me. I think it does have an influence on us; it has a negative influence on us. I think tests are

> biased; however, now I'm wondering what group is hurt the most. I think that teachers are beginning to teach to the test, and students will not learn as much and be as open. And it does frighten me that, perhaps, we will go back to the basics, and what that means is that you don't have that variety anymore. You don't have time, in fact. You have to go through the grammar book the whole year.

Joan feels that teachers meeting together to simply discuss and share would be beneficial but doesn't believe that collaborative planning works. "We tried for two years to get all the advanced composition people together just to decide on what we were going to do, and it doesn't work."

For Joan, schools could help, "by weeding out those people who don't care about kids. Weeding out those teachers who will not go the extra step, teachers who won't speak to kids in the hall, the teachers who are afraid to be in the building, teachers who are there for a paycheck. I know that sounds awful coming from a teacher but . . . "

At the close of the interview, Joan reflects on the interview experience and again expresses the concerns raised by the interview itself. "This has been very frustrating because you have to reflect on the way you want it to be and the way it is, and that's an awful conflict." Despite her frustrations, Joan insists she would choose teaching again.

Conclusions: School B

All three of these teachers are highly experienced and sophisticated. All three have advanced education beyond their masters degrees. They have also all maintained a strong professional involvement, and here is where the difference may lie.

These three teachers chose teaching at least partially because of their own love of reading, although they, too, have some difficulty justifying their personal reading. All three, however, have made professional reading a priority.

Through their ongoing professional involvement, they continue to develop personal theories of reading. Though not always feeling successful in the classroom, they are more secure in their confusion than those in the rural school, possibly because of the sense of identity and belonging provided by their professional memberships. Their confidence was more evident, and their attitudes more reflective than reactionary.

School C:

This suburban middle school is currently the only middle school in a city with a population of 20,000. The school's enrollment of 969 students has a somewhat mixed ethnic background and comes from a socio-economic background that is primarily middle to upper-middle professional.

Leigh

Leigh is a forty-two year old middle school teacher with 19 years teaching experience, 17 in this suburban school district. She

describes her own high school experience as purely traditional, with English 10, 11, and 12. Classes focused on literature, composition, and grammar, and reading and writing were taught separately. "Mainly, we read and answered questions out of packets, and then the next day, she would ask us questions. Oh, I remember once we had a great poetry unit, and the only thing she asked us was to match up the poet and the name of the poem. That was it!" Discussion was used "to simply check up to make sure we'd done our work."

Leigh discusses the concept of pleasure reading:

> It was just a whole separate entity. That was so separate from what we had to do at school. Now when I think back on it, even some of the classics that might have been enjoyable, they were given to us so early. We weren't ready for it. I remember our so-called classic in tenth grade was Silas Marner, which I just re-read this year to see why I had to read this book, and I still don't have a clue. So then, reading became like this task to prove you were intelligent.

Sadly, Leigh states, "If anything, my high school teachers probably did the most to make me not like reading."

Ironically, her unpleasant high school experience is one of the reasons Leigh chose to teach. "I guess I went into it because I wanted it to be different. I wanted kids to love what I did at home, crammed in my bedroom reading books. I want to tease them with the possibilities. I want them to see how much fun it can be."

Having taught both high school and middle school, Leigh much prefers middle school. "In middle school, I can do anything I want to do. There's a lot more flexibility and a lot more creativity than high schools."

As with my other interviewees, Leigh feels her undergraduate methods classes did not prepare her for the classroom. "I was trained to teach Milton, Chaucer, Shakespeare, 19th century English lit., 18th century English lit. Contemporary lit. went all the way up to like Ernest Hemingway--pretty much literature. Oh, and they threw in transformational grammar. That was big at the time. By the time I got to this school, the book wasn't even published anymore, so that was really helpful." Leigh also felt the need to return to school for more training, completing her masters in English education.

Her own attitude toward reading developed outside of school, and her love of reading didn't connect with school until she was in college. "Books had nothing to do with school probably until my freshman year in college, when suddenly we were reading stuff that was wonderful and spending time in classes tearing it apart, and thinking about it, and relating it to what was going on in the world, and suddenly, it was really exciting again."

Leigh states her goal for students in the following way. "Hopefully, to find stuff that kids are interested in that's at a higher level so they have to start making some jumps. Having them see that literature can relate to stuff that they're doing everyday in their lives."

In terms of her own reading, Leigh balances informative, professional, and pleasure reading. She admits that newspapers

come first, pleasure reading comes next, and academic professional reading comes after that. Leigh wishes she had more time to read for pleasure but often must wait until summer. "I wish I could do more personal reading during the school year, but after you've read 25 essays, you don't feel like reading anymore."

Currently, Leigh does not belong to any professional organizations, although she occasionally reads English Journal and Teacher Magazine at school. She also attended two professional conferences or inservices in the last year.

Leigh has constantly struggled with the conflict within the profession over purpose and method. "My biggest disappointment is how many people I work with have bought into the system. That there's never a challenge to not do what's always been done before. Everybody was doing what everybody else was doing, and there was a whole lot of pressure [for me] to change." Recently, Leigh's school has hired a couple of new teachers and she says, "It's taken some [pressure] off, and I think it helps me feel better about what I do, and that everybody's lined up on one side of the table, and I'm on the other side."

New colleagues, greater maturity, and her role as a parent together have helped to bolster her confidence, so she no longer feels pulled in different directions. "I no longer apologize to parents. I finally just decided that I don't do it [teach grammar] because I don't do it, and I know it doesn't work. I don't have to have 57 authors behind me to say that's true."

Addressing other issues within the schools, Leigh feels schools could assist teachers in a number of ways. First, she feels that

classroom teachers should be given more autonomy in how the textbook budget is spent. She also feels that time for teachers to share would be a benefit:

> True one-on-one sharing might be good. I find a lot of times I'm giving out tons of stuff and not getting much back. That's really frustrating, and I think that's what happens with a lot of teachers. And I hear about districts where they do that and do it really well, but so far I haven't seen that here, and I guess that's why we have lightheaded English meetings here because there's such a dichotomy, either in what people philosophize about what they do, or what they actually do in their classrooms. It just makes it real difficult.

When asked about external pressures affecting the profession, Leigh's animation turned to militancy. She's angry that those outside of the profession are again imposing standards on it. "The people who were trying to tell me how to be a better English teacher weren't in the classroom."

She's especially upset over the MEAP and the increased emphasis on testing. "The thing that appalls me about it is . . . they took 3-4 pages out of a social studies textbook and asked the kids 52 questions on it, which I think is unforgivable. First of all, the stuff was so boring, if they really thought a seventh grader should know any of it was kind of appalling, and then that they bothered to ask 52 questions on four pages of reading, I thought, was a unique punishment." Leigh continues, "I think the people that create testing materials are not the people in the front lines, and when they *do* ask

us to come in and let them know what we think about their questions, they don't listen anyway! Maybe it is time English teachers got together and did their own PR on the kind of test they should write."

Her passion for her subject matter, for her students, and for her profession comes through. Clearly, Leigh's committed to teaching and would choose it again. "I feel good about what I do, and I won't change."

Howard

Howard is fifty-five years old and has taught for 26 years, currently in this suburban middle school. As he recalls, his was a traditional high school experience with a required English 9, 10, 11, and 12 curriculum. His English classes focused on literature, writing, and grammar. Literature was read mostly from anthologies and occasional supplemental novels. Classroom approach was standard as well. "I think the teacher pretty much put out the issues, and we responded to them verbally. I don't recall a great deal of interaction from student to student. It was more directed from student to teacher."

Howard discusses his teacher education experience:

> I had a general methods class, Principles of Teaching, which was applicable to just about any subject matter area, but then I also had a series of teaching courses--teaching of reading, teaching of social studies, teaching of art, and a few other of these things. While that was helpful in terms of getting started in teaching so I could

> go into a classroom and do something, I don't find that it was helpful over the long term. It's important that you go into teaching, I think, with a certain naiveté about what's going on, and that way you can focus on being a classroom teacher. But once you're there a while, other issues come to the fore and you change, and you change things, and you change the way you do things in the classroom. And so, where I am today and the reason I do things today, be it in literature or other areas, is mainly because of my experience in the classroom.

Howard has continued his education, although not in English, completing his doctorate in another field. He sees many disappointing changes, both in the profession and in the students:

> I've got several disappointments. One is I have such a broad span of ability levels that I have to deal with running from third grade to eleventh grade. I can't do that. I cannot do that. That's very frustrating. Another disappointment and obstacle is the whole testing mode that we're in. That, I've said, has narrowed what we do and will continue to do so. Another disappointment has been--it's frustrating to deal with kids who don't want to come to school and do school, and that's an ongoing thing. But I have classes where 2 or 3 students can trash the class as best they can, and that limits what I do. In other words, just knowing they are there limits the type of activity I do. For example, I do very little discussion in class because it becomes too difficult, for me, to maintain

> just basic rules of discussion, so I don't do it. And that's based on, again, the behavior of maybe 3 or 4, and that's too bad. That's a shame.

Howard discusses his personal attitude toward reading and its relatively late development. "You know, I don't recall it being there through high school, and even after high school I don't recall it being there. But somewhere in the interim from high school--I didn't go to college until I was 23 years old--and somewhere in that interim, I think I started to read more and just that reading got me interested in more reading. Then once I hit college, why then I did quite a bit of reading, mostly required, but that was okay." That, coupled with a memorable college teacher, may have influenced him to choose teaching as a career. "On the college level, I had an English teacher that really impressed me and helped me, and I think it was patience, as well as he had a high standard, explained things well, and generated interest, as well. Just an all-around good teacher. And that was noticeable to me, and I think I responded positively to that. It was a good experience."

For Howard, teaching English at the middle school level demands many goals. "Literature, at least in my case, is only part of the week. I try to devote one day a week to it, and then we're only talking about a 45 minute period, which then gets further reduced in time, so it's a major part of the program but only one of several things we focus on." He continues:

> My objective tends to be the structure of literature, different kinds. For example, I'll start with fables and go to myths and then short stories, and then the novel. To

> deal with it by the structure of that writing, but also because I really come down heavy that literature has a message for us. And when you ask students (7th grade) what the story's about, they'll give you the plot, but they don't give you the theme. See, that is really tough for them. So that's one reason why I start out with fables because it's got the moral to the story. But that is really hard, and I think that some 12-year-olds are not that capable of abstract thinking.

He insists that his primary goal, to develop critical/analytical skills, ties into the testing phenomenon:

> And there's no doubt about it. We've been very impacted by and influenced by the fact that our test scores show up in the newspaper every year and along with all the other districts and that has to look good. And we are focusing and narrowing, actually, our focus in literature and in areas on what does the test show and how that is reported? And that's too bad, but that's going to happen as testing statewide, nationwide becomes more and more of a factor. I think it's devastating for education, but it's probably positive for politics, so we will do that for a while.

