PROBING THE GAPS:

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL CONTEXT AND STANCE ON SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS' CO-CONSTRUCTION OF A LITERARY WORK

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

JULY 1999

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Vancouver, Canada

Date July 14th, 1999

DE-6 (2/88)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of social context and stance on second language (L2) students co-construction of a literary work. To this end, it examined three small groups of L2 students, first investigating the influence of social interaction, group composition and the management of the task on the students' co-construction of the literary work, and then investigating the influence of three types of stances, post-structuralist, response, and literary, on the literary work constructed.

The study was conducted over a unit of instruction in a Transitional English 11 classroom. As the researcher was also the students' teacher, the study employed both a qualitative and action research approach and analysed data from three sources: audiotaped discussions, questionnaires, and individual interviews. The first question was analysed from a social perspective, using social theories of reader-response as well as Vygotsty's theories (1978) as the framework. The findings for the second question, which explored the influence of stance on the students' discourse, are presented in a summary of how the students' discourse varied as they discussed questions from different stances and an analysis of the discourse.

The findings for the first question indicated that social context did influence the literary work the students constructed. Students did model for each other the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for in depth literary analysis, but their interaction was influenced by both how they managed the task and by the composition of the group. Findings for the second question indicated that questions from a number of stances were productive. Post-structuralist stances were successful in highlighting differences in how

students constructed the implied content of the text. Response stances produced the most varied discourse, which included students sharing personal opinions, experience, and moral judgements. Literary stances produced the most abstract discourse. Limitations of the study are detailed as well as suggestions for future research and suggestions for teaching practice.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the people who have helped me bring this thesis to completion. Without their support, my journey would have been much more difficult. First, I would like to thank Margaret Early. Always encouraging, she gently guided this thesis to completion, always providing useful feedback as I struggled to find a shape for the findings. Gloria Tang was always supportive and a thorough editor. Lee Gunderson's participation was also much appreciated.

Second, I would like to thank the students who agreed to participate and generously filled out questionnaires and participated in interviews. I learned as much from them as I did from the reading I did for this project. They have instilled in me a belief that the exploration of students' perspectives are essential in our understanding of teaching and learning.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends who supported me through this project. My parents, always my greatest supporters, have been extremely patient as I have buried myself away working on this project. My friends, particularly the Friday night group, Angie, Cornelia, and Lisa, have been a constant source of levity and support. Suzette, my dear friend, was a rock through what was also a time of intense personal change. Finishing this thesis will allow me to give back what you have given me over the past few years.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Problem

The number of overseas student and immigrant enrollment in Vancouver secondary schools has been high in the past two decades. This enrollment has put a strain on both English as a second language (E.S.L.) programs and on mainstream English programs which are servicing more and more students for whom English is not their native tongue (L2 students). Many high school E.S.L. programs teach language through content but also require, when students are almost ready to be mainstreamed into English classes, Transitional English classes. These classes introduce the study of literature to L2 students because literature is rich in language and culture and will be some of the most challenging academic material for L2 students to study when they are integrated into mainstream classes.

Due to the difficulties and challenges that literature poses for L2 students and the variety of contexts in which literature is taught, L2 teaching of literature has always employed a number of approaches. These approaches include traditional content-based courses which teach the classics of the Western Canon, sometimes in modified versions, formal linguistic approaches to literary texts which involve the careful study of the language of the text in order to determine meaning, and language-based approaches which use literature as a tool for developing language competency. With the exception of the language-based approach which uses literature as a springboard for developing language ability, the above approaches are much like traditional literature instruction.

The above approaches are used for a variety of different purposes. The language-based approach is often used with students who are beginners in the language. The modified classics are often used by instructors who were schooled themselves in the classics and consider those works to be of cultural and literary importance. The 'close reading approach' is often used by instructors with a background in "New Criticism" or linguistics. New Criticism was a critical approach to literature, popular in the middle of this century, which asserted that meaning is latent in the text and can be discovered through a close analysis of the language of the text.

However, increasingly, teachers who teach transitional English are regular English teachers schooled in approaches other than the above, who adapt the methodologies used with first language (L1) students for L2 students, believing these methods to be equally suitable for L2 students. A large movement in L1 teaching of English is constructivism and one of the methodologies within this framework in English teaching is reader-response; its use in the L2 context is the focus of this study.

1.2 Reader-Response Theory

In the past decade, reader-response theory has had a significant impact on the teaching of literature to native speakers. Teaching strategies which are grounded in reader-response theory view meanings of literary texts as constructed by individual readers (Probst, 1988). Reader-response theory proposes that readers construct meaning as they process the semantic and rhetorical aspects of the text. An individual reader's personal background as well as his/her knowledge of language and culture will affect the meaning constructed. Teaching strategies which are the product of this theoretical framework include literary journals, response papers, and various discussion strategies. Reader-

response is a movement away from more formalist notions of meaning embraced in New Critical approaches and linguistics which have had a stronghold in the teaching of literature to both L1 and L2 students towards a more reader-centered approach.

1.2.1 Reader Response Theories and Language Socialization

Using response strategies in the L2 classroom socializes students to the academic conventions of the mainstream classes they will soon be entering. Response strategies are particularly productive in the L2 classroom because they encourage active, authentic meaning-making activities through which students both learn language and learn the academic conventions of the target culture.

Reader-response strategies are holistic and focus on students' emotional and intellectual engagement with texts rather than the forms and functions of language, which some feel are more appropriate for L2 learners who have not mastered the language code. At the foundation of this debate are different notions of the process of learning a language. Many now argue that language learning happens when students are using language meaningfully and that instruction should focus on interactive instructional activities, not on the learning of language forms. Through the negotiation of activities, often referred to as tasks, learners learn both socio-cultural knowledge and language:

> As learners experience the wide variety of functions and forms of language, they internalize the way their society uses language to represent meaning. So they are learning language at the same time they are using language to learn. They are also learning about language. But all three kinds of language learning must be simultaneous (Halliday, 1980). Thinking that we can teach the forms of language as pre-requisites to their use is a mistake schools often make (Goodman, Y. M. and Goodman, K. S., 1990, p. 231).

It has been argued that the integration of language and content is essential for the development of students' cognitive skills (Mohan, 1986). Reader-response theory is also

consistent with language socialization theory (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986), which is "devoted to understanding the interdependence of language and sociocultural structures and processes" (p. 163).

1.2.2 Reader-Response Theory and Small Group Discussion

This study focuses on one particular reader-response strategy, small group discussion. This strategy is used widely in L1 classrooms for a number of reasons. First of all, small group discussion is considered more democratic than large group discussions which tend to be dominated by teacher-talk. Small group discussion gives individual students more opportunity for participation and more involvement in the process of constructing meaning. Furthermore, the environment of a small group is believed to be safer for students to share ideas and to ask questions and clarify understandings. For L2 students, small group discussion allows students oral language practice as they co-construct knowledge with their peers. This co-construction of knowledge is essential for the development of thinking skills and has social benefits as well. Students, hopefully, learn to listen to each other and to respect differences in discussion.

1.2.3 Reader-Response Theory and Activity Theory

The cognitive benefits of interactive learning are well-documented in educational research. Donato (1994), citing Rommetveit, who draws on the work of Vygotsky, makes compelling arguments for meaningful interactions as the foundation of learning:

> For Vygotsky (1986), consciousness is *co-knowledge*; the individual dimension of consciousness is derivatory and secondary. To account for this phenomenon requires studies that capture the evolving and dynamic features of interaction that allow individuals to change and be changed by the concrete particulars of their social context (Rommetveit, 1985). (in Donato, 1994, p. 38)

Small group discussion allows L2 students to practice oral language as they are negotiating meaning with their peers. Peer-to-peer interaction allows students access to the interpretive strategies of their peers. Small group discussion is also an arena of battling subjectivities where students' concepts and opinions are challenged and negotiated collectively.

Both Piaget and Vygotsky comment on the importance of conflict in cognitive development, although Piaget is interested in internal conflict while Vygotsky is interested in external conflict: "To Piaget, social interaction is important because of the cognitive conflict it stimulates; talk is a catalyst for internal change without direct influence on the forms and functions of thought" (Cazden, 1988, p. 126) Vygotsky sees more of a direct link between knowledge and social interaction. Putting less stress on conflict, Vygotsky (1978) focusses more on the productivity of mutual-problem solving and stresses that knowledge is never truly 'individual' but is always a social production. A small group provides a safer environment than a large group for students to engage in conflict.

1.3 Factors Influencing Small Group Discussions

The above arguments portray small group discussion as compatible with theory. However, theory and practice never quite look the same. Researchers and teachers have invested much time and energy into understanding the dynamics and benefits of small group discussion and into understanding why it works sometimes and sometimes does not. Research has tended to isolate an aspect of small group discussion like task, group dynamics, management, social context, or individual differences, in order to come to some understanding of the phenomenon. Each perspective provides an insight into small group

discussion, but each is limited on its own. Small group discussion needs to be investigated as a complex phenomena.

1.3.1 Composition of Small Groups

Social theorists investigate how the social roles students adopt and the composition of the small group affect the discussion. Educational researchers (Bloome, 1987; Golden, 1987) are interested in the social dynamics of groups and the social roles and dialogue that occurs. Recognizing that groups discussing the same text and completing the same task can construct different meanings, theorists and researchers are interested in how the social roles students adopt influence the construction of meaning.

1.3.2 Management Considerations in Small Group Discussions

Management considerations include such issues as the optimal number of students in a group, how to construct groups, the time groups should stay together, and the training of groups for productive interaction. Although management concerns are considered too narrow a concern for a thorough understanding of the functioning of a small group, they are important to consider. Generally, heterogeneous groups of 4-6 students who work together for a long enough period so that they develop positive working relationships are considered optimal (Cintorino, 1994; Dias, 1992; Crowhurst, 1983; Wiencek & O'Flahavan, 1994).

1.3.3 Task in Small Group Discussion

Teachers and researchers are also interested in more micro-level concerns such as the influence of the task on the discourse produced by groups. The task given to small groups has also been shown to affect the discourse. Tasks that demand students produce the facts of the text and that have one answer shut down discussion while more open-

ended tasks facilitate discussion. Tasks for discussion range from open-ended, unstructured interpretive tasks (Golden, 1986; Villaume & Hopkins, 1995; Wiencek & O'Flahavan, 1994) to more structured, closed tasks (Snydor, 1989).

Much debate has ensued over the use of questions as a task, with many rejecting traditional comprehension questions and questioning hierarchies as unsuitable for the study of literature (Hynds, 1992). There are different perspectives on what kinds of questions are best used with literature with some advocating literary analysis and others advocating literary response. Gadjusek (1988), interested in the exploration of the cultural relativity of perceptions, encourages the use of "why" questions with literature. These kinds of questions probe into the indeterminate portions of the text and how students fill those in. Others (Hirvala, 1996; McKay, 1982) encourage questions which elicit readers' experiences of the reader/text transaction and capture the students' 'aesthetic' experiences of the text. The questions a teacher chooses reveal the kinds of stances that she would like her students to take towards literary texts. Questions from a literary perspective ask students questions about imagery patterns, point of view, conflict, and theme; questions from a reading comprehension stance focus on literal comprehension; questions from a reading-response stance ask students for their feelings and responses to the text.