When asked about the value and purpose of reading, Howard responded:

> I don't know that I've thought out a theory necessarily, but I guess I would think along the lines that a lot of people have had a lot of great thoughts prior to our

> getting here, and we get to share that with them. And what a wonderful way of doing it. I find it a little difficult to share that kind of a belief with my seventh graders at this point. I can share it with them but they don't buy into it. I'm finding that the novels we're reading are too slow for them. They want much faster paced stuff, and I'm not going to blame television, but television is extremely fast, and so we get into a novel like Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, wonderful novel, a lot of wonderful things in it, and they become very passive with it. It doesn't move for them. Where the Red Fern Grows, perfect for this age level, family values, do it all yourself, sticking to a task, commitment, moves slowly. It's a concern of mine . . . As far a reading being pleasurable, I always want to impart that in some way, and so my kids read 32 books a year. That's an assignment, but they're books of their choice, and so we have the girls reading the romance novels and the boys reading the sports paperbacks. And I want them to have that kind of recreational exposure, and even though they are turned off by, perhaps, textbook reading, at least they have that, and they're carrying a book and that's important.

In terms of his own reading, he says, "I mostly read for information, and I enjoy that, and so when I read books, I'll read in the area of philosophy or theology, that kind of thing and not so much current novels. Pop novels I tend not to read." He chooses

informational reading as pleasure reading. He admits to saving some of his reading for summer where he can read without distraction. "I do read throughout the school year, but, yes, I do save some for the summer when we at our house set aside a time every day for reading. And we really enjoy that, and you get toward the end of the summer and you've really done a lot of purposeful reading."

Professionally, Howard is a member of Phi Delta Kappa and reads the Kappan journal. He has not attended a professional conference in the last year.

Howard no longer feels pulled in different directions. "We've been given a lot of freedom in this school system, at least on this level, to do what we want to do. No pressure. And again, I attribute that to the fact that our [test] scores are high. I think as soon as our scores drop, we will hear from other powers, other levels. But because our scores are up, and they can stay up, they give us pretty much free hand, and I appreciate that, so I'm not pulled one direction or another."

His internal conflicts often result now from external pressures. "I don't like teaching just for the test. That creates frustration in me, and again, I would like to do more, of course, than what I do and probably every teacher would say that. But you feel constrained by some of these other things, behavior things, that I encounter, and so that is a frustration." He specifically names Public Act 25 and political meddling as disruptive. "I don't see any positive in it, I really don't. I think it's, again, politically based, and I think it's going to have, overall, negative results." Although he sees it as harmful, Howard feels we can't really do anything about it:

> It's one of these waves that comes through. It's going to play itself out on shore, and that could take a decade to do. But it will, I mean this is not necessarily where we're going to be 10 years from now. This will play itself out as all these things do. Somewhere down the road here, in 5 or 6 years, the data will start coming in, and it will be saying that this is wrong. That this is negative, that this is not what we really want from schools.

Howard continues:

> In education, we have the practitioners and the educationists, who politicians become a part of that, and if there's some problem with our trade agreements or industrial outputs, they immediately have to formulate some response, and their only responses are these programmatic responses which are limiting. But it makes headlines, and it makes news, and today, people's major source of information is TV news.

Howard sees all educational trends as based more on what's good for politics, not what's good for kids, "and that's another of my big disappointments over the years. I've seen so much good research shoved aside and replaced with what I call 'faddism' in education because it looks good, and we've got to do it."

Another issue Howard feels strongly about is the mainstreaming of special needs students. He describes how special needs classrooms have been dismantled, and how we used to believe that these students needed highly trained professionals, and now they're assigned to the general classroom teacher. Howard feels this

only adds to the problems already faced in the classroom. "I think that's an area that really needs to be re-thought and be addressed. But it's political, and the schools are not going to address that, at least not in the next couple of years."

Howard feels he has sufficient planning time to do what he needs to do. He doesn't feel a need for more time. Neither does he support time for colleagues to share. "I think that's good to do occasionally, but we, here, want teachers to be different. And if you do too much of that, you know, you begin to look a lot alike, and we don't want that. We want teachers to be different and to operate classrooms differently."

Though he may not discuss his concerns with his peers, Howard is constantly reflecting and assessing his own performance. "I think about teaching and education all the time, I really do. That may sound strange to an outside person, but I think about it all the time. I'm constantly watching, listening, whenever I can, looking for ideas and assessing what I'm doing. Is it working? Is it not working? What are the results? That's what I call a slow heat, but it's occurring constantly, and I'm probably my biggest critic."

On coping with all the pressures, Howard says:

> Teachers will often do what gets them through the day, and you have to, in spite of it all, or whatever you say and do, and how much you talk about it. And I really believe most teachers I've met in my 25 years in education have wanted to do a good job and have tried to do a good job, but to use an old term, the bottom line, I guess, too, with many kids is that the teacher will do

what gets them through the day. And that doesn't mean it's bad. Often, good things happen to get you through the day, too.

He admits that even he has succumbed to the pressure. He stated that he used to be much more creative in the classroom, but he got too much flak from parents, so he gave in. He now includes vocabulary and spelling, purely for appearance. "So things look like it's school," he says. He realizes that the kids don't learn the vocabulary except short term, but he gave in to those external pressures. He copes by maintaining his own pleasure reading outside of school.

Sadly, Howard has made his own personal choices, but even with his frustrations and disappointments, he insists he would choose teaching again. "I still think in spite of its problems, that it's a great, great profession. And it's right for me. You know, it's not right for everybody, but it's right for me, knowing who I am, and that's been a long time coming, finding out who I am. I enjoy the atmosphere. I think there are a lot of good people in education, and they're stimulating. They're idea people, and they're thinkers, and yet they're patient and compassionate people, too. It's a good work environment."

Sally

Sally is twenty-five years old and has been teaching for three years, the last year in this suburban system. Sally also recalls her high school experience. Because she changed schools between 9th and 10th grades, Sally experienced distinctly different English

curriculums. "In ninth grade, we did our reading on our own. We did some discussion in class. The teacher related her personal experiences, and then the study guide type of things. After that, my tenth grade teacher was not an English teacher and did not know how to teach English, and so she just had us read things and answer questions, and that's all we ever did." Eleventh and twelfth grades followed the same pattern, except that each semester required an artistic project related to literature. Sally recalls, "I really don't remember that we did much of anything, but if we didn't write, if we wrote anything, it was an answer to an essay question on a test and even that was rare. Mostly, tests were objective. We wrote a research paper in 11th grade, but that's about the only writing I remember doing grades 10-12."

Sally joins others who chose to teach after their own negative high school experience. "I thought I could do it better. I think every teacher thinks that, though. At least every kid that I've ever had in my class thinks they could do it better than I can, too. I decided I was going to be a teacher, though, in first grade and never changed my mind except for a few moments in sixth grade, but that was my main goal in life."

Maybe because Sally's professional education is so recent, she has a more positive view of it:

> I think my training really prepared me to do a lot of what I have to do, unlike a lot of education students have said, at least in my hearing, because I listened to things people had to say, instead of poo-pooing them, or because I found the ways that they would apply instead of saying,

"well, this isn't real experience." Because I don't think you have to learn everything through real experience. I truly don't believe that because if we did, this world would be in a lot of trouble. I have to also say that part of the reason I was prepared as well as I was is because I did have a lot of fieldwork, and so those kids who don't get much fieldwork really do have a legitimate complaint. The classroom theory is great, and it does work but only if it's used in conjunction with the other. I feel like I came out prepared to teach my goals. That was partly because I had to enumerate those goals going in, basically, what do you want to have kids to get out of literature? And knowing that from the very start, I was able to pick and choose along the way that which is going to help me reach that goal. And somewhere in the college experience, somebody has to do that for kids. Otherwise, they won't know how to pick and choose from the information that's presented.

In spite of her recent education, Sally is back in school herself. When asked why she's returned to school, she responds:

I suppose there's a very real threat that I have to have a certain number [of credits] to keep my teaching certificate, but aside from that, I really enjoy taking classes. To me, it's a stress reliever to be the student, and I really enjoy learning. And I even get frustrated, I find, even on the college level, that other people in the class complain so much about the way things are done because

even some of them are teachers themselves. I just like somebody there, providing me with opportunities to think about things that I haven't thought about before.

Even though Sally's a relative newcomer to the field, she already sees dramatic changes in the profession:

> When I got out of college, I got out ready to use all these ideas about empowering kids in literature and freedom of choice and options and reading theory and all that kind of stuff. And my first year in _____, even though I was mainly a history teacher, I was also viewing myself as a language teacher. My first year there, everything was pretty calm, My second year they got into outcomes based education, and they picked that up real fast, and by October there were people going to conferences, by November the science curriculum was being written in outcomes objectives, by January they'd sent six teachers to Minnesota for a week. I mean it was just overwhelmingly, rapidly fast that they decided they were moving toward outcomes based, and I'm going, "Wait a minute! I'm just trying to figure out how to use this stuff that I got out of college with, and you're telling me the trend is already changing?" And then when I transferred to _____, what I saw was people who had picked up on ideas twenty years ago and left them alone for twenty years to see if they would work instead of changing them, and that appealed to me, but then again, I found out that had problems of its own. I see that there is a need for

> change, so people's attempts to change is positive, but I see our rapid shifts and frequent trends as very damaging to education because nothing ever stays in place long enough. I think society wants here and now. It doesn't understand that in the educational process, you have to give something twenty years to figure out if it works because that's the time it takes to create a whole human being, and I don't think people understand that.

Sally states her goals for teaching literature emphatically:

> I think first and foremost, you have to be able to see yourself in literature. Why would anybody sit down to write except to express their own experiences and try and reach out and connect with other people? So that has to be your number one goal, and out of that fall all these other things, like you make people who enjoy reading, and critical thinkers who are able to see these connections between their lives and other people's lives, and what that means in terms of empowering people to change, to change the world. I'm really into empowerment and really haven't found a way to empower students as much as I'd like through literature, but that is probably one of my, that has to be secondary to the goal of seeing that. Yes, we're reaching out, we're touching, we're communicating, but what's the purpose behind that? To empower people to do something.

In terms of her personal reading, Sally reads for a variety of reasons. "There are times when I go sit in my room and read

something that I know every English teacher in this world would frown upon just because I want to escape. And there are times when I don't want to escape. I'm not stressed out or anything. I really feel like thinking, so I'll read something that challenges my thinking, or sometimes I really need an emotional outlet so I'll choose something that I know is going to tap into things I need to deal with." She continues:

> I don't read as much as I should for information, unless I need to for a specific reason. Which is one of the reasons I keep taking classes because then I have to. I tend to get my news through news broadcasts and radio, like NPR news is my main news source, so I don't even read many newspapers. But I do a lot of reading that is both pleasure and professional at the same time. I read a lot of young adult, so I know what's out there so I can recommend it to kids, but I enjoy reading it, and I would like to write it, so I mean that taps into personal, professional at both times.

Although it appears that Sally never stops reading, she still feels guilty about taking the time for pleasure reading. "I do a lot of it in the summer, and I do feel guilty about taking the time to do it which is why I actually read a lot of young adult lit. during the school year and more of the adult stuff in the summer." She continues:

> Rationally, I don't [feel guilty], but I think that there's a conscious choice. I tend to be a workaholic, and I tend to feel like I always need to be working, and so that has a

> lot to do with it. During the school year, I think that probably is the main source of guilt. And I even got up this morning, and I read The Kitchen God's Wife for a couple of hours before I came here, and I even felt bad, like why wasn't I doing something to prepare for school next year? So I do have that work-driven thing.