1.4 Post-Structuralist Approaches to Reading

Much response theory is compatible with post-structuralist theory. Langer, in a discussion of response theory, states that response theory is "remarkably consistent with developments in literary critical theory, accommodating as well some of the basic and less flamboyant arguments in post-structuralist literary criticism" (Langer, 1992, p. 131). Generally, response theorists are interested in the interaction of reader, text, and context.

Post-structuralists theorize that subjectivity and consciousness are socially produced (Weedon, 1987) and that meaning is not latent in the text, but rather constructed afresh as readers and contexts change. Readers' backgrounds as well as their personal cognitive beliefs will affect the meanings constructed.

Students, particularly L2 students, bring different cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic backgrounds, family values, gender perspectives, life experiences, and culturally learned ways of reading and responding to literature to the classroom. Response theorists interested in these issues are interested in how these differences influence students' responses to texts. Small group discussions are forums where students can explore these differences which are often silenced in whole class discussions because students do not feel confident in sharing personal differences with the whole class.

1.5 Research Purpose

This study investigated small groups of L2 students in a Transitional English 11 class discussing questions which took varying stances to a short story. The purpose was to look at small group discussion from a social and cognitive perspective. The primary investigation was of how social interaction played a role in the construction of the literary work, with a detailed exploration of the groups' management of the task, group composition, and peer-to-peer scaffolding. The secondary investigation was of the discourse produced by small groups of students as they discussed questions which took varying stances to the text.

1.5.1 The Personal Context

I would like to explain my motivation in pursuing this study. I began teaching both mainstream English and Transitional English eight years ago. From the beginning, my

purpose in teaching Transitional English was to familiarize L2 students with the study of literature written in English while continuing to develop their L2 language competency. From the beginning, I always worked to incorporate as much student talk as possible in my lessons. I also became aware that different groupings produced different results and that some tasks were successful at producing talk while others were unsuccessful. I also became aware that I could design very tight lessons which produced uniform conventional interpretations of literature from my students, but I was ultimately dissatisfied working in this manner. I wanted to encourage more variety and depth in interpretation and to nurture more talk and rich, diverse interpretations of literature in my classroom. This was not only a concern in my Transitional English classes; small group discussion and student response are also continuing interests in my mainstream English classes. I also believe that L1 teaching and L2 teaching, although perhaps different in purpose, are more similar than different and that rich, interactive meaning-making activities should be the focus of all classrooms.

1.5.2 The Research Questions

This study, therefore, investigated the use of small group discussion of literature in a Transitional English class. As I am both the teacher and researcher, an action research framework was used (Alrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993). My purpose in completing this study was the improvement of my practice. Data were collected over a term, between February and March 1998 and the discourse produced was analyzed from two perspectives: social and cognitive. First, each group's discourse was analyzed to explore how social interaction, group composition, and the management of the task influenced the co-construction of the literary text. In addition, each group's discourse was analyzed to

explore how questions from different stances influenced the discourse. The following methods were used in data collection: (1) audiotaping of small group discussion (2) questionnaires providing student background and questions on small group discussion (3) discourse interviews with individual students.

The major research questions of this study were as follows:

1) How do social interaction, the management of the task, and group composition influence the co-construction of the literary work?

2) How do questions which take different stances towards the text influence the discourse produced by groups?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The proposed study has great significance for me, as its results will impact my day to day decision making in my classroom. Furthermore, few studies which look closely at how questions from different stances influence the discourse investigate this question with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. L2 students, whose differences are more pronounced, are ideal for this exploration.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

The second chapter presents the literature relevant to this study. First, I overview the history of L1 and L2 teaching of literature to provide a context for the study. I then introduce reader-response theory and overview social theories of response. Then I review literature on talk and problem-solving in learning and management issues with small group discussions. Finally, I look at task with small group discussion and stances to literature. I end this chapter with a brief discussion of literature on schemata theory and recent educational thought based on recent research on the brain.

The third chapter outlines the methodology used in the study. This chapter describes the research site, participants, and details of the research design such as data collection and analysis procedures.

Chapters four and five present the findings. Chapter four answers the first research question, providing a detailed description of each group and an analysis of the social interaction, including peer-to-peer scaffolding, group composition and management of the task. The fifth chapter answers the second research question. First, the effect of questions from varying stances on the discourse is investigated. Then, additional insights on the influence of individual differences on the discourse are explored. Finally, insights on the patterns in students' thinking when discussing the questions are explored.

The sixth chapter synthesizes the findings and discusses both the limitations and the educational implications of the study.

Key Terms

Literary Stance - traditional literary questions that look at theme, irony, point of view, imagery patterns

Post-Structuralist Stance - questions that probe into the indeterminate portions of a text and individual reader's ways of making meaning

Response Stance - questions that probe into reader's opinions and evaluations of various aspects of the text

Scaffolding - the social interaction among students that allows for a rehearsal of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for literary interpretation

Schemata - knowledge frameworks

Task - the activity given to students

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I review a number of areas relevant to this study. First, I overview the history of L1 and L2 teaching to provide a context for the study. I then provide an overview of reader-response theory before discussing social theories of response. The benefits of talk in learning are then explored as well as management issues with small group discussions. Finally, I overview tasks and stances to literature. I also add, as additional information, a brief review of schemata theory and recent theory which comes from brain-based theory on teaching and learning.

2.1 Literature in the L1 and L2 Classroom: An Overview

Generally, language teaching and literature teaching are considered separate activities, each housed in separate departments in high schools, each requiring a separate training, and each having a different purpose. Those arguing against teaching literature to second language students assert that the language used in literary texts is too complex, the study of literature is not of practical use, and the cultural context of literature is too remote (argument summarized by McKay, 1982; Spack, 1985). However, many others argue that "literary texts offer genuine samples of a very wide range of styles, registers, and text-types at many levels of difficulty" (Duff & Maley, 1990, p. 6) which are enriching for ESL students, particularly since, as this language is embedded in discourse, students can study the language in context (McKay, 1982; McCloskey & Stack, 1993; Ronnqvist & Sell, 1994). The debate is similar to the one on whether literature is suitable for elementary school students. However, for secondary L2 students there is less choice in

this matter because they must quickly begin to study literature in school. More urgent is the issue of suitable teaching methods for L2 students.

The teaching of literature to L2 students has an eclectic history not unlike L1 teaching of literature but with its own distinct features. However, in order to understand L2 teaching and to explore the possibilities, we must first look at the history of L1 teaching. Looking at this historical framework will contextualize the reader-response approach used in this study.

2.1.1 L1 Teaching of Literature

Not surprisingly, the road is never straight and we often turn around and revisit many favourite destinations a number of times. Embedded in the history of the teaching of English to first language students are the very issues which confront both L1 and L2 teachers today: the tension between teaching English for academic purpose and functional purposes, the tension between teaching skills and more whole language approaches, the tension between teaching the classics and texts from a number of different perspectives, and the tension between prescribing a sequence of skills and leaving the curriculum to the judgment of the teacher.

Applebee (1974), in his historical overview of the teaching of English in the USA, charts the struggle of English to establish itself as a discipline. Although Applebee's book concentrates on the United States, the movements he traces are similar to movements in Canada. The teaching of English has had a long and active history, swinging from 'innovative' approaches to more 'traditional' methods and back again as the political and economic climate changed. Applebee, in the more recent section of the history, tracks the concerns of the pre-war (WWII) Progressive Era for minimum essentials, a more

functional emphasis, and for using literature to explore self and society. Rosenblatt wrote her ground-breaking text *Literature as Exploration* (1938/1976) during this period in which she argued for the student's response to the work rather than the work itself to become the focus of the classroom.

The Progressive Era was short-lived, however, for during the war attention was given to developing scientific methods for the training of the citizenry in effective communication skills necessary in times of war. Furthermore, after the second world war and partly due to Sputnik, attention turned to educating a nation of engineers. At a time when much money was available in education, university professors became heavily involved in the elementary and secondary school curriculum. This involvement was to have a lasting effect on the teaching of English. A report from a 1958 conference between the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Modern Languages Association (MLA) states that "English must be regarded as a 'fundamental liberal discipline,' a body of specific knowledge to be preserved and transmitted rather than a set of skills or an opportunity for guidance and individual adjustment" (Applebee, 1974, p. 193). This marked an era characterized by an academic approach to English in the high schools with a concern for educating the 'best' students. The College Entrance Examination Board appointed a Commission on English which issued the report *Freedom and Discipline in English* (1965). The commission recommended the basic 'tripod' of language, literature, and composition as the foundation of the English curriculum. The academics involved in this movement were heavily influenced by the New Critics such as Cleanth Brooks (1939) and Robert Warren Penn, and the 'close reading' approach they

advocated influenced both practicing teachers and university students, some of whom would enter the teaching profession.

However, despite the lasting impression that New Criticism has had on the teaching of English, primarily because of the heavy involvement of universities in school curriculum and New Criticism's stronghold in the universities for decades, it soon became apparent that the academic approach was failing a large percentage of the students in schools and in the late 60's the American high school was again in crisis.

> In response to the national agony over the Vietnam war, student unrest, escalating problems in the inner city, and a widespread malaise even among academically talented students, the emphasis in education thought shifted gradually but unmistakably away from knowledge of an academic discipline toward the process of knowing and the dignity of the individual." (Applebee, 1974, p. 236).

The Progressives and Dewey were popular again. However, approaches continued to shift, and in the 1970's a variety of movements influenced the teaching of English including an emphasis on job training and 'basic skills' which then in turn influenced another return to a liberal humanities approach.

Most recently constructivist theories of language use and language development have influenced English curriculum: "What scholars in this tradition share is a view of knowledge as an active construction built up by the individual acting within a social context that shapes and constrains that knowledge, but that does not determine it in an absolute sense" (Applebee, 1992, pp. 2-3). This approach shifted emphasis from content knowledge to an understanding of the processes of meaning making. The concept of the "active learner" was in vogue. This conceptual shift in English teaching continues to focus methodological concern.

In the past twenty years, a focus on the reader as central in the construction of meaning has occupied the energies of both literary critics and educational theorists. Constructivism and reader-response theory have the potential to fundamentally change the way literature is taught in schools. However, Applebee (1992) in an overview of a national survey on current practice in the teaching of literature stated that, at the time of his study, the dominant mode of instruction in high schools was large group discussion with the teacher guiding the students' interpretations. Student-centered approaches were used to get students' attention before more text-centered study. Although Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1976) first theorized on the role of the reader in the early part of this century, paradigm shifts are slow and for a number of reasons many instructors still control the interpretation of texts. The potential of reader-response in a constructivist classroom has yet to be realized.