Sally is currently a member of NCTE and ALAN, her NCTE membership dating back to her undergraduate days. She reads English Journal but admits to often saving them for summer reading. She has also attended a professional language arts conference in the last year.

Sally recognizes many issues affecting the profession. One of her biggest challenges is that of juggling priorities:

> I find it very difficult to balance the need to recognize kids as individuals and care about them as individuals, first of all, because there's so many of them, and I always feel like I'm failing somebody in that category. On top of looking at them as individuals and their individual differences, it's very difficult for me to deal with helping them keep up in class and still structure an educational environment. If my main goal is to educate them, and after 45 minutes a day with them, here's my main goal of education. But how much time do I give to treating them as individuals and talking to each one of them, and etc., etc. And out of classtime counts the same way. If I choose to go to a volleyball game to see them play, that's time away from my planning or grading. I haven't found

> a way to cope yet, and I just wish society would decide what it wants out of our educational system. Does it really want people who are involved in the kids' lives, or does it really want people to educate them because they're sending mixed messages.

She says she feel perpetually pulled in different directions:

> Always! I end up trying to pull so many different needs, and so many different goals, so many different ways of doing things, that I'm always occasionally pulling in something, and I'm never deciding if that's good or bad. That just doesn't give a focus, but it uses a little bit of everything to expose kids to as many different things as I can expose them to. And I find that kids are real ambivalent themselves about what they want. They want it to be easy, and they don't want to have to work which is human nature, but they want some real specific goals because they need that thing to feel proud of themselves for having accomplished. But my teaching style is not real task, skill oriented, like most. My goals tend to be broader and more general, and so some of these kids get real frustrated, so then I'm pulled by them to find something where they can do that. And by parents who want specific things in the curriculum. Parents are real active in this district.

Other external issues that concern her include standardized testing and curriculum:

> There does need to be some need to standardize curriculum to a certain extent so we know at what level what things are taught. And I have to say that the state curriculum guidelines that are coming out are fairly general and do allow for a lot of that, and so I don't feel real threatened by those. I think whoever made those has a clue. Once they start to get more behavior oriented, that becomes a problem because different teachers are best at teaching different skills, and somebody along the line, hopefully, gives kids some of the things that they need and can grow and build on. It's also a threat when you start trying to measure education in terms of outcomes because that is the least of education. The most of education is what happens in your mind, the mental gymnastics, so to speak. When I give a test, for example, I'm rarely measuring students' past acquisitions. The tests are another learning experience. Take what you know at this point and build with it and go further, which is why a lot of kids really don't do well on my tests, and I don't give very many because they are another activity in mental gymnastics. They're not a "what-did-you-learn? Spit-it-back-at-me." And when we reduce education to that, we reduce it to about 10% of what it should be.

For Sally, one of the biggest ways schools could help is by providing the time for her to assess what she's doing:

> I rarely have time to pause and reflect. I think if I had more time to pause and reflect, I wouldn't feel so overwhelmed. I also wouldn't feel so unsuccessful most of the time, which I have to confess, as a teacher, I have very rarely felt successful. Occasionally, something will strike you, and that'll make you feel successful; like I was making a bulletin board for my kids and I had them bring in their favorite piece of writing. And this was probably in February, and it took the whole while to put everybody's favorite piece of writing on that wall. But when I stood back and looked at it, I saw how many different types of writing we had done. There were poems up there, there were newspaper articles, there was a constitution up there, there was a narrative up there. That was kind of a forced reflection that I noticed. But you don't get many of those. That was just kind of a chance thing. I guess I try to measure, unfortunately, and I have to keep myself from doing this, you tend as a teacher, it's natural, to measure in terms of whether or not the kids like you. And that is deadly.

When asked whether she'd again choose teaching, this intense young teacher struggles before answering yes:

> That's a tough question. I chose to go into English, and I'm not entirely sure why. I guess because I love to read and write. History was my last thought ever, and I had to pick a minor, and it was getting real close to the line, and I wasn't going to be able to graduate in four, and my

> parents weren't going to help me if I didn't graduate in four years, so I just said, "Okay, I'll just do history, even though I hate history." And I discovered that I'd been very poorly taught history in high school. Also, I came to love history and decided that history had a lot of keys to empowerment and perhaps even more than language arts. And so with empowerment being one of my major goals for people, I don't know . . . there's a balance [with history and language arts] somewhere for me there.

Conclusions: School C

All three of these teachers have also continued their education, but two have since discontinued their professional involvement. Leigh and Howard, the experienced teachers, have a real frustration which seems to stem from external pressure from their school and community to excel and conform. Howard admits to giving in to the pressure; Leigh insists on bucking the system but feels intense isolation in her quest.

Sally, although the newcomer, also feels this external pressure and constantly feels overwhelmed by her desire to do it all. For Sally, the educational experience was different. Her relatively recent schooling allowed her to be much better informed of current educational theory at the beginning of her career.

Like Leigh, Sally chose to teach in an effort to effect change. Both felt that they could do it better than their teachers did. Perhaps it is this need that drives them to continue to fight.

All three of these teachers value pleasure reading, though they incorporate it differently into their classrooms. While Howard seems to have totally separated his personal life and reading from his profession, Leigh and Sally continue struggling to reach a compromise. Leigh has pretty much established a working balance, but Sally's professional responsibilities continue to rule her life.

I will further look at these ten teachers, their lives, educations, and theories in an attempt to discover connections between these and their classrooms along with the implications for education in my final chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

Reader-response theory has been defined as the reader's construction of meaning through the transaction with the text. For Rosenblatt, the meaning of literature exists neither entirely in the text nor in the mind of the reader but is created through their transaction with one another:

> A novel or poem or play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols. The literary work exists in the live circuit set up between the reader and text: the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel thoughts and feelings. Out of this complex process emerges a more or less imaginative experience. (Rosenblatt, Literature 25)

The role of the teacher, according to Rosenblatt, is to help improve the young reader's "capacity to evoke meaning from the text by leading him to reflect self-critically on this process" (26). As the reader grows, so does his ability to respond, combining emotional, cognitive, and aesthetic dimensions into a unified creation.

Traditionally, education has been thought of as the transfer of knowledge from one to another, but reader-response works against this notion. Reader-response allows students to be active rather than passive agents both in their own learning and in assessing their own growth. In order to assist in this growth, teachers must also experience this growth and reflect on their own learning process.

Reader-response theory allows for growth and empowerment for students and teachers. Its benefits should not be limited to one group but applied schoolwide.

In looking at the impact of reader-response theory on our schools and attempting to draw conclusions from my study, it is necessary to return to the original three questions focused on the categories of professional journals, teacher histories, and external pressures to determine the role reader-response theory plays in each.

Question One: Is reader-response theory being written about in these professional journals and to what extent?

Overall, my findings are encouraging. Regarding the presence of reader-response theory in professional journals, the evidence is clear. Both theory and application are thoroughly covered in almost three hundred articles. These articles are also readily accessible, the vast majority of them (250) published in the English Journal whose primary audience is secondary teachers. The articles are also reader friendly. Most (78%) are classified as description of methods and classroom practice. Reader-response is defined primarily from the experiential framework. Theory is discussed in non-technical terms and is specifically tied in with specific classroom activities. Most of the articles focus on praxis, the working out of theory through classroom instruction.

Repeated through this literature are several key findings:

1. The more aware readers are about the steps they go through in their reading, the deeper their understanding. It is not

sufficient to decode; readers must understand how they negotiate meaning.

2. This understanding of learning or metacognition requires reflection. It is necessary for teachers to provide time within their classrooms that allows students to reflect and think about their own reading process.

3. There is a need for teachers and students to work together. Meaning is also created through interaction and discussion. Teachers can provide the assistance students need in their meaning making experience.

4. A reader's deep sense of identity influences her responses to literature. The more confident a reader, the more likely she is to allow herself to bring in personal elements that assist in meaning making.

5. The role of the teacher is changing to that of co-learner. This change can be threatening to the teacher because it demands that much of the authority of the classroom be shared with the students.

6. The battle of method and goals results in an identity crisis. Belief in one approach to reading and trained in another, the classroom teacher often is confused about just what should be taught.

7. Schools affect methods of response rather than reading ability. Studies have shown that students approach reading from the same critical stance used in most classrooms even after they are out of school.

8. Methods of response are influenced by texts used. Because of the schools' reliance on anthologies, students often think of literature in terms of study questions dealing with genre and literary terms.

9. Literature anthologies are not reflecting response theory. Primarily, anthologies are organized historically or by genre, and focus on textual understanding and analysis. Teachers feel comfortable with these texts because they are in effect the same as the texts they used as students twenty-five years ago.

All of these findings indicate the need for informed teaching. However, most of the discussion of reader-response occurred in the seventies, just as many of today's teachers came out of school. By the time these teachers began their professional affiliations, reader-response articles appeared less frequently. Interest didn't necessarily wane, but other issues took precedence, simply reflecting a periodic change of focus. The decade of the eighties resulted in fewer articles than the seventies, but since the late eighties, articles are becoming more frequent which may indicate a renewed interest.

The material in the journals is there. For whatever reason, some teachers have chosen to not make use of it. In my study, only four teachers regularly read English Journal, and only fifty percent regularly read any professional journals at all. In fact, according to recent estimates, of the approximate 100,000 presently teaching English, less than 5% currently are members of the National Council of Teachers of English. I will speculate about some of the possible reasons for this lack of involvement later in this chapter; however,

those who have remained involved seem to have a broader view of the profession, a clearer personal philosophy, and a greater self-confidence than those who have not, which leads to my next question.

Question Two: What is the teachers' knowledge of current response theory, and is it incorporated into their classrooms?

The answer to this question is not quite so positive. Of those teachers I interviewed, less than fifty percent regularly read English Journal. Only one reads English Education, and none read Research in the Teaching of English. Several other professional journals were mentioned (IRA, Kappan, Teacher Magazine) but were only read by one or two of the participants. Whatever their knowledge of reader-response, these teachers seem to be getting it through a source other than professional journals.

In looking at the teachers themselves, I looked at the role of reading in their lives, both on the personal side and the professional. I was hopeful that for teachers, especially English teachers, the distinction between the two may blur, but what I discovered was that their reading remained distinctly separate through their educational and professional lives.

Though all came to teaching through a personal love of reading, none of them connected that joy of books with their own experience as a student. Ninety percent had a traditional high school experience, teacher directed and information based. Even Joan who attended a

progressive private school recalls a literature canon and emphasis on writing correctness.

This traditional experience extended into college. The focus for eighty percent was a standard literature background using a critical analysis approach. Only Sally, newest to the field, had professional undergraduate education emphasizing theory. For the others, methods classes were few or outdated. Even those who did receive professional methods classes as part of their undergraduate program were not exposed to reader-response. None of the methods taught was integrated into their other English classes.

It's not surprising then that nine out of ten of these teachers returned to school for additional education. While three of those didn't feel that graduate school met their needs, the remaining seven did benefit from their experience. However, even in graduate school where they were introduced to response theory, these teachers discovered that the required literature classes did not incorporate it, still clinging to the critical analysis approach of their undergraduate days.