2.1.2 L2 Teaching of Literature

L2 teaching of literature has a history of less scope, partly due to L2 teachings' overall struggle to be recognized as a professional pursuit and the controversial role of literature in language teaching. However, because of the stronghold of English globally, English literature has been part of the university curricula in places like Hong Kong, China, and Singapore. Generally, these programs attempt to expose students to the 'best' literary texts written in the English language, using the text as a vehicle for teaching Western cultural and artistic values. However, for the most part, a limited number of second language students are at a level of proficiency that would make this approach suitable.

Linguistics and language-based approaches have evolved in the teaching of literature to L2 students as L2 instructors and theorists generally have language teaching or linguistics' backgrounds. Stylistics (Carter, R. & Long, M., 1991), which was born out of structural linguistics, is the study of the words and syntax of a literary text. Generally, stylistic approaches with second language students involve the careful study of the language of the text in order to determine the meaning, very similar to the New Critics' close reading approach. Many second language teachers also use literature as a tool for developing language competency. Language-based approaches (Duff, A. & Maley, A., 1990) focus not on the meaning in the text, but rather use the text to develop students' knowledge of vocabulary, form, and convention. This approach is generally used with students whose language proficiency is still developing. Opponents to this approach (McKay, 1982; Spack, 1985; Hirvela, 1996) claim that it encourages an inauthentic relationship between the reader and the text: literature is not meant to be used to foster language acquisition, rather literature is meant to be read for intellectual and emotional pleasure. With the exception of the language-based approach, the teaching of the Western canon and the stylistics approach both focus on the text rather than on the reader.

Recently, however, many of the innovations in L1 teaching have infiltrated L2 teaching with teachers using various L1 approaches in the L2 classroom. Particularly, an interest in student response has developed in L2 circles and an interest in constructivism. Reader-response recognizes that different readers construct different texts and rejects the transmission model of teaching, therefore, allowing the classroom community to actively construct interpretations of texts. For L2 students this presents opportunities for language use and an active exploration of themselves and the literature of the target culture.

Reader-response theory, however, is a highly diverse field with a number of different orientations. Many volumes offering complex explanations of the relationship between reader and text have been published. In order to narrow this large field, a brief overview of the field will first be offered.

2.2 Reader-response theory: Mapping out the Territory

Within reader-response, teachers and theorists adopt a range of positions on reader, text, purpose, and context. To begin with the literature regarding the role of the reader, Elizabeth Freund, in her survey of response positions, identified a number of theoretical conceptions of the reader: "'the mock reader (Gibson); the implied reader (Booth, Iser); the model reader (Eco); the super reader (Riffaterre); the inscribed or encoded reader (Brooke-Rose); the narrattee/reader (Prince); the 'competent' reader (Culler); the literate reader (Holland); or the informed reader in the interpretive community (Fish)'" (as cited in Beach, 1993, p. 6). Much intellectual energy has gone into formulating these positions. Unfortunately, none are investigations of real readers. Feminists (Fetterley, 1978) have made explicit attempts to resist texts; liberal humanists have based their arguments on the assumption that readers are coherent, autonomous, morally certain beings, while post-structuralists have argued that readers are not autonomous, but constructed by the various discourses within which their lives are embedded (Weedon, 1987). However, much of the work is theoretical and does not reflect the investigation of 'real' readers. Recently, educational theorists have begun to investigate the activities of real readers.

Along with constructs of the reader, response theorists are also interested in how the text constrains interpretations, purposes for reading, types of response, and how

context shape readers' construction of meaning. Positions on the text range from the text constraining the interpretation (Iser, 1978) to interpretation being subjective (Fish, 1980). Purposes for reading and the nature of responses are equally wide-ranging, including reading for information or efferent purposes to imaginative reading or aesthetic purposes (Rosenblatt, 1978). Furthermore, readers may have an intellectual, emotional, or evaluative response to a text. Readers make links between the text being read and other texts they have read. Readers use their personal experience and social constructs to construct the meaning. Furthermore, the social context of the reading, whether in a classroom or at home, the composition of the class or small group, and the teacher's approach also affect the interpretation constructed. Finally, the cultural background of the student will also influence meaning-making. With such a wide range of issues, the plethora of literature and research on response is not surprising. Investigating all of the above is beyond the scope of one project. As one major purpose of this project is how social interaction influences the co-construction of the literary work, the literature on social theories of response will be focussed on.

2.2.1 Social Theories of Response

Generally, social theorists see response to literature as socially constructed. Students learn in classrooms ways of responding to literature through the classroom tasks and interaction. Fish (1980) conceptualized classrooms as interpretive communities with dominant modes of discourse which members learn and, consequently, use to become members of the community. Fish emphasizes that communities do have distinct ways of being which are socially constructed and learned by participants in that community. Bloome (1983, 1987) also sees the interaction in the classroom as a 'frame' that is

constructed by the teacher-to-student and student-to-student interaction and the classroom tasks.

> [a]pplied to reading events, a constructivist view suggests that the participants construct the meaning the text will have, and they also construct ways to think about the text, ways to orient themselves to others, ways to distribute social, psychological, and physical reward (e.g., status, praise, and candy) and ways to think about the world associated with reading" (Bloome, 1983, p. 169).

Through social interaction and tasks students learn the academic and social norms of the community. Vygotsky (1978) was the first to suggest that individual consciousness is secondary to social consciousness and that through social interaction people learn knowledge and mental processes which then are internalized.

Educational theorists interested in how the social environment influences learning (Bloome, 1983) pay attention to social roles in communities. Generally, students adopt roles in the classroom, depending upon the context. Some students may choose to be clowns, others rebels, others pleasers, and others silent opposition. Important to remember is that students' roles will sometimes change from classroom to classroom and within the same classroom, depending on the situation. A rebel, for a number of reasons, may become a pleaser for a period of time. An usually talkative and enthusiastic student may become silent because of the students with whom she is told to work. Most important to social theorists is the interdependency of social interaction and knowledge construction. Social dialogue and intellectual dialogue happen simultaneously. At the same time a student is discussing a text, a student is also defining his or her social role. For many, the defining of social roles is more important that the intellectual conversation taking place: "The primary goal in such reading events may have more to do with

establishing social relationships, social positioning, and group formation and membership than with obtaining the author's intent" (Bloome, 1983, p. 166). Bakhtin, a well-known dialogic theorist, articulates the constraints which the social context often puts on response: "When persons make an utterance or respond to a text, they are answerable for what they are saying. Because they are accountable for the potential social implications and effects of their utterances, they must consider the meanings that are constituted by their social interaction" (as cited in Beach, 1993, p. 111). How a student participates demonstrates to the community the role the student is adopting; a student never fully states what is on her mind, and is always aware that her comments have the power to both encourage and discourage both social and intellectual interaction. Labov and Robins (1969) found that skill in reading was perceived by teenage gang members in Harlem as "schoolish" and was likely to result in a loss of status for them (as cited in Bloome, 1983). This phenomenon was also the subject of the film *Stand and Deliver* which was set in East L.A. and narrated the conflicts a gang member had in attending school. Furthermore, students' use of language in a classroom or a small group also defines the individual as conforming with or resisting the dominant intellectual discourse. The external dialogue of a speaker is never just the words spoken, but rather is also a message that can only be fully understood in context. Bakhtin also argues that meaning always involves two levels of dialogue: "At an *internal* level, a person constructs an intrapersonal dialogue that takes into account the potential *external* dialogue. The meaning of this internal dialogue is intimately related to the social and ideological meanings of the external social context" (as

cited in Beach, 1993, p. 111). Students sift through their responses and, often, modify their thoughts to suit the social and ideological context of the classroom.

Social theorists continue to investigate the importance of the social context in the construction of meaning. Golden (1987) in her summary remarks emphasizes this:

> [T]he notion of the construction of meaning as a social process should be addressed. . . . To consider one reading as representative of the literary sign constructed by the reader is to ignore the dynamic evolution of a text in multiple readings. The implication of this statement is that we should consider how texts are read in different contexts. The processes involved in a small group discussion suggested how social interaction plays a critical role in the construction of a literary work. . . .Further study on the construction of the text as a social process, then, is needed in order to appreciate this kind of interaction. (p. 191).

2.3 Small Group Discussion

> We internalize talk, and it becomes thought. We externalize talk, and it becomes our bridge to literacy. Like the sea, talk is an environment that first incubates and then nurtures our development (Rubin, 1990, p. 3).

As one main focus of this study is small group discussion, educational research on talk will be overviewed next.

2.3.1 Talk and Learning

Talk has been the focus of much educational research. Research has shown that student talk enhances learning. However, many studies have indicated that teacher-talk dominates most lessons, with narrow demands being made on students' talk (Barnes, Britton, and Torbe, 1987). Barnes (1990) categorizes two functions of speech in classroom: presentational and exploratory. Not arguing that one is better than the other, Barnes does make the argument that presentational talk does dominate classroom talk and is not supported by exploratory talk which involves students in constructing knowledge,

rather than reproducing knowledge transmitted by the teacher. Cazden (1988) makes the same argument:

> The distinction between exploratory and final draft is essentially a distinction between different ways in which speech can function in the rehearsing of knowledge. In exploratory talk and writing, the learner himself takes responsibility for the adequacy of his thinking; final-draft talk and writing looks toward external criteria and distant unknown audiences. Both uses of language have their place in education. (Cazden, 1988, p. 133)

Cazden (1988), who also analyzed classroom discourse, notes that the typical pattern of classroom discourse is IRE (teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation) and that teachers dominate most of classroom talk. The conclusions of these studies have always been pleas for more student talk in the classroom.

Small group discussion has been suggested as a remedy for the above for a number of reasons. With small group discussion, students have more of an opportunity to interact and are exposed to multiple points of view. Dialogic theorists see small group discussion as useful in both encouraging students to talk and listen to other perspectives. Rather than encouraging students to adopt rigid positions which they rigorously defend, students who are encouraged to incorporate a dialogic perspective engage in animated talk in order to clarify differences, enhance understanding, and build social relationships. Miller (1993) describes dialogic pedagogy and places discussion at its centre: "Because of the problematic nature of texts and the sociocultural diversities of readers, then, text discussion can be particularly suited to provoke an interplay of differences" (p. 249). Langer (1995), when describing what classrooms rich in literary dialogue would look like, sees a similar process occurring: "Students use their interactions with others to explore new horizons of possibilities. Such explorations help students see from various angles of

vision, providing them with increasing sensitivity to the complexities in life as well as literature" (p. 53).