There are many reasons for this lack of movement away from New Criticism despite the presence of the multiple post modern theories. As Cahalen and Downing note, " 'Theory' is just one more subject to be 'covered' according to the 'field coverage' principles which Gerald Graff and others described. In short, the traditional scholarly models still operate as powerful constraints on the dissemination of the very pedagogical alternatives being recommended by those authors" (4). According to Cahalen and Downing, New Criticism remains attractive for teachers "because once

its method (involving the preeminence of the textual form and the literary devices within it) was 'mastered,' classroom teaching became an art at which teachers enjoyed being better 'bankers' than students and could avoid doing much extratextual homework" (6). They continue:

> The problem as we perceive it, is that introductory courses are still often taught in this fashion even by teachers who have not read New Critics in years, or haven't needed to read them because the New Critical doctrines have been so deeply naturalized as the professional "unconscious" of literature departments. (7)

It is apparent through all strands of my research that for most, the focus of their educational experience has been on the material to be covered in the classroom rather than on the person facilitating that classroom:

> Research in reading, no matter what else it has demonstrated, has found the teacher to be a most important--perhaps *the* most important--factor in educational process. Theoretical movements come and go, but change comes slowly. In the classroom, teachers often fall back on the ways of their own teachers, because of lack of practical implementation of new theories or because of fear of failure in trying new methods. (Rosenblatt, Literature xi)

It is no wonder that these teachers have been unable to merge their separate views of personal reading and school reading. Never in their professional careers have they seen response theory applied.

They may have read it, discussed it, even viewed it, but if they haven't lived it, they haven't really learned it. They've only gone through the motions. They maintain this inconsistency between the theory they espouse and the practice they prescribe for their students. This behavior also has political ramifications; through saying but not doing, these teachers are still in power.

It is apparent that modeling and personal experience are extremely important. These teachers came to reading early, and their attitudes were fostered by family members who modeled positive reading practices for them. Modeling was also important for many in their choice of profession. Either they had a memorable teacher who was sensitive, caring, and personable whom they wanted to emulate, or their teacher was memorable for negative reasons and was someone they knew they could outperform. Even in these examples of modeling, it is important to note the distinction that these teachers make between personal reading and school reading.

Given the role that modeling had for these ten teachers, what can be said about the model they are now providing for their students? Nine out of ten state that their primary goal for their students is to create lifelong readers. Yet, nine out of ten admit that personal pleasure reading is their last priority. They leave it for summer or squeeze a few pages in before falling asleep. Even then, nine out of ten feel guilty about reading for enjoyment, which perhaps more than anything reflects in their classrooms. They divorce personal reading themselves, and it carries over into their classrooms. Few share their own reading interests with their

students on a regular basis. For a variety of reasons, most are not modeling their own number one goal.

Instead, their classrooms reflect a mixed theory approach, inculcated with the beliefs of the New Critics but drawn to the logic and power of response. Teachers may use response activities one day and analysis activities the next, volleying back and forth without understanding their connections. Often, as Tom Newkirk points out, teachers mistakenly believe that reader-response and critical analysis are "two opposing ideas," and to advocate one, one must reject the other (Andrasick x). Transactional theory, however, views them both as necessary parts of the whole. It is this incomplete understanding of reader-response theory that creates conflicts for teachers. Louise Rosenblatt states, "Few teachers of English today would deny that the individual's ability to read and enjoy literature is the primary aim of literary study. In practice, however, this tends to be overshadowed by preoccupation with whatever can be systematically taught and tested" (Literature 64-5). She later continues, "The tendency to hold on to old attitudes, on the one hand, is opposed by the struggle, on the other hand, to find fresher and more completely satisfying patterns" (257). No wonder these teachers feel pulled in different directions and sometimes overwhelmed. If they haven't been able to merge their separate views of reading in their professional lives, how can they hope to integrate them in their classrooms?

The teachers I interviewed deal with this struggle and are at various levels of merging theory with practice. In reviewing my two sources of collection, the teacher questionnaires and follow up

interviews, it was clear that for these teachers their goals and personal beliefs do not always connect. As Rosenblatt states, "Conscientious teachers often thus unwittingly defeat their long-term aims by classroom methods, day-to-day assignments, and devices for evaluation" (68). I will now look at five teachers whose classrooms reflect at least partial merging of theories.

Will, in his interview, indicates a reading theory based in response. "I think when you can relate to certain texts, you can get insight on behavior . . . I think the more you read, the better you read, and the broader you read, the more open you become to new ideas." His questionnaire, however, indicates a more traditional classroom approach. Will regularly uses anthologies and teacher directed discussion. Most reading is done outside of class, and students are assigned the same material and rarely given choice. Although use of anthologies and teacher selected material doesn't mean response can't be used, by allowing students choice, we provide them with a vested interest in their own learning. Teacher directed discussion can also generate genuine student response, but as Robert C. Small suggests, students are more likely to be responding to the teacher's response than their own reading (Karolides 17). Evidence of a merging of response theory with other approaches in Will's classroom can be seen in the way he pairs regular use of reading journals with study questions, focusing of both aesthetic and efferent reading. Will also combines methods of assessment, using objective tests, homework, projects, teacher conferences, and portfolios.

Kathleen also indicates a response approach to reading in her interview but admits her difficulty in extending that connection into her classroom. "I also look into reading in terms of myself, in terms of the lives of my children, in terms of the relationships with my students. I think reading is fun. I think reading should be fun. Unfortunately, I haven't figured our how to make all the things that kids are supposed to read fun." Kathleen, however, has made gains in merging response theory with practice. Her questionnaire indicates that she regularly uses paperbacks and novels rather than anthologies, although most of the reading is assigned. Her students regularly read the same material outside of class but often discuss it in small groups. Kathleen uses both reading journals and study questions in her daily activities. The journals serve as the basis for sharing and generating class discussion. Methods of evaluation are more traditional, relying primarily on objective and essays tests and rarely on portfolios or observation.

Warren balances his classroom with a combination of activities. In his interview he expresses his own struggle between the two theories of response and critical analysis:

> If we really believe in reader-response theory, then what we probably ought to do is give them a bunch of books and say, "Read them, and when you think you have something to say, write an article or an essay and let me read it," and I'm committed to that. On the other hand, there is another side to me that says, when a kid leaves a course called American Lit., they should know the names of ten authors and poets, and then they should be able to

> cite fifteen titles and give you a brief synopsis, and if the only way we're going to do that is by me talking about it, then so be it.

This mixed view is also apparent in Warren's questionnaire. He regularly uses anthologies as well as paperbacks and novels. Teacher directed discussion is balanced by small group work. Although most of the reading for class is assigned and completed outside of school, students are occasionally offered choice. Warren's methods of evaluation rarely include objective tests but primarily depend on essay tests, occasionally augmented with portfolios, projects, and teacher conferences.

Anne is perhaps the most successful of my teachers in her attempts to incorporate response theory into her classroom. She states, "So, one of my biggest goals is for them to make a connection between their lives and the literature and to come away with [recognition] that the literature has some kind of impact on them." Her questionnaire indicates regular use of anthologies, paperbacks, and young adult literature. Students regularly read the same assigned material outside of class. In class, small group work combines with whole class discussion. Activities include reading journals, creative writing, projects, and readers theatre, and students are evaluated through essay tests and projects. Anne is the one teacher in my study who did not have the traditional undergraduate English preparation based on critical analysis, and she feels that this plays an important role in her approach to teaching. This view that English majors are somehow crippled or at least analytically indoctrinated is shared by Ogle Burks Duff who notes, "They have

been educated to interpret, analyze, evaluate (all efferent concepts), but not to feel. Is there any wonder that many of our high school students see literature as something only to interpret and analyze?" (Karolides 218). Anne believes that missing that indoctrination has allowed her to avoid many of the conflicts experienced by her colleagues. "I think the reason I'm still happy as a teacher is I don't feel I'm there to give information. I feel I'm there to learn as much as the kids are, and I learn tremendous amounts from them every year."

Leigh also combines approaches is her classroom. In her interview she states that her goal is to encourage students to connect with what they read. "Hopefully, to find stuff that kids are interested in that's at a higher level so they have to start making some jumps. Having them see that literature can relate to stuff that they're doing everyday in their lives." She continues, "I want to tease them with the possibilities. I want them to see how much fun it can be." Leigh's classroom reflects these goals while maintaining traditional ties. She regularly mixes use of anthologies, paperbacks, and young adult literature. Activities range from whole class to small group. Leigh regularly reads aloud to her students, though most reading is assigned for out of class. Projects are regularly used as well as essay tests and homework, but conferences and creative dramatics are not.

All of these teachers assign reading to be completed outside of class. Most are not providing time for reading within their classrooms, which may suggest that talking about reading is separate from and more important than the reading itself. These teachers

assume implicitly that the reading has occurred before it is covered in class, and that is not necessarily wrong, but to encourage or promote the value of reading, we should make it important enough to rate class time.

For some, how they approach literature is influenced by the courses they're assigned to teach. Literature survey courses demand one approach; genre studies, another. However, even accounting for these influences, these teachers weren't confident that they were doing the right thing.

Given the various kinds of reader-response theories and these teachers' own lack of time to reflect, it is no wonder that there is confusion among them, and that they are experiencing difficulty in sorting through all the information.

This personal conflict extends beyond their separate classrooms. It affects their individual goals and creates professional conflict over whose goals are correct, current, or necessary. Their teaching is more directed by their experience and education than their personal goals. These teachers have handled this conflict within the profession in a number of ways. Some have quietly given in as Howard who resorts to teaching spelling and vocabulary for the sake of appearance. Others have made peace or simply cope. Will and Joan continue to push themselves and their students harder. Kathleen has reduced her English teaching to half-time. Linda refuses to change but is unhappy over her lack of results, and Leigh remains angry over outside pressures but determined not to give in. Many balance uncomfortably on the edge. Jan introduces the classics in her readers workshop. Warren questions the whole purpose of

teaching literature, and Sally still tries to do it all, unable to limit priorities. For these teachers there is no clear mission, and they look to the outside to provide direction in lieu of a single, coherent, personal philosophy. In fact, this single philosophy may be an impossibility in the teaching of English with such a mix of theories and goals and need not reflect negatively on these teachers.

Least frustrated by these differences are those who have remained professionally involved. In this study, fifty percent of the teachers maintain professional memberships, read professional journals, and attend professional conferences. Although this figure is well above the national average, it still isn't ideal.

Education, as any profession, demands our staying current. Those who remain professionally involved are more philosophic about changes in the profession and continued external pressures. They tend to adjust to change, not place blame, and resist questioning themselves. Those not involved are more frustrated by and defensive about those external pressures. Blame is placed on students, parents, society, and government, and these teachers seem less sure of themselves and what they're doing. Part of the problem may be that the teachers have only a limited definition or understanding of response theory, limited to a superficial, emotional response. They don't understand that emotional, personal response is only the first step in responding to literature that combines with critical response. In lieu of a complete understanding, they are unable to take it through critical analysis. As Stephen Judy states:

> The Dartmouth Seminar helped many English teachers see that there is a considerable need in the schools to

> provide young people with more opportunities to examine literature in personal terms. However, a great many undergraduates (and, one might add, experienced teachers) have initial difficulty approaching literature this way, because as successful graduates of conventional literature programs, they have lost their capacity to respond to literature in personal ways. These are the students who have "done well" in school and college literature classes. They are skilled in formal "classroom criticism," and quite understandably, they are reluctant to abandon conventional classroom talk about books in order to plunge into more creative kinds of responses. ("Exploring Response"33-34)

Clearly, professional involvement provides positive benefits for those who take advantage of it. It provides continued education, affirmation, and community. Within it, members are challenged, cheered on, and encouraged to reflect. Professional conferences allow members to participate in a community of fellow educators, sharing as individuals and benefiting from the group. As Kathleen Dudden Andrasick notes, this continued education is imperative. "Students trained by teachers who are not themselves readers and writers are likely to be limited by their instructors' lack of experience" (186). She continues, "Teachers must not neglect personal literacy in their dedication to student competence. One informs the other" (186). In addition to this lack of personal literacy are other issues which affect teacher performance, as discussed in my third question.

Question Three: What are some of the factors that limit or impede the use of response theory in the classroom?

External pressures affect all of my teachers, though not as much as I had predicted. Government regulations, testing, public pressure, and funding were important issues for all, but each teacher kept coming back to the same issues: time and support. Nine out of ten said emphatically that they could use more time. All felt pressure to do more and were frustrated at their inability to do it all.

They said they could use more time to plan and to meet with other teachers just to share. Professional journals are not being read at least in part because these teachers just don't have the time; however, the teachers in my study offered several other reasons. Leigh, who teaches middle school, stated that she dropped her membership some years ago because she didn't feel English Journal addressed the issues important to that age group. Since then, she has not renewed her subscription. While for some it was an matter of time, for others, cost was a factor. None of my teachers indicated that they didn't have a need for professional information; they simply rationalized their actions. Kathleen, however, may have been the most honest in her reasons for not reading the journals, " . . . some of the articles absolutely to me had no relevance at all to my experience, and it was a lot of people making themselves feel good by writing an article in the English Journal and getting it published."

Her comment may reflect an important point on the part of many practitioners. These classroom teachers in their own struggles operate in solitary classrooms and function alone. Many feel isolated, defensive, and bombarded by new and conflicting theories. How

they choose to make sense of all this is a matter of survival. Perhaps it is this basic insecurity that keeps them from using what seems to be just another source of new frustrations. Subconsciously, they may be avoiding one more demand on an already overloaded system.

It may also be that their lack of confidence and feelings about their lack of success are only reinforced by reading articles written by or about teachers who only meet with success in their classrooms. As I recall, out of close to 300 articles dealing with reader-response, there were only two or three that expressed doubt, uncertainty, or described failed programs. These few articles stood out from the others, and I remember my mixed reactions. First, I was critical of the authors for adding more fuel to an already negative fire. Then, more honestly, I admitted to myself how I have felt similar frustrations and doubts. I realized that nowhere is it appropriate or acceptable for teachers to voice concerns, difficulties, or a sense of inadequacy. This unspoken rule often results in teachers turning inward rather than reaching out, or worse yet, dropping out altogether.

Because of the nature of the school environment which promotes isolation on the part of the teachers, rather than sharing, I suspect teachers often fall victim to professional jealousy and in an effort to spare their already fragile egos throw up protective walls around themselves. By avoiding journals and professional conferences, these teachers allow themselves to remain insulated but safe from seemingly more successful peers.

The demands of teaching English took over their lives, and most of their outside time was spent grading papers and planning.

Several mentioned favorably the scheduled professional time at a local professional development school. They feel isolated and alone in their classrooms, especially those who are not members of a professional organization.

Ironically, it may be that the one thing that keeps them from quitting is the lack of time to think about it. Conversely, had they more time to reflect, they'd feel better about themselves and what they're doing.

Implications

Clearly, the demands on English teachers are great. Even though there may already be too many demands placed on them, there are advantages to incorporating response theory. Initially, there may be more work on the part of the teachers to restructure their classrooms, but the payoff is in the students' increased interest and involvement as well as their own. The value of reader-response theory is that it allows readers to become active agents in the creation of meaning. It promotes connection between the reader and the text. It encourages reflection, implies larger connections, and encourages sharing. It views literature as the human artifact that it is, not an unchanging body of knowledge to be mastered.

The concepts need to be applied not only to the literature but to the teachers' lives as well. If we truly want our teachers to be effective, we must meet the same needs for them that we wish them to meet for their students. As Ogle Burks Duff says, "If we want students to recognize the confluence of the cognitive and affective domains in the literary experience--to transact with the poem--our

pedagogical approach must be modified. Humans not only think, they feel. The reader-response experience provides an opportunity for all of us to learn what it means to be a human being by providing us the opportunity to experience a range of encounters with life through the aesthetic stance" (Karolides 218).

Assisting in developing, encouraging, and maintaining this opportunity for change involves teacher education programs, the schools, and the professional journals. It is true that there are also many factors outside the educational system that impact teachers; however, I will limit my remarks to these three which most directly affect teachers and the implications for each.

Teacher Education Programs

Schools need to modify teacher education programs so that teachers and pre-service teachers are allowed to experience the application of reader-response theory. All of the teachers in this study experienced traditional literature classrooms, and nine of these ten earned undergraduate English degrees with an emphasis on literature from the perspective of New Criticism. These literature classes focused on knowledge about the text and rarely, if ever, connected those texts to either the students themselves or the teaching of literature. As Susan Florio-Ruane states, "Classroom discourse about academic subjects is de-contextualized in the sense that it is often about knowledge unconnected to authentic contexts of its development and use" (5). Teacher education needs to help the teachers connect with the literature and with themselves. We need to encourage them to examine their attitudes toward literature,

reading, and learning. "We have found that future teachers with whom we worked often were unaware of the values and beliefs they brought to the classroom" (Hammersley 210). Without clear knowledge of their own underlying assumptions, teachers often operate in a confusing world of mixed goals.

Too often, university English departments still operate with the study of literature separate from the study of teaching methods, and there is no real incentive to change because, in universities, scholarship is more highly valued than teaching. "The professional and institutional structure of the literary discipline amply rewards scholarly research through conferences, journals, and books. In contrast, few institutional structures reward pedagogical practices or answer the educational needs of teachers" (Cahalan and Downing 3). As I have said before, the traditional model persists because it provides a clear pedagogy and an exact content, and it is so ingrained in the system that we often practice it without consciously recognizing it as such. Cahalan refers to it as the "professional 'unconscious' of the literature departments" (3).

This focus needs to change. I'm not saying that literature departments need to be dismantled, only that they should incorporate more than one critical approach to literature and include those such as reader-response that recognize the role of the reader and the importance of metacognition. The many new contemporary theories which are currently popular on many campuses have in their premises a reliance on reader-response theory, although some may not acknowledge it. As Cahalen and Downing note, "As diverse as theoretical developments have been, they share a common

emphasis on the centrality of readers and their culture in interpreting literary texts" (ix). Acknowledging this balance of the important roles of reader and text, teachers will feel less anxiety about recognizing the importance of the reader in their own lives and classrooms. As Alan Purves states:

> The attitudes that need to be developed are those that allow a prospective teacher to give up many of those comforts traditionally associated with the teacher's role and to accept an open classroom, in which the teacher allows the students to express themselves and exchange the variety of their responses. It is difficult for the student teacher, deservedly apprehensive, to give up the security blanket of a desk, of lecturing, of being right, and of grades. ("Inside" 120)

This is true for experienced teachers as well. If teachers are offered more than a single approach to literature as well as an opportunity to explore their own values and beliefs and reflect upon them, they will be more apt to integrate their conflicting views and recognize in themselves, possibly for the first time, a level of competence.

As Elliot Eisner suggests, there are many benefits to teachers having full understanding of both content and pedagogy:

> One is that full command of the ideas one is teaching can free one to take on all comers--responses to questions and statements by students can be treated with style if one knows one's intellectual turf . . . What does competence mean to those of us interested in the

> improvement of teaching? To what extent is it likely that a teacher will have pedagogical grace if the teacher does not have a firm grasp on the content to be taught? Psychologists often study teaching as if it were a contentless process. Can teaching be effectively studied that way? Can one teach for transfer if one does not see the connections through which such transfer is made? (Eisner 134)

Those changes begun in teacher education programs need to be continued as teachers move into the new setting of the schools. Teacher education programs must begin to address the continued needs of the professional, not limiting their focus to the needs of the pre-service teachers but following them out of the universities and into their classrooms, providing that much needed support and sense of ongoing education. Professors of professional methods classes need to maintain their connections with the public schools, spending time both observing and teaching alongside of their students. This university presence will only help the schools in their own efforts to assist teachers.

Schools

What can the schools do to help? First, they need to provide support, both personally and professionally for their teachers. They also need to provide leadership and encouragement. Fifty percent of the teachers no longer read professional journals or attend conferences, and the most frequently cited reasons were lack of time and personal cost.

Ironically, most of the journals articles were published in the seventies, just as most of these teachers were entering the profession. As new teachers, time was limited and so were personal resources. By the time they settled into their careers and finished graduate school, the trend had changed, and response theory appeared less frequently in the journals.

Coming into the eighties, the economy also changed, and school budgets felt the crunch. No longer was there money available for professional development, and many schools found it necessary to have teachers pay for conferences and subscriptions out of their own pockets. Lack of time and money were the reasons most often given for teachers lack of participation.

As noted earlier, schools do not have much effect on reading ability, but they do affect methods of response that students use when reading literature. Alan Purves in Reading and Literature notes, "When one turns to response to literature, one finds a clear indication that patterns of response are learned in secondary school" (106). He continues, "If they are learned, they appear to have been taught, if not as a conscious part of the curriculum, at least as part of a 'hidden agenda' " (106). Herber and Herber name "quality of school textbooks, the nature of instruction that teachers provide, and the opportunities for meaningful practice" as the three essential factors for extending student literacy (Davidson 69). This need for extending literacy applies to teachers as well as students. It is this lack of concern for the extended growth of teacher literacy that results in the reliance on textbooks.

Rather than teachers, Wilkenson states, "Textbooks are the organizing elements of the curriculum and the driving force in instruction" (Karolides 82). Textbooks drive the curriculum, the schedule, and the budget. As they did for me, anthologies determine approach, limit selection, and dictate method. The cost of textbooks, particularly literature anthologies, is one area that has multiple effects. Money spent on anthologies is not available for supplemental materials or teacher professional development. In her interview, Leigh comments on her school's recent $2,800. purchase of new anthologies. "Do you know how many paperbacks I could have bought with that money?" Leigh is outraged that so much money was wasted on a set of books that she doesn't use anyway, all because of a school policy that says that each student must be provided with his/her own book. For Leigh, it is only a sad misappropriation of money; for others, anthologies play an even bigger role. Because of the exorbitant cost of anthologies, many schools insist that their teachers use them and restrict curriculum accordingly. Schools need to allow their teachers to make their own professional choices and then support those choices.