With L2 students, talk is essential because they are both learning concepts and learning a language. Various educational research and methodological traditions emphasize the importance of talk in learning. Theorists Vygotsky (1978) and Rogoff (1990) both stress that knowledge is constructed through social interaction which is itself embedded in the larger culture: "the social context includes much more than social interaction between partners. A primary aspect of the social context is at the level of society -- the institutions, technologies, norms, and practices developed by and appropriated from previous generations" (Rogoff, p. 138). This idea is echoed by Vygotsky who "believed that the internalization of culturally produced sign systems brings about behavioural transformations and forms the bridge between early and later forms of individual developments" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 7). For Vygotsky, both adult-to-child interaction and peer interaction could promote cognitive development as long as one of the partners in the interaction was more skilled: "Vygotsky's emphasis on interaction with more skilled partners is necessary to his theory, since such interaction is conceived as the means by which children begin to use the intellectual tools of their society" (Rogoff, 1990, p. 148). Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development emphasizes that each student has a potential which cannot be realized alone but can be realized with the assistance of others:

> It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 86).

In the case of literary discussions, procedures for meaning-making are learned through talk about literature: "Meaning in literature is, ultimately, opinion, and interactive and transactional theorists suggest that the opinion is arrived at through negotiation" (Straw, 1990, p. 132). The social interaction between peers or between students and more skilled adults is often referred to as scaffolding and in literary discussion these social processes precede the internalization of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for learners" (Hogan & Pressley, 1997). Bridges (1987) has described a good discussion as having the following qualities:

> (a) discussions involve members of the group contributing from their different perspectives, opinions, or understandings; (b) discussions involve a general disposition on behalf of members of the group to listen to, consider, and be responsive to what others are saying; and (c) discussions are guided by the central purpose of developing the group's knowledge, understanding, and/or judgment on the matter under discussion (as cited in Rogers, Green, & Nussbaum, 1990, p. 83).

Straw (1990), citing Johnson and Johnson (1985), concludes that "'the discussion process in cooperative groups promotes the discovery and the development of high quality cognitive strategies for learning'" (p. 142).

2.3.1 Conflict in Small Group Discussion

However, although in theory many encourage collaborative models for discussion, discussions are often not conflict free. These conflicts can be productive though. Straw (1990), summarizing Johnson and Johnson (1982), discusses the productiveness of disagreements in groups, which Johnson and Johnson call "cognitive controversy": "When managed constructively, cognitive controversy promotes curiosity and uncertainty about the correctness of one's views, and, consequently, an active search for more information, and high achievement and retention of material" (p. 142). Rogoff (1990) also

reports that from both a Piagetian and Vygotskian perspective problem-solving that includes a healthy dose of conflict is the most productive: "The most productive interaction appears to result from arrangements in which peers' decision making occurs jointly, with a balanced exploration of differences of perspective (Bos, 1937; Glachan & Light, 1982; Light, Foot, Colbourn, & McClelland, 1987)" (as cited in Rogoff, p. 176). Almasi (1995) investigated the sociocognitive conflicts in both peer-led and teacher-led discussions of literature. Differences in the type and amount of conflict in the peer-led and teacher-led groups resulted. The peer-led groups explored topics more fully and were better able to recognize and resolve conflict than the teacher-led groups. Almasi identified three types of conflict: conflict within self, conflict with other, and conflict with text. Generally, when an interpretation of a text is challenged by new information, a reader experiences cognitive conflict. The peer-led group engaged substantially in conflicts within self:

> The conflicts within self category represents a metacognitive realization that some aspect of the text of one's interpretation has caused confusion. During the episode of sociocognitive conflict, the individual verbalizes this internal incongruity in the social milieu in hopes of resolution" (Almasi, p. 328)

This type of conflict demands that students externalize individual conflicts and that the group helps to resolve the individual's confusion. This kind of conflict is useful in that it generates much conversation. The second type of conflict, conflict with others, occurs when one realizes, during a group discussion, that someone else has a different interpretation. This was infrequent in Almasi's study. The third type of conflict, conflicts with text, occured when students said something that contradicted the text. Generally, this type of conflict was resolved by referring to the text. This kind of conflict was more

frequent in teacher-led discussions. Overall, Almasi found that peer-led groups were exposed to more alternative interpretations and concluded that

> Just as quantity and quality of student verbalization is important in terms of developing the ability to recognize conflicting events and incongruities, exposure to alternate interpretations is a key factor in the development of the ability to consider multiple interpretations when constructing meaning" (p. 331).

Limitations to small group discussion have also been suggested. Lewis (1997) after a year long study of fifth and sixth grade students in literary discussion groups found that moving from teacher-directed large group discussion to peer group discussion does not necessarily level the playing field: "Rather than decentering power in the absence of a teacher as they are meant to do, these peer-led discussions often gave dominant students a position of power" (p. 197). Lewis suggests that it is incorrect to assume equal status and power among all students. Rather, she found that students achieving and interrupting social and interpretive power were significant features of peer-led small group discussions.

Studies have also shown that the patterns of discourse modelled in large class discussion will often be copied in small group discussion. Marshall, Smagorinsky, and Smith (1995) looked at the patterns of discourse in the large group and small group discussions in four classrooms and found that the teachers who actively involved their students in the large group discussions, having the students actively construct knowledge in this context, had more successful small groups. Teachers whose students were more passive in large group discussions didn't bring the confidence and strategies that the other teachers' students did to small group discussion.

However, despite some limitations on small group discussion, its possibilities are well-documented. Schieffelin & Ochs (1986) in an overview of the process of language

socialization highlight that "the child or the novice (in the case of older individuals) is not a passive recipient of sociocultural knowledge but rather an active contributor to the meaning and outcome of interactions with other members of a social group" (p. 165). Furthermore, from a phenomenological perspective "members' perceptions and conceptions of entities are grounded in their subjective experiences and . . . members bring somewhat different realities to interpersonal encounters" (p. 165). Small group negotiation of meaning will allow students to see different ways to construct meaning, participating in what Dewey felt to be essential in schooling in a democratic society, the free exchange of ideas and opinions with others and the development of critical thought.

2.3.2 Management and Small Group Discussion

Despite the potential of small group discussion, what happens in reality is usually a shadow of what is suggested by theory. In order to maximize the potential of this strategy, teachers must manage small groups expertly. Teachers must make choices about group size, group composition, the length of time a group needs to work together, and how to best assist the group in cooperating. Educational literature offers some suggestions. With regards to size, most agree that 4-6 is an optimal number of students in a group (Wiencek & O'Flahavan, 1994; Crowhurst, 1983). This number of students is considered optimal because it is large enough to allow for diversity while also allowing all students ample opportunities to participate. Teachers must also decide how to group students. There are a number of different strategies for grouping including random selection, allowing students to choose their own groups, allowing students to choose a partner and then combining pairs, or teacher assignment of students to groups. Random selection is quick and convenient and can lead to both productive and unproductive

combinations; allowing students to choose their own groups pleases some students but also allows for inequities in groups and for some students feeling left out and inadequate; allowing students to choose a partner and then combining pairs can work but sometimes with this strategy pairs are unbalanced and groups do not work well; teacher grouping allows teachers to consider the social and intellectual capabilities of students as well as gender and cultural background. Heterogeneous groups are considered optimal for a number of reasons, cognitive and social. Wiencek and O'Flahavan (1994) suggest using social ability as the basis for grouping to ensure that some of the students in the groups are socially gregarious and will take a leadership role in the completion of the task. Groups need socially positive members who will bring a productive attitude to the group (Cintorino, 1994). Teachers should also be mindful as they are grouping that they also include a variety of intellectual abilities in the group to ensure for peer-to-peer scaffolding in the group. From a Vygotskian perspective (1978), heterogeneous groupings are essential in that they allow for the more able members to model processes for less able members. Ideally, each group will have a number of able members so that the able members are also stimulated by the discussion. This is perhaps the most difficult element of group work because, depending upon the composition of a class, grouping can be relatively easy or can be difficult. This also brings up the issue of time and how long should one group work together? Wiencek & O'Flahavan (1994), Crowhurst (1983), and Dias (1992) all agree that students need time to develop norms of behaviour and to become comfortable with each other. Wiencek & O'Flahavan (1994) suggest as long as 6-8 weeks. Furthermore, Wiencek & O'Flahavan (1994) also suggest that students

explicitly discuss and negotiate norms for behaviour so they will learn supportive behaviours as they work with their groups.

2.4 Tasks for Small Group Discussions

Translating theory into practice is always the challenge. Once students are grouped appropriately, English teachers then have to decide what will students be asked to do in their small groups. Tasks for small groups discussing works of literature vary from open-ended discussions of responses or response journals to more structured tasks. The kinds of tasks assigned small groups depend both on the theoretical perspective of the teacher and on the goals of instruction. The unstructured discussion which explores individual responses to literature is modelled on the 'book club.' Classrooms, however, are not living rooms and most teachers modify this structure for use in classroom study. Modifications include using an adult facilitator to scaffold discussions (Golden, 1986), using response journals as the basis of discussion, to provide focus, and also including an adult facilitator (Villaume & Hopkins, 1995), and teachers' generating with students possible topics for discussion, but allowing the students to discuss the text on their own (Wiencek & O'Flahavan, 1984). The purpose of these discussion groups is generally to facilitate the building of interpretations of literature. Those favouring this model see structured tasks or pre-determined teacher questions as short-circuiting the exploration of the text.

However, most of the research on discussion groups has studied the constructing of initial interpretations. Although, these groups have been much more productive in enriching students' understanding of literature than more traditional methods like answering comprehension questions, the question of tasks for small groups still needs

consideration. Assigned questions may be counter-productive in the initial stage of interpretation when students are constructing their readings of texts but are assigned questions always counter-productive, or is the problem more with the kinds of questions we have been asking?

2.4.1 Questions and Stances

Research has shown (Hynds, 1992) that questioning practices are a 'cultural event' and that students learn how to think and respond about literature through the questions asked in the classroom: "[R]eaders' stances in school contexts are strongly influenced by the questions asked by teachers in examinations and study guides" (Hynds, 1992, pp. 91-92). Reading formations or stance can be defined as a reader's way of reading a text and particularly whether a reader or group of readers see the text as a representation of reality or as a construction which represents only a partial truth which should be questioned. Historically, critical stances towards certain texts can by linked to the current ideological climate. Institutions often encourage a 'monologic' stance which accepts the texts as representing reality which historically has reflected middle-class values:

> Much of the reading instruction at the turn of the century focused on 'reading for character,' through which students were socialized to respond by adopting the character's point of view as a moral guideline for appropriate behaviour. (Beach, 1993, p. 137).

Cox (1992) in a theoretical and historical overview of readers' stances towards texts, catalogues various theoretical constructs of stance including Rosenblatt's (1978) efferent and aesthetic continuum, Britton's (1982, 1984) spectator-participant continuum, Iser's (1978) anticipation and retrospection, Fish's (1980) culturally constructed concept of stance, and Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic stance. Judith Langer (1995), an educational

> I use the word *envisionment* to refer to the world of understanding a person has at any point in time.1 Envisionments are text-worlds in the mind, and they differ from individual to individual. They are a function of one's personal and cultural experiences, one's relationship to the current experience, what one knows, how one feels, and what one is after. Envisionments are dynamic sets of related ideas, images, questions, disagreements, anticipations, arguments, and hunches that fill the mind during every reading, writing, speaking, or other experience when one gains, expresses, and shares thoughts and understandings (p. 9).

Key to the envisionment-building process are stances which Langer describes as 'options' readers have as they are reading a text. Langer's stances include the following: being out and stepping into envisionment; being and moving through an envisionment; stepping out and rethinking what one knows; and stepping out and objectifying the experiences. Langer stresses that these stances are not linear, even though they imply a linear progression, but rather are possibilities for readers at any point during the reading process. Post-structuralists (Fetterley, 1978) encourage a more dialogic stance to texts, encouraging readers to deconstruct both the ideological values implicit in the text and how their own historical and ideological condition affect the stance they have towards the text.

The kinds of questions asked or stances taken in literature classrooms has recently been under investigation. Particularly, researchers have been interrogating various models for questioning that have been developed including Blooms' (1956) taxonomy and other models (see Hynds, 1990 for a list). Questioning hierarchies have been criticized as being unsuitable for the literature classroom: "The questions teachers and textbooks pose within these hierarchies tend to produce passive readers and to reduce the act of reading literature 'to one of finding answers to questions which are not one's own -- even if they are eventually appropriated by the reader' (Dias, 1990, 292)"(in Hynds, 1992, pp. 80-81). One study (Chou & Pullinan, 1980) showed that 75% of elementary reading questions

are eventually appropriated by the reader' (Dias, 1990, 292)"(in Hynds, 1992, pp. 80-81). One study (Chou & Pullinan, 1980) showed that 75% of elementary reading questions were literal, 10% were inferential, and 15% were evaluative. When literal comprehension of the facts of the text become the primary focus of classroom discussion the imaginative experience of reading is extinguished. The movement to response has been in many ways a reaction to the reading-as-comprehension approach to literature instruction.

However, some assert that it is not questions which are the problem, but the kinds of questions asked. Hynds (1992) asserts that we need to ask more 'challenging' questions: "*Challenging* questions are those that lead students to direct their responses to each other, rather than to the teacher alone -- questions that encourage variety, diversity, and even idiosyncrasy, rather than conformity of response" (p. 96). Probst (1992) also sees a teacher's role as encouraging "readers to attend to their own conceptions, their own experience, bringing the literary work to bear upon their lives and allowing their lives to shed light upon the work" (p. 60). Langer (1992) also states that questions help students step outside their own particular stance to a text and see other possibilities for meaning:

> Asking questions that help students explore their envisionments, that guide the students to explore possible meanings beyond those they already have considered within a particular stance, have the potential to help them learn ways in which they can enrich their envisionments on their own. (p. 42)

Most important to rich explorations of literature are open-ended questions because they validate difference: "Authentic teacher questions promote ownership because they show that the teacher takes students' ideas seriously" (Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck, 1993, p. 15).

Questions from a variety of stances allow an interplay of different intellects, creating a rich literary dialogue. In many ways, the focus away from the text as the locus of meaning to the reader is a recognition of the subjectivity of reading. Post-structuralist theorists have been influential in dispelling the notion of readers as autonomous subjects, but rather as constructed by ideological and historical forces. Foucault has argued that discourses or discursive practices, more simply the construction and privileging of certain forms of knowledge "are embedded in a continually changing, fluid set of relationships that continually challenge what he described as the 'will to truth' that is 'reliant upon institutional support and distribution,' which 'tends to exercise a set of pressures, a power of constraint on other forms of discourse'"(as cited in Beach, 1993, p. 128). Able students quickly figure out what are the conventions of the particular classroom community in which they are involved and quickly learn the rules and constraints for discourse in that community: "As James Porter argues, readers and writer are participants in a process of continually negotiating knowledge and truth as 'portable, local, and temporary' (as cited in Beach, 1993, 128)." Weedon (1987) succinctly summarizes the essence of post-structuralism which

> is a theory which decenters the rational, self-present subject of humanism, seeing subjectivity and consciousness as socially produced in language as a site of struggle and potential change. Language is not transparent as in humanist discourse, it is not experience and does not label a 'real' world. Meanings do not exist prior to their articulation in language and language is not an abstract system, but is always socially and historically located in discourses. Discourses represent political interests and in consequence are constantly vying for status and power. The site of this battle for power is the subjectivity of the individual and it is a battle in which the individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist. (p. 41).

The above is often invisible for native speakers who see cultural discourses as natural and not socially produced. Stances from a number of perspectives, which could include a post-structuralist perspective, response perspective, or literary perspective, allow students to explore their subjectivities.

2.5 Schema Theory and Brain-Based Theory

The following, although not directly connected to the research questions, is reviewed because it is a framework that offers additional insight into the discourse the students produced. Although I was introduced to this literature after I had collected the data for the study, it helped me make sense of some of the pattern of the students' discussions. These frameworks are schemata theory and new theory on learning and the brain. One framework is old; one is relatively new. Although schemata has been around for a long time, it is useful in coming to an understanding of how readers go about constructing an understanding and providing an explanation for differences in understanding. Schemata was first developed by Rumelhart and Ortony (as cited in Rumelhart, 1980), but can be traced back to Kant and is defined in the OED as the following:

> Anyone of certain forms of rules of the 'productive imagination' through which the understanding is able to apply its 'categories' to the manifold of sense-perception in the process of realizing knowledge or experience.

In general, schema theory is a theory about knowledge with the term 'schema' referring to data structures which represent concepts stored in memory. Usually, meanings are encoded in terms of the 'typical' or 'normal' situation or events that instantiate that concept. Schemata help people make inferences and are our own private theories about the nature of events we face. The fundamental processes of comprehension are similar to

testing a hypothesis, evaluating its fit, and testing the parameters. Furthermore, schemata have variables, can embed, one within the other, represent knowledge at many levels of abstraction, represent knowledge rather than definitions, and are recognition devices whose processing is directed at judging the goodness of their fit to the data being processed (Rumelhart, 1980). Schemata will also vary with cultural background. Finally, schema-directed processing goes from whole to part and from part to whole and the interpretation of parts and wholes must proceed jointly.

The fundamental principles of schemata theory are similar to the principles of recent theory on how the brain makes meaning. Brain-based educational theorists are interested in how the brain processes information and in individual differences. Educational theorists (Parry & Gregory, 1998; Caine, Caine & Crowell, 1994; Fogarty, 1997) are now looking at recent research on the functioning of the brain and formulating principles to guide what is termed brain-compatible teaching and learning. Three of the principles which have been formulated by Caine, Caine & Crowell (1994) are "the search for meaning is innate," "the search for meaning occurs through patterning," and "every brain simultaneously perceives and creates parts and wholes." The first principle, "the search for meaning is innate," suggests that human beings automatically search for meaning, the familiar, in any situation and that the brain automatically registers this familiar stimuli while processing novel stimuli (Caine & Caine, 1991). This process is similar to the one suggested by schemata theory in which the processes of comprehension involves hypothesis testing, the evaluation of its fit, and the testing of parameters. The second principle, "the search for meaning occurs through patterning," suggests that the brain searches for and responds positively to patterns and resists having meaningless

patterns imposed on it (Caine & Caine, 1991). Caine & Caine (1991) term pattern detectors in the brain "natural categories." All human beings expand and build collections of categories, which are then used in pattern perception. We organize our understandings with the knowledge structures in our minds. These frameworks which sound very much like schemata, although considered "natural" knowledge, do not constitute truth. Rather, people's schemata or conceptual systems vary. The final principle is closely connected to the previous two in that while automatically registering what is familiar and building patterns and connections, the brain simultaneously perceives parts and wholes. The idea that the brain moves from part to whole and from whole to part was also mentioned with schemata theory. The process of reading a literary text is the process of constructing a text world. The patterns in that world are the union of the words in the text with the readers' own mental maps or schemata.

As evidenced from the above, the use of small group discussion in the L2 literature classroom is an ideal activity that is consistent with current thought in L2 learning, literary theory, the psychology of learning, the importance of talk in learning, activity theory, and language socialization theory. However, small group discussion is also a highly complex endeavour that is influenced by number of factors including social context and task. The present study proposes to look at three separate small group discussions and investigate this phenomena from both a social and cognitive perspective.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used in this research: the research design, the course and participants chosen for study, the data sources, transcription procedures, and analysis.

3.1 Qualitative Research

A qualitative design was chosen for this research project for a number of reasons. Initially, it was designed as a multiple case study because the primary purpose of the research was to understand the nature of a classroom event. Hitchcock & Hughes (1995) assert that case study research is probably the most suitable for educational research because it is best used when "naturalistic everyday, cultural and interactive phenomena are studied in their own right and in their own territory" (p. 316). I was interested in probing into the nature of small group discussions, looking at a number of variables which influence each group's discussion. The groups easily could be treated as separate cases. Also, case study research is said to be most suitable for research that asks 'how' questions (Yin, 1994), and, as both of my research questions are how questions, case study methodology seemed most suitable. However, because each case would be similar due to the fact that each discussed the same text and questions and because I had multiple purposes in the research, I chose to structure the results of the study in two ways. The results for the first question, which were the analysis of the group interaction, were best suited to a description of each case. The results for the second question were more suited to a discourse analysis.

3.2 Action Research

Besides being qualitative research, I also consider my research to be action research as my goal is both to improve my understanding of how social interaction influences reading and to investigate how to improve small group discussion of literature in my classroom. "John Elliott (1991:69) says action research is 'the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it.'" (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993, p. 4). I wanted both to improve my intellectual understanding of the processes I was using in my classroom and to formally investigate some of my beliefs about what is effective in the classroom, in hope of improving my teaching. Therefore, I am investigating both the more elusive issue of social context as well as the more practical issues such as group composition, task, and management of the task. However, this research did not complete a full cycle of action research. I did not gather and analyze data and then implement action strategies. Rather I designed a unit of study which incorporated what I felt to be effective teaching strategies with a mind to interrogating those strategies. The final chapter of this thesis considers implications for my own teaching.

3.3 School Site and Course Chosen

I am a teacher at a secondary school in West Vancouver, British Columbia. At the time of the study, the high school where I teach had grades 7-12 and approximately 1,800 students. My teaching load for the year was Transitional English 11, International Baccalaureate English 11, English 12, and Communications 12. My teaching of L2 students was primarily the Transitional English 11 students. Transitional English 11 is a course for L2 students in the eleventh grade whose English is not proficient enough for

them to take English 11. The students ranged in age from 16 to 18. Often older students who have completed the eleventh grade in their home country repeat the grade in order to acquire language. All students are literate in their first languages. Students' reading levels ranged from approximately a grade three reading level to a grade seven reading level.