Teachers also need time to share and to reflect. If reflection is necessary for students, and their learning is dependent on this, then it only follows that teachers need the same opportunity. Schools could help by adjusting the school's schedule to provide time within the day for teachers to meet, share, and plan. As Marilyn Hanf Buckley states:

> To teach literature with poise and confidence, teachers need to experience and internalize the subject. If the

> institute aspires for a different teaching of literature, then new ways of literature must first become part of the teacher, not just part of the curriculum. Change the teacher, the institute hypothesizes, and then students will change accordingly. The challenge of teacher education, therefore, is to bring about the teachers' personal re-knowing of curriculum. (Karolides 46)

Schools should also recognize the need for professional growth. This is not a selfish luxury but a necessity that benefits the teachers and the students. Professional growth needs to apply to administrators as well as teachers. Administrators must provide leadership not only through support but also by example, demonstrating their own professional growth. As Wilkerson states, "Principals have an obligation to be informed and knowledgeable in the same areas expected of teachers" (Karolides 84). He continues, "The need for ongoing and relevant staff development for teachers and administrators is a crucial one. Development of a shared commitment to a philosophy of instruction and implementation of instruction consistent with that philosophy require knowledge, experience, and support" (84). Schools must guarantee an adequate amount of money that would allow their teachers to attend their respective professional conferences and encourage their teachers to become more involved as presenters and committee members. Schools should also maintain professional libraries. This, too, requires a commitment of time and money.

Despite the frustrations of teaching, all of these teachers insist that they would choose teaching again. All are sincerely dedicated,

love their field, try hard, and want to do a good job. They also want to do better. None has totally dropped out and is only going through the motions. If they didn't care, they wouldn't have agreed to participate in this study. However, dedication and concern are not enough. These teachers can't do it all on their own. As Buckley says, "Rosenblatt's contention that no one can make meaning for readers other than the individual readers themselves, can be extended to suggest that no one can make a 'new' teacher other than the teachers themselves" (Karolides 49). She continues:

> Teaching is a behavior, deeply rooted and in action more spontaneous than reflective, so change is primarily psychological. It involves not so much a change of mind as a change of heart . . . And without the change of heart, it is my observation that teachers will continue repeating their established patterns of instruction whether or nor they *intellectually* adopt a new curriculum idea or verbally boast of academic acquaintance with this modern theorist or that. (49)

Secondary schools need to provide time and opportunity for teachers to read journals, reflect, incorporate, and share with peers. Schools must create situations that encourage and, in fact, make it necessary for teachers to verbalize their thoughts. Most of the teachers in this study are unable to make connections between theory and practice. Their inability to articulate their own pedagogical theories suggests that they have lacked opportunities to do so. Schools can assist by providing time for their teachers to develop personal theories and take ownership of them. Also necessary is continued professional

development, helping teachers to feel empowered in the face of external pressures. And finally, literacy needs to be the responsibility of all disciplines, not just the realm of English departments. All of these issues and others need to be addressed in the professional journals.

Professional Journals

Journals are only one way to disseminate information and a passive one at that. It is apparent from my study that professional journals alone are not the answer. In terms of topics, these journals, particularly Eng.Ed and RTE seem to be influenced by their focus on composition. This focus may reflect the profession's natural trend toward composition or may be an effort to counter the impact of the literature focus of past. Regardless, professional journals should attempt to offer a balanced and integrated emphasis on all areas of language arts, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

In terms of readership, these journals as representing their professional organizations need to do more to recruit a larger readership, possibly by making their institutional memberships more attractive. At this date, institutional memberships are significantly more expensive than individual memberships. As more and more individual teachers feel the need to limit expenses, it is even more important that their schools provide professional resources. The one resource that can be consistently available to all is journals.

In addition, as indicated in this study by both the journal review and the teacher case studies, there is a need to do more with assessment. It need to be asked why was there such a lack of

articles dealing with assessment of reader-response? Journals should address the issue of evaluation and assessment in light of current theory, providing alternatives to often state mandated testing procedures.

As mouthpieces for professional organizations, journals need, perhaps, to become more political in their stand against uniform testing. Journals should re-examine their previous policy of separating professional and political concerns. Professional organizations are very active in their opposition to standardized testing, and it is time for their journals to more adamantly reflect this position.

But most closely connected with reader-response theory is the fact that in these journals, too little attention has been given to teachers. Journals need to address this lack of focus on the teacher as an integral part of the learning process. It is neither selfish nor unprofessional to address the concept of teachers as learners and their needs in this evolving role. If one truly believes in the response-based theory of learning, then the teacher becomes a co-learner. Almost all of the research and articles in my study dealt with the student learner, materials, and methods, not the teachers, their strengths and their problems. How teachers struggle with their own conflicting beliefs, how they adapt and attempt to make sense for themselves, how they feel about themselves in this process are all questions that need to be addressed in professional journals. Teachers need to read about others' experiences as they struggle with the same difficulties; they need to know they are not alone. The teachers in my study felt isolated and alone in their frustrations. It

would be helpful if journals, as literature, offered a means for teachers to connect with each other and to share their multiple perspectives. Learning is collaborative, and as Hammersley says, "In short, we come to see ourselves in part as others see us. The self is thus also a social construction, the results of persons perceiving themselves and then developing a definition through the process of interaction. This loop enables people to change and grow as they learn more about themselves through this interactive process" (35).

Summary

There are many reasons why reader-response is so slow to be incorporated in the schools. Professional journals play only one role. If change is really going to take place, teachers need to feel empowered to effect that change, and I don't feel that they currently do. As we know is true for our students, expectations affect achievement. If we wish teachers to behave as professionals, then we need to treat them as such. Maybe then teachers will come to view themselves with confidence. Teacher education programs must modify their curriculums to reflect the broader view of current theory. Schools need to provide support and let teachers know that they are more important than test scores. Through promoting teacher literacy, schools help teachers build the confidence that allows them to remain firm against external pressures. And professional journals need to recognize the teacher as an individual with questions and needs, not simply as someone incidental to student learning.

Overall, schools and the other various components of the educational system need to work together to provide an environment that recognizes the need for collaboration and reflection for teachers as well as students. Time in school is well spent for professional development and sharing. Outside of school, time can be set aside for conferences or teacher support groups, sponsored by schools, universities, professional organizations, or just the teachers themselves.

For teachers, if their own school experience was traditional, and college was traditional, then the demand for continued education is great. We need to recognize this need in ourselves and others. Education is truly a lifelong process, but if educators themselves don't believe, practice, or model it, then we only perpetuate the status quo.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

UCRIHS Approval Letter

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH
AND DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1046

June 25, 1992

Susan B. Steffel
4521 Oakwood Dr.
Okemos, MI 48864

RE: CONNECTING READER RESPONSE THEORY, TEACHERS, AND CLASSROOOM PRACTICE, IRB #92-261

Dear Ms. Steffel:

The above project is exempt from full UCRIHS review. The proposed research protocol has been reviewed by a member of the UCRIHS committee. The rights and welfare of human subjects appear to be protected and you have approval to conduct the research.

You are reminded that UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval one month prior to June 24, 1993.

Any changes in procedures involving human subjects must be reviewed by UCRIHS prior to initiation of the change. UCRIHS must also be notifed promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

Thank you for bringing this project to my attention. If I can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

David E. Wright, Ph.D., Chair
University Committee on Research Involving
Human Subjects (UCRIHS)

DEW/pjm

cc: Dr. Marilyn Wilson

Appendix B

Cover Letter

May 1992

Under the direction of Professor Marilyn Wilson of the Michigan State University English Department, I am interested in studying current classroom practices in the teaching of literature, specifically the extent to which teachers are using reader response theories in the teaching of literature.

I intend to try to determine to what extent teachers' professional training, personal values of reading, and outside constraints impact their teaching of reading/literature in the classroom.

For each cooperating teacher, the study consists of one taped interview where the teachers will discuss their thoughts on reading both in and out of the classroom. The interviews will also focus on those external pressures that the teachers see as affecting their success. A copy of the questionnaire is included.

The significance of this type of study is that it will give voice to the classroom teachers. For some, I hope this study provides insight into some of the constraints that affect them and other teachers like them.

If we are to improve our effectiveness in the teaching of reading, we must understand those issues, both internal and external, that affect teacher performance. This study is a step in that direction.

Sincerely,

Susan B. Steffel

Appendix C

Letter of Consent

I have freely consented to take part in a study being conducted by Susan Steffel under the supervision of Dr. Marilyn Wilson, Associate Professor of English, English Department, Michigan State University.

The study has been explained to me, and I understand the explanation that has been given to me and that my participation will involve an interview of approximately one hour.

I understand that I am free to discontinue my participation in the study at any time without penalty.

I understand that the results of the study will be treated in strict confidence. Neither interviewees nor school systems will be named. If I wish, I may select a pseudonym to be used in the reports; otherwise, one will be assigned to me. Within these restrictions, results of the study will be made available to me at my request.

I also understand that the purpose of this research and any reports about it will in no way be used to evaluate the quality of my teaching.

I understand that my participation in the study does not guarantee any beneficial results to me.

I understand that, at my request, I can receive additional explanation of the study after my participation is completed.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix D

Teacher Interview and Questionnaire: Part One

I. Teacher Background

A. Biographical

1. Name

2. Age

3. Number of years teaching? Where?

4. What subjects have you taught?

5. What subjects are you currently teaching?

6. How many students do you see per day?

7. What is the average number of students you see per hour?

8. Describe your typical student.

9. Other careers or responsibilities?

10. Interests or hobbies beyond teaching?

B. Teacher as student (refer to your own secondary school experience)

1. What was the average size of your English classes?

2. What type of curriculum did your high school follow? (Eng. 9,10,11,12; Electives, etc.)

3. How many years of English were you required to take?

4. What would you describe as primary focus of your secondary English classes? (Lit. Comp. Reading Speech Drama Grammar Other)

5. How were literature and writing taught ? Separately Together

6. What English courses were required, if any?

7. What major works or novels did you read?

8. How often were the following used in your class instruction?

Anthologies	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Novels	regularly	occasionally	rarely

Paperbacks	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Young Adult novels	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Duplicated supplemental literature	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Printed drill material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Indiv./Programmed material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Study guides	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Small group activities	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Small group discussion	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Individual conferences with students	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Audio-visual materials	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Field trips and special projects	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Lectures	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Questioning	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Discussion	regularly	occasionally	rarely

9. In your own response to literature, how often did you use the following activities?

Reading journals	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Summarizing	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Study questions	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Essays	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Creative writing	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Projects	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Drama	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Readers theatre	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Role playing	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Choral reading	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Discussion	regularly	occasionally	rarely

10. In presenting literature, how often did your teacher

Ask students to read aloud	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Read aloud to the students	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have students read silently in class	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have students read outside of class	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have all students read the same material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have groups reading different material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have each student use different material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Assign material to student	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Allow student to choose from selected material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Allow student completely free choice in selecting materials	regularly	occasionally	rarely

11. How often did you write for class? regularly occasionally rarely

12. What type of writing was most often assigned?

13. What was emphasized about writing?

14. What methods were used for your evaluation?

objective tests	regularly	occasionally	rarely
essay tests	regularly	occasionally	rarely
essays	regularly	occasionally	rarely
discussions	regularly	occasionally	rarely
projects	regularly	occasionally	rarely
portfolios	regularly	occasionally	rarely
attitude surveys	regularly	occasionally	rarely
confs. with teacher	regularly	occasionally	rarely
homework	regularly	occasionally	rarely
observations	regularly	occasionally	rarely

15. Did you have any "special" English teachers? What made them special?

C. Teacher as reader

1. Do you read for pleasure outside of the classroom?
regularly occasionally rarely

2. About how many hours a week?

3.What type of material do you read?

novels	regularly	occasionally	rarely
best sellers	regularly	occasionally	rarely
nonfiction	regularly	occasionally	rarely
magazines	regularly	occasionally	rarely
poetry	regularly	occasionally	rarely
newspapers	regularly	occasionally	rarely

4. What do you enjoy most about your pleasure reading?

5. Do you ever discuss your pleasure readings with others, including other students as well as friends? regularly occasionally rarely

In what way? With whom?