3.3.1 Classroom Culture

Before moving onto a description of the participants chosen and the specific unit of study from which the data was collected, I would like to comment on the general classroom culture and, particularly, the use of response-based teaching in my classroom. Most important to recognize is that these particular classes were involved in a pilot project using a computer-assisted reading program for part of their instructional time. As there were only eight computers in the classrooms, groups took turns using the computer lab and therefore instruction was organized in modules; students progressed through the modules with their small group. For approximately 1/4 of their instructional time, students used a computer program which was primarily response-based and required students to write responses on-line to passages they were reading. The other 3/4 of their instructional time was devoted to literature instruction and during this time students studied a play, a novel, and received writing instruction. Students had completed an open-ended response journal in the novel unit and had used this journal in small group discussions facilitated by me. This facilitation was possible because the computer lab demanded that instruction be in a four part progression: one session on the computer and three sessions of classroom instruction and activities. Students were sometimes at the same stage and sometimes at different stages in the progression. In reference to the context for learning, students had

received many opportunities to respond personally to literature prior to the specific unit which is the focus of this study.

3.4 Participants

All students in two Transitional English 11 classes were recruited for the study. Of the 48 students, 24 agreed to participate. Of these 24 students, four were eliminated from the study because of past attendance problems that would most likely jeopardize data collection. The remaining 20 were grouped into five heterogeneous groups. The groups were formed by me and attention was paid to creating groups that had a balance of genders and variety of language backgrounds and English ability. Heterogeneous grouping is supported in the literature (Wiencek and O'Flahavan, 1994) and was supported in my practice. I grouped the students as I had learned was most effective with at least one socially outgoing student in each group and with a variety of language backgrounds so students would use English to communicate. I also had at least one student whose English was strong in each group. Due to holidays and attendance, the initial five groups were narrowed down to three groups during the course of the study. All names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection occurred within a selected unit of study. The unit was designed in a progression. Groups of students were at similar and different stages of the progression at any given time. The unit was a short story unit and each story required a series of instructional activities including a pre-reading activity, a vocabulary activity, comprehension questions to ensure that students were understanding the basic 'facts' of the story, a group discussion of the story with specific questions for discussion, and an

open-ended journal in which students explored their personal understanding of the story. At the beginning of the small group discussions, students were given guidelines for managing the group discussion. These guidelines were referred to and expanded as the discussions progressed. The data for this study was taken from the last cycle of the unit. This allowed for group members to become familiar with each other and to become more comfortable with the tape recorder. The text and tasks for this cycle will now be looked at more in depth.

3.5.1 Text

Students were using the short story text Impact (Safier, 1986) in this unit. This text is specifically intended for Transitional English 11 because the stories are short and, therefore, manageable, and the stories are also interpretive. The book does have a Western cultural bias. The last story in the unit was "All the Years of Her Life" by Morley Callaghan (1936) which is a story told in third person point of view from the perspective of Alfred Higgins, a boy in late adolescence, who is caught stealing at the drugstore where he works. He expects his mother to be in a rage when she comes to deal with the problem. Surprisingly, for Alfred, his mother is calm and collected as she charms his boss, Sam Carr, and manages to convince him not to call the police and just fire Alfred. Initially, Alfred is proud of the way his mother behaved, but then, when he sees her alone in the family kitchen, trembling, he realizes the toll his behaviour is taking on her and sees "all the years of her life." This story was chosen because it was identified in an informal study in 1997 by a Transitional English 11 class to be at an appropriate level of difficulty for L2 students.

3.5.2 Student Tasks

The following activities were used with the story "All the Years of Her Life."

3.5.2.1 Pre-reading Activity

In this part of the unit, students were asked to first discuss and then write about specific instances when their parents were angry with them: What happened? How did your parents react? How did this make you feel? The purpose of the discussion was to allow students to share their own experiences and hear others' experiences. The sharing also helped trigger students' memories if they were having difficulty remembering a specific example. This activity also anticipated the content of the story which involves a parent controlling her anger with her son and hopefully stimulated students' interest for the story they would be reading. Students then read the story.

3.5.2.2 Vocabulary Activity

After the students read the story, the students read the story again and completed a vocabulary activity which involved the skill of guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words in context. "All the Years of Her Life" uses language that portrays body language, ways of speaking, and emotions. Students tried to guess the meaning in context, checked the meaning in an English-to-English dictionary and then reviewed the words with the teacher.

3.5.2.3 Comprehension Questions

Students also answered comprehension questions to ensure that they were familiar with the basic 'facts' of the text before they proceeded to the group discussion. The answers for the comprehension questions were discussed with the teacher.

3.5.2.4 Group Discussion Questions

As one of the purposes of the research study was to investigate how questions which take multiple stances towards the text influence group discourse, groups were given specific questions to discuss. The three stances were post-structuralist, response, and literary. Questions from a post-structuralist stance probed into students' concepts of economic background, perceptions of connections between background and behaviour, motivations for criminal behaviour, ideas about power, lifestyle, and people's ability to change their behaviour. These stances ask students to interpret both what is stated and unstated in the story and explore how they make sense of the story. Questions from a response stance asked students' opinions about characters and characters' behaviour. These questions asked for an evaluation. In addition, more formal literary stances which asked students to discuss the point of view and theme of the story were included to see how discourse on these types of questions differed from the discourse on the other questions. Following are the questions with a brief explanation of the purpose of each question and an indication of the stance following the question.

1. What do you think is the financial situation of Alfred's family? Are they rich or poor?

   Although the second part of the question does seem leading, I included this in case the students did not understand what financial situation meant. With this question I was interested in how the students constructed Alfred's background. This is a post-structuralist stance.

2. Do you think Alfred's family's financial situation affects Alfred's life? In what ways?

   This question was meant to probe into any connection students saw between his financial background and his life. This is a post-structuralist stance.

3. Why do you think Alfred steals?

Alfred offers a brief explanation for his petty thieving. I was interested to see if students accepted this explanation at face value or did they probe more deeply into his motivations. This is a post-structuralist stance.

4. Which character do you think has the most power? Explain why you chose the character.

With this questions I was interested in seeing where students located power. Do the students automatically jump to Mr. Carr who could call the police or do they consider the mother's role more powerful? This is a post-structuralist stance.

5. What is your opinion of Mr Carr's behaviour?

With this question, I was interested in probing into students' reactions to Mr. Carr's behaviour. How did they evaluate this character? This is a response stance.

6. What do you think Alfred's mother's life is like? Explain your answer.

With this question, I was interested in how students constructed Alfred's mother's life. This is a post-structuralist stance.

7. What is your opinion of Alfred's mother treatment of her son after the incident in the drugstore?

With this question, I was interested in probing into students' reaction to Alfred's mother's behaviour. How do they evaluate this character? This is a response stance.

8. What is your opinion of Alfred at the beginning of the story? Explain your answer.

Because Alfred is approximately the same age as the students, I was interested in how they reacted to his behaviour. Are they critical or empathetic? This is a response stance.

9. What is your opinion of Alfred at the end of the story? Explain your answer.

With this question, I was interested in how students responded to Alfred's insight at the end of the story. This is a response stance.

10. Do you think Alfred will behave differently in the future? Explain your answer.

With this question, I was interested to see if students saw the possibility for a permanent change in the character? This is a post-structuralist stance.

11. Why do you think the author only tells the reader what Alfred is thinking and feeling?

This is a literary stance. I was interested to see the differences in the discourse with this kind of question which analyzes the literary technique.

12. What do you think the author is trying to show the reader with this story?

Again, this is a literary stance and the question asks students to generalize a purpose for the story and objectify the text. I was interested to see what purposes the students would generalize and how varied the discourse would be.

Each group was given one copy of the questions in order to create interdependence in the groups. This was another strategy that had been presented to me when I was in teacher education and one that I had believed effective in encouraging groups to work cooperatively. By having to share the question sheet, they would have no choice but to work together. Members were instructed to take turns reading the questions from discussion to discussion. Each group evolved its own way of managing the task which will be discussed in the results.

3.6 Recording Procedures

As the students were working in a four stage progression, care was taken so that the groups involved in the study had their discussions at different times in the progression. Groups were introduced to the tape recorder at the beginning of the unit so that they could get used to having their discussions audio-taped. This also gave me time to test the equipment and check if taped discussions were audible. The first discussions were difficult to hear because of other classroom noise, so I decided to move the group being taped into a narrow hallway which led to the classroom door. This changed the context of the

discussion as the students were physically separated from the rest of the class, but this eliminated the noise which made the first tape inaudible. Students sat on chairs around a table. The space was intimate. Audio-tapes were transcribed using standard transcribing conventions.

3.7 Questionnaires

The purpose of questionnaires was to get background and academic information on each of the students involved, get immediate retrospective reports of students' experience of the small group discussion, and to probe more generally into students' opinions and ideas about small group discussion. These questionnaires along with the transcripts of the small group discussion were used to formulate the questions for the discourse interviews. Questionnaires are also a form of triangulation in that you can compare individual members' perceptions of the same phenomenon. These differences formed the basis for the interviewing.

3.8 Discourse Interviews

Immediately after the short story unit, a student teacher began to teach this course. This offered me the opportunity to pull out individual students for interviews. Interviews were held in a small teacher's office/work space near the classroom and were audio-taped. The office had no other people other than the researcher and student in it during the interviews. There were minimal disruptions. All students in a group were interviewed during the same class period so that they would not discuss the questions together. Questions for the interviews were written after the group discussions were transcribed. A preliminary analysis of this discourse exposed a number of issues which were focussed on in these interviews. A semi-structured interview format was used for the interviews.

Questions were formulated ahead of time because I wanted to probe into specific issues which were identified by the transcripts of the group discussion and the questionnaire. The questions were not yes/no questions and the interviewer asked all students the same questions and probed into certain issues which surfaced during the interviews. Following are the interview questions and a brief explanation of their purpose:

1. Which person, other than yourself, did you enjoy listening to the most in your group? Why?

   I asked this question because it became evident in the transcripts and in the questionnaires that each group had one member who was powerful. I used the word enjoy because it is less loaded than powerful or strong. I was interested in checking to see if all members of the group enjoyed listening to the same person.

2. Which person did you not enjoy listening to? Why?

   I asked this question because it came up in the questionnaires that students' different accents were an issue for some students and made understanding sometimes difficult. I was interested in probing into this issue because I have always mixed language backgrounds in groups.

3. What do you enjoy more, listening or speaking? Can you explain why?

   I asked this question because I was interested particularly in probing into quieter students' reasons for not participating in the groups.

4. Who had the most influence in your group? Why? How do you feel about this?

   When I wrote this question, I was interested to see if there was a difference between the student they enjoyed listening to and the one who had the most influence. I was also interested in their feelings about dominant members of the group.

5. Did you ever agree with a person when you didn't agree? Explain.

   With this question, I was interested in what reasons students had for agreeing rather than asserting their own opinion. For social reasons, did they keep quiet rather than voice their opinions?

6. Did you ever purposely keep silent? Why do you think you did this?

With this question, I was interested to see if any of the students used silence as resistance.

7. Did you ever feel like you weren't being allowed to speak? Why do you think this was happening?

I asked this question because I wanted to find out if some students felt they were being silenced and why they felt this was happening to them.

8. Did you ever feel uncomfortable during the discussions? Why?

With the question, I was interested in finding out what made them feel uncomfortable (e.g. silence, conflict).

9. Did sharing (or) one person reading the questions affect the discussions? Why?

When reading the transcripts, it became clear that the groups in which the students shared the reading of the questions discussed the questions in more depth than the groups in which one student read all the question. I was interested in probing into this.

10. What types of students would you like to be in a group with? Explain.

With this question, I wanted to hear students' preferences for group composition.

11. Does it help the discussion to keep the same group for a number of discussions?

The literature generally supports keeping students in a group for an extended period of time so they can become comfortable with each other and develop norms for interaction. I was interested in what students would feel is the optimum length of time to work with one group.

12. Did the order in which people spoke affect the discussion?

Again, this question arose out of the transcripts which showed that much more discussion occured in the groups in which the order of response varied.

13. Was your thinking ever changed? Why?

With this question, I was interested to see the influence of different ideas on the students' own ideas.

14. Would you have liked my input on the questions after the discussion? Can you explain that?

I purposely did not tell the students my ideas about the story because I wanted to see where they would go without my input. I was interested to see what they thought about my interpretive authority.

15. Do you think it is important for people to have similar understandings of a story?

With this question, I was interested to see if they felt there was a correct interpretation, especially considering that they come from education systems which are teacher-dominated.

3.9 Method of Analysis

The analysis of the data proceeded in two stages. First, I did a complete analysis of the students' discussions. At this point, it became apparent that the results would be best presented in two chapters, one which focussed on the groups' social interaction and another which focussed on the literary discourse and was organized around the stances. I then focussed on each chapter separately. In the fourth chapter, I used the transcripts of the students' discussions, questionnaires, and the interview transcripts to describe each group's members, management of the task, group composition, and peer-to-peer scaffolding. In the analysis of the peer-to-peer scaffolding, the coding categories for scaffolding were constructed by me. The metaphor of layering best described the students' discussions and the conflict in the discussions was straightforward. My purpose was in looking at collective processes. The fifth chapter first looks at how the various stances influenced the discourse. This demanded a content analysis. The chapter then, for additional insight, considers the thinking processes of the students using schemata theory and theory from research on brain-based learning and teaching as the framework.

3.10 Issues of Validity

Much debate has ensued over qualitative research (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Generally, with qualitative research the primary issue is validity with the focus being on capturing as closely as possible the phenomenon under investigation. Careful attention to validity will guarantee reliability (Hitchcock & Hughes, 324).

3.10.1 Internal Validity

Essential to internal validity is triangulation. In this study, data were collected from a number of sources including audio-taping the event, immediate retrospective questionnaires after the event, and further discourse interviews to probe more in depth into issues. Furthermore, comparison of individual's responses to questionnaire items and interview questions also allowed for validation. Furthermore, I have attempted to identify my biases in the choices I made in the study and in the questions I asked. I wanted to avoid constructing a project which merely validates my personal conceptions about what is happening in my classroom. By investigating how context influences events, and by demonstrating how groups of students who sit in the same classroom and have the same teacher and are given the same instruction and activities produce, at times, quite different results indicates that the nature of social phenomenon are complex and never fully exposed by educational researchers or understood by teachers. I am presenting my understanding of the event which is informed by a number of sources of data.

Two issues are central: first I am the students' teacher and second the issue of the tape recorder. First, on my role as their teacher, I did feel that students were open with me during the interviews. Although my position as teacher and adult did not allow me to probe as deeply as if I was a friend or confidant, in general, students' responses seemed

honest. On the role of the tape recorder, students were introduced to the tape recorder early in the study in order for them to become more comfortable with it. Some students indicated that they still were not comfortable with the tape recorder at the end of the presentation. The tape recorder and the changing of physical space in the classroom did change the context for discussion as would a teacher moving closer to a group during a group discussion. I would argue that the idea of a naturalistic environment is perhaps misleading in that most environments are socially constructed and the data is no less valid because of the change in environment. In many ways, our goal as teacher is for our students to perform at a high level. The tape recorder did make some of the students nervous but it also stimulated performance.

3.10.2 External Validity

As this study is a detailed investigation of a small number of participants rather than an investigation of a larger sample, generalizing the findings of the study is questionable. The research design could easily be replicated with the intent of verifying conclusions made on patterns in the students' discourse. These findings are, at present, limited to this context and demand further investigation. As to the findings on social interaction, future research should not attempt to replicate the findings but rather should attempt to further explore the issues that the research raised and probe more into the grouping of students for productive interactions with further investigations of peer-to-peer scaffolding and the management of the task. In the next chapters, I will present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF THE LITERARY WORK

This chapter addresses the first research question which asks how social interaction, the management of the task, and group composition plays a role in the construction of the literary work. Each of the three groups will be analyzed separately with a description of the members in each group, the group's management of the task, the peer-to-peer scaffolding, the roles students adopted, and an analysis of the effects of these aspects on the literary work constructed by the group.

4.1 Group One

This section describes the members of this group, their management of the task, their scaffolding, the roles they adopted and concludes with an analysis of the effects on meaning.

4.1.1 The Members

Sam, a 16 year old Iranian student, is a strong and conscientious student. He began the year with limited English, but progressed at a quick rate throughout the school year. Sam had studied English in high school in Iran, beginning in the eighth grade, and had also taken private English classes for six months before coming to Canada. Sam arrived just after the school year had begun. According to Sam's parents, he had been studying in a school for academically gifted students in Iran. Trisha, a 17 year old Taiwanese student, is also a strong and conscientious student. Trisha was one of the top academic students in the school in her grade 10 year. She is also a trained peer-helper in the school. She had studied English for 3 years in Taiwan before coming to Canada and

this was her second year studying in the school. Eddie, a 17 year old Taiwanese student, is a hard-working, pleasant student. Eddie had studied English in school in Taiwan for 8 years. Pam, a 17 year old Vietnamese student, is an inconsistent student. She has studied English in Vietnam and Canada for a total of 5 years. This was her second year studying in the school.

4.1.2 Management of the Task

This group, on their own initiative, set up a structure for the management of the task which alternated who read the question and the order for response. With this structure, which was mentioned by all of the students in this group, they "passed the paper" and each "one of them read [a] question" and the "last one who was reading the question tried to answer it first" (Sam's interview). The transcripts of this group's discussion verifies that each student did read out an equal number of questions. The discussion of the first questions was structured with each student speaking once in response. As the discussion proceeded, students maintained, for the most part, the turn-taking structure but interchanges became a little more varied.

Students generally felt this structure was good because it controlled against the most influential group member always answering first and over-powering the other students in the group. Pam stated in her interview that this was a temptation because Trisha, the most influential member, "always give a good opinion and the other ones like to copy her just saying again but change a little bit." Sam also said that "every time that Trisha speak first say everything then we didn't have anything to say." Trisha also felt that their structure was good "because that way everyone get a chance and they don't say it's not my turn because it's your turn so you have to say something." This structure

controlled both for the stronger members dominating the group and more reticent members not participating.

4.1.3 Peer-to-peer scaffolding

One of the benefits of students working together cooperatively is that they share information and perspectives, collectively constructing understandings and sharing and debating interpretations. This social process has been touted by Vygotsky (1978) as essential to learning. Through social interaction, particularly with more skilled partners, students construct knowledge and learn ways of thinking which are then internalized. Furthermore, through these social interactions students' individual understandings are both broadened and challenged. Scaffolding "characterizes the social interaction among students and teachers that precedes internalization of the knowledge, skills and dispositions deemed valuable and useful for learners" (Hogan & Pressley, 1997, p. 9). Essential to scaffolding is that the knowledge and skills which are being nurtured by more skilled partners are not beyond the learner's sophistication. Vygotsky (1978) called this range the zone of proximal development and this range is the area between what a student can accomplish independently and what he or she can accomplish with support.

One of the difficult questions with literary discussion is pinpointing what exactly are the knowledge and skills which need to be nurtured. The 'discipline' of English literature has experienced numerous approaches to the analysis of text which range from formalist text-based approaches to more subjective reader-based approaches. The questions the students discussed, which will be analyzed in detail in the next chapter, were intended to facilitate a reader-based discussion of students' understandings and opinions. These questions were intended to shape and support their discussion, functioning as an

initial scaffold. Previous to these discussions students had engaged in small group literary discussions during which I scaffolded their discussions. The present discussions had no teacher support except the questions provided and the initial training of the groups in discussion skills.

This section will discuss the peer-to-peer scaffolding which allowed the students to collectively construct interpretations and opinions of the text and to interrogate their understandings. The kinds of scaffolding, for the purpose of this discussion, will be called layering, disagreeing, arguing, negotiating, and clarifying. This is a macro-level rather than micro-level analysis of scaffolding which uses the metaphor of layering to describe the shape of the students' discussion and then looks at disagreement, argument, negotiation, and clarification within this layering. Layering is a collective and supportive process that takes a variety of forms in which students collectively construct the literary sign by exploring opinions, responses, feelings, and personal experience. Disagreement happens when a student disagrees with something but there is no counter-argument or discussion of the disagreement. Argument occurs when there is counter-argument and debate. Negotiation is when disagreement is not direct but there is some hesitation in supporting what is being put forward. Clarification is when students resolve a misunderstanding. All of these processes, to different degrees were present in the students' discussion.

As stated, layering is a collective process during which students co-construct meaning as they layer textual details, inferred information, opinions, feelings, and personal experience. There are numerous examples of students layering textual details as they co-constructed the literary sign. During the discussion of the first question, each student

added at least one new detail from the text to support their conclusion that Alfred's family is poor. The textual details or 'facts' mentioned by the students are highlighted in the following short excerpt:

Sam: What do you think is the financial situation of Alfred's family? Are they rich or poor? (3) um I think they are um like they are not rich and not poor so so but uh - I think - a little bit poor because **Alfred was working** and **his father is a printer** and that's it.

Eddie: I think um what his name Alfred he's very poor **because his father is a printer** his job is a printer and - **his mother - is a housekeeper so she didn't make money** and and - **Alfred work in the drugstore and that's and that's why he stole some thing** from the drugstore if if his family very (x).he won't he won't do that

The other students in the group mentioned similar details. This collective layering results in a more detailed response to the question than a student would create individually.

Another interpretive process was layering inferred details. This kind of layering is more imaginative because students have to fill in what is not stated in the text. Again, this was a collaborative process. In the following example, students infer why the character is stealing. The inferred understandings are highlighted:

Eddie: Why do you think Alfred steals? (14) **Because he want to earn some money** and - like um (3)

Pam: Or because he's (xx)

Eddie: **Yeah for his allowance** but

Sam: **Because he need money and - or maybe he like to steal things**.