6. Do you ever identify with the characters, the actions, or the issues you read about? regularly occasionally rarely

7. Do you relate readings to earlier readings?
regularly occasionally rarely

8. How do you define "literature"?

D.Teacher Training and Professional Affiliation

1. What was the major emphasis of your undergraduate English degree?

2. Did you have methods classes? What did they consist of?

3. How were you originally taught to teach writing?

4. How were you trained in the teaching of reading?

5. Were the approaches to lit. you were taught in your methods classes used in the literature classes you took?

6. Did you have an outstanding or memorable teacher in your undergrad major?

7. What made him/her special?

8. Have you had any training in your major field beyond your B.A.? How much?

9. What did this training consist of?
(literature writing reading other)

10. What was your primary reason for taking advanced training?

11. If you have had post graduate training in English, what was the major emphasis of the coursework?
literature
literacy issues (reading and writing)
methods

12. Are you a member of a general teachers association or union?

13. Are you a member of a subject matter teaching association? Which?
NCTE MCTE ALAN IRA MLA Other

14. How long have you been a member?

15. How often do you read periodicals or journals about teaching?
regularly occasionally rarely
Which ones?

16. How often do you read subject related periodicals or journals?
regularly occasionally rarely
Which ones?

17. During the last year, have you attended any professional conferences related to your field?

18. How many? What were they?

Teacher Interview and Questionnaire: Part Two

II. Present Values and Methods in Teaching

1. How many classes do you teach per day?

2. In how many of those do you use or teach literature?

3. About how many hours a week do you spend preparing lessons in school? Outside of school?

4. About how many hours a week do you spend grading papers in school? Outside of school?

5. Listed below are a number of goals for teaching of literature. Rank each goal in order of its importance to you as a teacher, with ONE being most important and ELEVEN being least important.

____To improve the literary tastes of students

____To teach the students the history of their literature

____To acquaint the students with their literary cultural heritage

____To help the students understand themselves and the human condition

____To develop the students' ability to discuss the variety of literary forms that are around them

____To develop the critical faculties and analytic skills of the students

____To develop the students' ablility to use their language

____To show the students the ways by which language affects their response to events

____To encourage students to develop lifelong reading skills and habits

____To encourage students to view reading as a pleasurable activity

____To develop the student's ability to find answers to personal questions through reading

6. How often are the following used by you in your class instruction?

Anthologies	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Novels	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Paperbacks	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Young Adult novels	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Duplicated supplemental literature	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Printed drill material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Indiv./Programmed material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Study guides	regularly	occasionally	rarely

Small group activities	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Small group discussion	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Individual conferences with students	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Audio-visual materials	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Field trips and special projects	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Lectures	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Questioning	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Discussion	regularly	occasionally	rarely

7. In having students respond to literature, how often do you use the following activities?

Reading journals	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Summarizing	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Study questions	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Essays	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Creative writing	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Projects	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Drama	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Readers theatre	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Role playing	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Choral reading	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Discussion	regularly	occasionally	rarely

8. In presenting literature, how often do you

Ask students to read aloud	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Read aloud to the students	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have students read silently in class	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have students read outside of class	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have all students read the same material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have groups reading different material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Have each student use different material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Assign material to student	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Allow student to choose from selected material	regularly	occasionally	rarely
Allow student completely free choice in selecting materials	regularly	occasionally	rarely

9. In assessing your students' work, how often do you use the following methods?

objective tests	regularly	occasionally	rarely
essay tests	regularly	occasionally	rarely
essays	regularly	occasionally	rarely
discussions	regularly	occasionally	rarely
projects	regularly	occasionally	rarely
portfolios	regularly	occasionally	rarely
attitude surveys	regularly	occasionally	rarely
confs. with teacher	regularly	occasionally	rarely

homework regularly occasionally rarely
observations regularly occasionally rarely

III. External Pressures

1. How often do you meet with other teachers to
plan the teaching of literature? regularly occasionally rarely
share and discuss ideas? regularly occasionally rarely

2. How often do other teachers suggest
that you do certain things? regularly occasionally rarely

3. How often do administrators pressure
you to do certain things in teaching
literature? regularly occasionally rarely

4. How often do administrators dictate
methods? regularly occasionally rarely
materials? regularly occasionally rarely
grading methods? regularly occasionally rarely

5. How often do parents pressure you
to cover (or not cover) certain
material? regularly occasionally rarely

question your methods? regularly occasionally rarely
demand certain practices? regularly occasionally rarely

6. How often do students tell you
what they want or don't to read? regularly occasionally rarely

7. How often do you adjust to their
complaints or requests? regularly occasionally rarely

8. Has the decline in SAT scores
affected your teaching in any way? regularly occasionally
rarely

9. Has press and media criticism
affected you teaching of literature? regularly occasionally rarely

10. Has the back to basics movement
affected your teaching of lit? regularly occasionally rarely

11. Have the state determined
guidelines (e.g. PA 25) affected
your curriculum? regularly occasionally rarely

IV. Personal comments

Please feel free to comment on any of the above issues or on any additional issues you feel are pertinent.

Appendix E

A Sample of Typical Interview Questions

1. In what ways did your training prepare or not prepare you for teaching?

2. In what ways has teaching changed since you've begun?

3. What do you see as the biggest change? Do you view it as positive or negative?

4. Have the students changed? the parents?

5. In terms of this ongoing debate of how to teach English, do you feel conflict (pulled in two directions) in terms of what you want to do versus what you're being asked to do?

6. Can you draw any conclusions about your own experience as a student in secondary school and why you went into English?

7. Why did you choose to teach English?

8. Would you choose it again?

9. What is the biggest drawback to teaching English?

10. In terms of your personal reading habits, would you say your outside reading is mostly for pleasure, for information, or professional?

11. Tell me as best you can your theory of reading.

12. What are some of the ways schools could help you in the teaching of literature and reading?

13. Is there anything you would change or do differently if you had the time?

14. What are some of the ways in which you measure your own success?

15. How important do you think modeling is in the classroom?

Appendix F

Sample Interview Transcript

Part I

Q. In terms of your own high school experience, what were the primary methods you were taught literature?

A. Most of the emphasis seemed to be on mechanics. I can remember writing, in fact, I still have it--one long, autobiographical paper. Other than that, I can't remember doing any other papers to speak of for this woman. The sophomore teacher, she was into forensics, so she was more into speaking than she was in writing, but she really knew her grammar. Junior year we did more literature and less grammar. Senior year was all literature. It's called College English. She even gave us a college number, and she lectured everyday like a college teacher would lecture from a notebook that she would read the same lecture from for the last 10-15 years. We took notes. Basically, they were notes on the reading. I did find the notes one time. In fact, I still have those, too, somewhere.

Q. What is it in us that makes us keep these?

A. We did more writing for her, but her great love in composition was vocabulary. And so the bigger the words you used, the more exhilarated she became, and so I really had a warped conception of what composition was when I went to college. I had a hard time at first.

Q. You said that discussion was used regularly in the classroom. How would you define discussion?

A. Class discussion in terms of--she would ask a question. When I say directed, I wouldn't say it was with the senior class, it was with the other classes. She used to read the questions at the end of the reading. It was directed.

Q. In terms of reading, pretty much all your reading was assigned. Did you get any choice or free choice for book reports or projects? How about a reading list?

A. Yes, I can remember doing a book report on Lord of the Flies that she was captured by and kept for a long time that she used to show other classes. I also have that. It wasn't very good now that I look back on it. We used to buy books a lot. We were encouraged. I don't think we ever got any credit outside of class, but it was a regular thing to buy paperbacks if she would order them and allow us to do book reports on them.

Q. What did your book reports involve? Format?

A. Yes, she gave us a pretty extensive format of questions to answer, and as I recall, my book report on Lord of the Flies was 7 or 8 pages. A lot of summary.

Q. In terms of your personal reading outside of the classroom, what do you enjoy most about your pleasure reading? Why do you read 10 hours a week outside of school?

A. Sometimes I'm reading material to use in the school- nonfiction and fiction.

Q. In your personal reading, is there a breakdown between pleasure reading, reading for information/utilitarian reading (news, etc.), and professional reading?

A. I read a lot more in the summer. But I tend to take things up that are more challenging, more work. A few years ago I got that Joseph Campbell's Atlas of Mythology , and I've been trying to read my way through five volumes of that. After reading that, you don't really care about reading for a while. It's kind of a struggle.

Q. How would you define "literature"?

A. I would say it's just the writings of the culture.

Q. In terms of your memorable teachers, were they positive or negative? Why? Did it have to do with their teaching or with them personally?

A. I can remember my English teachers, but I wouldn't say in terms of memorably positive. They did things that I wouldn't do or that I've vowed not to do when I made the decision. Not that I disliked these particular people, even in light of what I knew when I graduated from college, which was very little. Michigan State had no program to speak of for preparing to teach English. The methods class was the only class that dealt with applying English to the classroom, which was the Education Methods class. And all we did was prepare imaginary lesson plans for imaginary classes. And I had no idea how to teach writing, no idea how to teach reading. I was mostly teaching as I had been taught, except that I was trying not to do some of the things that these people were doing. It took - I almost got out of the profession until about 1973, when I got back into meaningful theories.

Q. Do you have any mentors in the profession? Who are the people (professionals, practitioners, theorists) on whom you base your methodology?

A. '73 was the year, I don't know if it was the first or second course in that program where they offered that collection of media and teaching English as a second language and writing. I had felt really insecure about my writing after being lauded for years in school. I can remember my first paper in college was a D- because I had done what this other teacher had told us to do. And it wasn't until this class that I regained my confidence as a writer.

Q. What kind of training do you have beyond your BA? What kinds of courses did you take and why? What was the major emphasis?

A. Most of my training, the training I was interested in, was writing. Ken Macrorie came and spoke at a workshop, and I attended a conference that he had at Western [Michigan University] over one weekend. John Bennett, I went to a conference that he was at Michigan State. And I read a lot of those English teachers who influence Britton. But I also was introduced to Britton. The Moffett and the K-12 curriculum. I happen to stumble on things like the Boynton book, Beat Not the Desk. I have a feel for what I'm doing.

Part II

Q. How much do you teach literature? What are your goals for teaching literature?

A. I have probably four classes. American Lit. is strictly literature, and English II is probably 60% of literature or more.

Q. In rating your goals, why did you choose those you rated the top three?

A. For American Lit., I would say one of the main ones is to aquaint students to their literary cultural heritage, but I wouldn't say that's necessarily what I'm trying to do in the other two classes. I wouldn't even put it that high. I think critical and analytical skills in general. I use a lot of variety in my methods, but it depends on what we are doing and what materials are covered.

Q. In what ways did your training prepare or not prepare you for teaching? What were you trained to teach versus what you actually ended up teaching?

A. I was good at English lit.; I knew English lit. I was ready to teach that because most of my college classes were English lit. I knew English lit. fairly well, but as far as teaching methods - no. I think common sense has a lot to do with if you survive in the classroom. I had a lot of common sense, enough to know that a lot of the crap they taught us in the education classes would never be applicable. Enough to probably land me C's in most of those classes. I didn't have an underlying theory concept of what I was doing. I think when I began, I thought all these students were learning literature like little college students, and I was teaching them to analyze difficult pieces of literature as I wished my high school teachers had done for me but couldn't do, or had never tried to do. And I found the results not very good. A lot of my students couldn't read very well. They weren't interested in anything I was interested in. The writing we did was all expositional. They really weren't ready for that, but see at the time, I believe that was the only

kind of writing we could do other than a little creative stuff, and that was all fluff and wouldn't count.

Q. How has teaching changed since you've been in it?

A. Well, I think that mostly the theories applying to composition and to reading. And as the theories have changed, so have the methods for obtaining results changed.

Q. Do you see that as positive or negative?

A. I think it's positive. I've seen positive results here.

Q. Have the kids changed during your teaching tenure?

A. Yes, they've changed. Behavior wise, they've changed a lot. Kids do things now that twenty years ago they wouldn't even have been in school. I mean, I had a girl get up today, second hour, apparently somebody walked by the door. There's some kind of a feud going on. He made some gesture or something, and now I heard he claimed she gave him the finger, but he came to the door as I was turned, and he sort of mouthed a message to her about her, some kind of illicit profession she was a member of, and she got a confirmation about what had been said and screamed down the hall, "F**K YOU!" You know, condoms occasionally are turning up on the floor. Things that when I was in school, teachers would have been hospitalized from trauma of - the kids do that kind of stuff. I think kids are more sophisticated now in a lot of ways because they watch so much t.v. But they don't read. They don't read nearly as much as we used to. They read okay. They come over from the elementary with them reading at level pretty much. Reading hasn't been a problem here for a long time. They do a good job. They choose not to read. The only things that boys will read are magazines and the sports section. Some girls read a little more. I have a couple readers now in my 5th hour class that I would say they read everything. I tell them something, and they'll go home and read it overnight. But they're rare. They just don't read. That's why the use of <u>The New Yorker</u> has been such a trauma in class because nothing is short. They complain.

Q. Can you draw any conclusions about your own experience in secondary school and why you went into teaching?

A. First, actually, I wouldn't say my schooling was frustrating in high school. I enjoyed it. I got a lot of notoriety. I was a big man on campus. I was a good student, so it wasn't that. It was just that it could have been better. That's probably the first time I've thought about it since I graduated, to tell you the truth. Why would I teach English? Why would I start out in special ed. for the emotionally disturbed? I was interested in psychology, and when I went to the orientation and Michigan State, the guy said 7 years. No, I can't, I couldn't picture myself going to school for 7 years. At least 7 more after graduating. So I said what can I apply interest in psychology to? And they said get into special ed. for the emotionally disturbed. After a year of that, I was. And I really didn't take that many courses, which is the department that I would have been marooned in forever, and, I don't know, the education department - it was like they are on one page and you're on another page, and I never seemed to be able to figure out how to help catch up to them. But I could never, so I got out. In fact, then I decided that I was going to become an apprentice lithographer, so I got married at the end of my freshman year. I did that for about 6 months, and I decided that's not what I wanted to do, so I started going to LCC full-time at night taking the required courses- sociology, humanities. And about the spring of that would have been '67. Actually, there was somebody living in the apartments that I lived in that was an English major, and he was just getting ready to graduate, and there was another woman that was a major, too, and I don't know. I realized that I was interested talking about literature, reading it, and so I decided to change my major and go into English. Take two years of foreign language and all that.

Q. Would you choose to go into English again, at this point?

A. If I were to stay in teaching, I think so. I think it's probably more work than any of the other areas, but there is more opportunity for variety, and you have more control over what you're doing and how you do it. It's a challenge.

Q. In terms of the ongoing debate of how to teach English, getting into some of the external pressures, do you ever feel like

you're pulled in different directions according to what your goals are, what your theories are, what you want to do, and what you're being asked to do?

A. Well, I think sometimes you can't help but be influenced by criticism about what students are coming out of high school knowing or not knowing. You're compelled in some ways to address that. But I would say in general, I feel pretty free to choose my curriculum. You tend to become complacent if you don't have somebody that you have to rationalize what you're doing. If I could do what I wanted, and to be perfectly honest, I did go through a period of that for a while. I think I see changes in my approach where a few years ago I may have taken every Friday and had students work on projects. Basically, it was a blow-off day and every day before vacation. And then I started thinking, we have a lot of days off, and they're not really working on these projects, they're mostly screwing around, and so I sort of buckled down and decided to get the most out of every class day. I don't care when it is, so now they know whenever they ask me for a party or anything like that. If we can accomplish anything in class, we will. And I think that might have been influenced by the administrator, but it was sort of a realization on my part, too, how much farther we could be, how much more material we could cover. Because I don't think, when kids are screwing around, nothing's getting done.

Q. What would be some of the ways that schools could help you, in terms of your teaching of literature and reading? What would you change or do differently if you had the time? How could schools assist you?

A. Probably a better library - make paperbacks more available. I've been acting as the department chair, and I realize now how much money goes into just maintaining a certain level of paperbacks. I'm using paperbacks in American Lit. that were purchased in 1974-75, and when I was teaching 8th grade, we were constantly replacing books because kids weren't taking care of them. So we've been trying to convert over to perma-bound paperbacks and hope that they'll last longer, but textbooks don't seem to last as long. I don't think they're as well made.

Q. How about time? Planning time? Do you think it would be helpful, productive for teachers to meet and discuss common goals, department planning, English teacher stuff? Just to share?

A. One other teacher that I talk to at lunch quite often. She is the only other teacher that I discuss what I'm doing with very often. And I like that.

Q. How do you measure you own success, not necessarily the success of the kids? Do you have any gauges of assessment? Do you pause to reflect? How do you determine what you keep and what you change?

A. Well, I don't have any gauges, clear-cut gauges of assessment because you do it by a general field of what I've accomplished. I've kept my students generally successfully mastered certain things I wanted them to do. Have they shown, in general, skill advancement, depending on which class. I get bored a lot using the same material, so I change things from one year to the next. I may use some of the same things, but even though I do that, I always get the feeling - it's like the anecdotes I've told them, like they've heard it before, so they know it like I'm cheating on them. I don't really think about it like that, but I can't imagine how my senior English teacher could read from the same spiral bound notebook year after year. It would be like you're not advancing. I think part of her approach was that she was trying to make it like a college class because I don't recall that many classes when I was in school that were pure lecture. Hers was, but I think she had graduated from Michigan State, and she wanted us to experience what it was like to take notes and be lectured to. We did two term papers, one each semester. That's what your whole grade rested upon. I mean, if you didn't do the term paper, you failed the class. But you also had to pass the test which was supposed to be difficult. She was rigorous, but I wouldn't say she had a great deal.

Q. Could you verbalize or define for me you own theory of reading? Why read?

A. Well, I haven't had the courses in psycho-linguistics in teaching of reading. I've had some excerpts in the reading it had

influenced, for example, I teach vocabulary. I'll only give them about a list of ten words a week, and we'll go over them every day in class. And they do seem to learn a lot better than they ever have before. And that was just something that a kid has to see a word 13 times before he learns it, so... But in terms of theory in reading, I think that I have seen students reading levels get better. When I started here, I had 5 or 6 seniors that couldn't read and several at the third grade level. And for a period of years, as this system improved, the level went up. I discovered that they had a better grasp of language skills. I started using Frank O'Hare's sentence combining book back in 1974 when I first came, and I had classes that struggled and had a terrible time. Since the 80's, I'll pull out this book, and I'll use it like with a group of sophomores I have now, and they zip through those exercises. They have no problem at all. I don't think they've had that much background in sentence combining. My suspicion is because they do read and they read fairly well, they have a better intuitive grasp of written language. As far a personally speaking or psychologically speaking, I think when you can relate to certain texts, you can get insight on behavior. I think you can. Well, it's your linguistic math. It's so much broader. I think it - the more you read, the better you read, and the broader you read, the more open you become to new ideas.

Q. Do you think that testing is going to affect us in terms of going back to skills based and segmented, or not?

A. I think they would have to fire everyone in the profession to go back to skills-based. Back to basics just depends on what your definition of basics is. P.A. 25 is workable with what we do. I think it has a lot of emphasis of oral skills which we have gotten completely away from, and maybe we should get back to. Certainly, some of the language you hear from some of these kids nowadays. Well, yes, they really have poor speaking skills in front of people. One of the mothers that teaches one of the English classes was saying how she noticed that at the National Honor Society Induction, that they all mumbled into their scripts and didn't look into the crowd. I used to spend a couple of weeks a year when I had another Basic English class in which they had to prepare their little speeches, and really it was fun because it didn't require a lot of preparation on my part, and the kids would come up with some amazing speeches.

The courses changed, they got redefined, the curriculums have changed, and I'm stuck with MEAP which takes almost two weeks of my year up. And along with the other distractions, I find it hard to set out - plus our composition text doesn't really have anything on public speaking. But I remember a girl one time that must have graduated in mid-70's. In order to make these kids do speeches, you had to be tough about it. You had to say, if you don't do the speech, you flunk. And she got up, and she cried and couldn't do it. And she got up the second speech, and she cried, but she finished it, and she pretty much sobbed and wavered through the rest of it. And then she came up to me one year at graduation a couple of years after she got out of school and said, "You know, making me get up and speak was probably one of the best things that could have happened to me." She got a job at a real estate office and became a secretary or a receptionist or something, but before she had been shy when dealing with people, she thought that had been important to her. In that sense, maybe sometimes this will cause you to re-examine what you are doing. I'm not threatened by what someone outside of the profession wants. It's those who are really kind of ignorant and they're pushing things that we know are outdated and useless. I had a parent come in, and we were talking about compositions, and he said, "I think you should teach the kids penmanship." And I said, "I really don't see that as my domain." And he said, "No, you should at least assign one paper with all the matter on penmanship." And I said, "Well, the trends toward learning to write better are using a word processor." And he said, "Well, someday they'll have to use their handwriting." Even the portfolios will be misused and abused. Schools that have money will hire somebody to keep portfolios for the students. School that don't have money will pile it on the teachers. They're already trying to load it on us. They wanted us to become mentors. I'm not a mentor, I'm a teacher, and I'm not going to be responsible for what goes into someone's portfolio. And then there's no guarantee when they get done that anybody will give a damn. That McDonald's will say, "Bring in your portfolios. I want to see if you have it."

Q. You indicated that you used reading journals in your classes. Could you briefly explain how they're used? Do you base class discussion on those writings?

A. Well, it depends. For example, a difficult reading assignment I may ask them to write something pertaining to what they read. I may ask them to do some magic from what they've read, become a character, or write a letter, or write a diary. And for poetry, when we are reading poetry in class, we'll look at a certain concept like imagery and give them a journal assignment to write a poem, and then the next day, we'll have them for participation read their masterpieces. We talk a lot, but it depends on the class. I have a group of bright kids 6th hour, but everything's funny. They're never serious about anything. They're getting to the point where some of them are going to be seniors next year.

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