(portion of transcript omitted)

Trisha: =Maybe he thinks - **maybe he thinks that he works at that store and nobody will knows** - so he steal things.

(portion of transcript omitted)

Sam: But he steal very cheap things

Eddie: Easy to sell

Trisha: **Because maybe he doesn't get many - like much money and sometimes when he needs things he just steal them** so that his money can

Pam: **Can export for another thing**

Students supportively discuss a number of possibilities for the character's behaviour including the suggestions that the character wants money, likes stealing, and thinks he can get away with it. This layering models alternate ways of thinking about the text and opens students up to a number of possibilities for understanding.

Students also layered opinions of characters' situations. Furthermore, as the students shared their opinions they also layered details from the text that supported their opinions. With a number of questions that asked students' opinions and an explanation for their opinions, they re-constructed the text as they constructed their opinions. The following is one example:

Trisha:	Number six what do you think Alfred's mother's life is like? Explain your answer.
Pam:	Her mother life is very boring
Trisha:	((laughs))
Pam:	She has to stay at home and look after look after
Eddie:	His son her son
(portion of transcript omitted)	
Pam:	[Alfred] get into trouble
Trisha:	Yeah get her to into trouble - and her sister is not very nice either want to get married so in her young age

Sometimes students had strong opinions about a character's behaviour, particularly when they had personal experience with the situation. This happened particularly around the issue of parental punishment. The following example appeared during this group's discussion of whether or not Alfred will change his behaviour in the future.

Pam:	I have question if uh if Alfred's mother going to mad at him punish him and yell at him I think next time he will do it again
Eddie:	Yeah
Pam:	Because it's it's as my feeling - if my parents punish me uh yell at me
Eddie:	I will do it again
Pam:	Hit me I will do it again
Trisha:	((laughs))
Pam:	If they say oh come on don't do that - and something

Eddie: I will excuse you this time but don't do it again or say oh you are so good and I will be a good child
Pam: [Maybe don't use any punishment
Trisha: [Yeah when you feel someone is really kind to you then you you don't want to hurt them
Pam: Yeah because if I tied to you right - [you don't want to hurt my feelings right of course
Trisha: [Yeah if I feel you might be hurt I don't want to do it yeah ((laughter))
Pam: You don't mind my feelings right

The layering of experience provided some of those most personal discussion students had about the story.

As shown from the above examples, the co-construction of one's opinions and understanding of the literary sign is a social process and the primary scaffolding that occurs is this layering of textual details, inferred information, opinions, and personal experience. The literary sign constructed is a sum of the parts and is owned collectively rather than individually.

However, within this highly supportive process of layering also exists conflict in a number of degrees including negotiation, disagreement, argument, and clarification. Disagreement is when someone disagrees with a statement but there is no counter-argument or debate. Generally debate follows a disagreement, but sometimes a disagreement is stated and then the discussion continues with no debate. With this group disagreement came primarily from Pam. Trisha sometimes disagreed but she was more subtle in her disagreement, adding it as an opinion or subtly negotiating with her group members. This negotiation will be discussed later. Pam initially disagrees that Alfred is stealing because he is poor and Eddie agrees:

Pam: (5) Uh I don't think so because his father is a printer and he he can he can he can afford to buy like what he stole - this uh compact and two lipstick that is - that's are too cheap so I think - I think Alfred family can afford that

- maybe he's - I don't know - he like to he like to steal things from the store.

Trisha: ((laughs))

Eddie: And I think Alfred had a bad personality because whether his father is a printer or something and maybe they're his family's not very rich but he want steal things and he's bad so if his family is very rich then I think he will still steal something because it's his habit.

At this point in their discussion, this group is locked quite rigidly into their turn-taking structure so no argument occurs. However, this idea which Pam suggests is picked up later by Sam and the other students, indicating that her disagreement is productive in exploring multiple understandings of this story.

Arguing is when students openly debate understandings. With this group, argument was again initiated by Pam and also by Sam. As stated, Pam disagreed with Trisha during their discussion of the second question. Pam also disagreed with the group's assertion that Mrs. Higgins had the most power in the story. She thought that Mr. Carr had the most power because he had the power to call the police. Her disagreement and the ensuing argument involve the students in a discussion of the meaning of power and the events of the story:

Pam: I think it's the guy who own the store has power.

Eddie: No

Trisha: You think so,

Pam: Cause he I don't understand

Eddie: He has power to call cops=

Pam: =To call a cop and arrest him

Eddie: And arrest Alfred but his mother can solve this problem - this is big problem but his mother can just explain what how bad for Alfred and so the can make the shopkeeper feel very sorry about his mother and let him to let her take his son take her son home right so I think his mother has more power.

Without this disagreement and debate, students would not have interrogated their understandings of power and how it is exercised in the story.

Sam's resistance to the group's understanding that the protagonist will change his behaviour also generated argument. Initially, most of the group agrees that Alfred will change because he has seen the devastating effect of his behaviour on his mother. Sam, however, disagrees:

Sam:	(3)I think it doesn't change my opinion about Alfred at the end of the story I think I don't think he will change his way - he used to - steal the thing and he will continue with that.
Trisha:	But before he didn't see his mother's mind
Pam:	Yeah this is his uh first time
Sam:	I don't think it will change him because he always see his mother angry when he did a bad thing his mother is become angry
Trisha:	But this time his mother was calm and then he was like it's a secret - so her mother his mother didn't let him know

Sam admitted in his interview that it was more his need to assert that his response was correct than his belief in his response that motivated him to resist the group; the social need to assert his opinion over hers took precedence over meaning. Trisha, in her interview, remembered the disagreement and says that although it didn't change her mind, it made her think:

Trisha:	Yah, yah, and Alfred and someone says Alfred is never going to learn but at first I thought cause he saw his mother is sad and very frightened and he might going to be changed but they said if someone is just like that when they are small and they grow up they probably is not going to change and I think that might be possible
Teacher:	Okay, so they made you think about that
Trisha:	Yah

Argument was a productive way for students to explore understandings and re-consider textual details.

Negotiation occurs when there is not direct disagreement but someone hesitates in fully supporting what someone is saying and engages a student or students in a re-evaluation of the text. This group's discussion of the fifth question is a negotiation of

understanding between Trisha and Pam. Initially, Pam puts forward an interpretation which Trisha disagrees with; however, she does not directly state that disagreement but rather negotiates Pam's understanding:

Sam: Number five what is your opinion of Mr. Carr's behaviour?
Pam: Mr. what,
Eddie: Carr's the boss.
Pam: Oh he uh he he he was he was very angry when he when he was very angry right,
Trisha: Mmm not very
(portion of transcript omitted)
Trisha: I think Mr. Carr is kind and he was speaking like nicely to Alfred and that he didn't like yell at him very loud and or angry like
Pam: He didn't call the cop
Trisha: No he didn't
Pam: Just call him like calm and
Trisha: Like he speak softly and say
Pam: Just [leave what you got on the table
Eddie: [Just a moment
Pam: And you can leave
Trisha: Yeah yeah
Pam: Then he's kind

In the above interaction, Trisha negotiates Pam's understanding, despite the plausibility of Pam's understanding. Mr. Carr is brusque with Alfred at the beginning of the story. However, rather than directly disagreeing, she suggests that perhaps Pam should reconsider her understanding and then they collectively reconsider the details from the text. Pam does not resist this.

Finally, clarification occurs when there is a misunderstanding of something or an incorrect statement. Generally, the students had a strong grasp of the details of the text and did not spend much time clarifying. Clarification is, of course, important for students' understanding. However, clarification tended to short-circuit more in-depth conversations. With this group, the only time clarification was needed was when Eddie

thought that Mrs. Higgins was in the garden instead of the kitchen. This inaccuracy occured during an argument over whether Alfred will change his behaviour in the future and took attention away from this argument:

Eddie: No she doesn't want let him to see he just feel very bad see in the garden and just offer just offer finish his shower and walk walk to the garden and see that
Trisha: Not garden it's kitchen.
Eddie: Kitchen garden,
Trisha: Kitchen she is drinking her tea
Eddie: In a I think garden no,
(portion of transcript omitted)
Eddie: I don't know why I think the garden

This clarification ends the disagreement of the students.

Generally the scaffolding that occured with the group was the layering of textual details, implied details, understandings, opinions, and personal experience. The students were familiar with the text so clarification was minimal. Healthy conflict forced the students to reconsider their understandings. The knowledge which was scaffolded was multiple ways of understanding the text. The skills and dispositions which were modeled were careful consideration of textual details and openness to alternative opinions.

4.1.4 Group Composition

With peer-to-peer scaffolding, the group interaction is essential to successful learning experiences. Group composition needs to be such that the social and intellectual differences between the students are not too great to make the group dysfunctional. If students are too far apart intellectually, the zone of proximal development is lost. If there are not any socially outgoing students in the group, students will sometimes struggle to communicate.

Overall, this group had a lively interaction. Each of the students adopted a distinct role in the group which created an energetic dynamic. The most powerful member of the group was Trisha. Sam, Eddie, and Pam all identified her as the most influential member because she responded thoughtfully to the questions, had good English skills, and was easy to understand. Sam liked that "everything she said it was from his brain" and that "she think [and] every time after the question she became silence." Pam liked that her answers were "clear and easy to understand" and Eddie liked that she "speak very good English" and "has a lot of opinions." However, Trisha did not dominate the group's discussion. This was partly due to the structure for response that the group set up which was previously explained. Furthermore, Trisha is a trained peer-helper who is skilled at working with people. She said she likes both speaking and listening in a group and she also described her participation in her questionnaire as the following:

> I read the questions sometimes. Every time when the question is read, I would say my opinion. Sometimes I asked other's feeling. Sometimes I couldn't get someone's idea, so I asked them again.

Trisha would be considered an "expert" member in Vygotsky's framework. This was evident in the group's discussion, particularly in her negotiating skills.

Pam, the other girl in the group, spoke the least of the students in this group. Trisha commented that her participation was minimal:

Trisha: (silence) I think everyone in my group has equal we have equal chance to say things but sometimes Pam doesn't say much detail but the other three of us say lots of things so I think we have equal impact.

Sam did not like working with Pam because he thought she "plays jokes on the others . . . and say things that was funny" and he didn't like that. Sam also felt, like Trisha, that Pam didn't participate enough:

Sam: Yes but ah this is . . . Pam like overtime it was his turn he said like you say first
Teacher: Oh, I see so so when she read the question or when it was her turn to answer first she didn't answer first she just let someone else answer
Sam: Yes

However, Pam played the role of resistor in discussions. She did this twice, first resisting the motivation for stealing the group was constructing at the time and also resisting the student's opinion of which character was the most powerful. Her resistance was not, however, superficial and just to stir things up, which Sam seems to by suggesting. Often she agreed. She only resisted when her understanding was in conflict with the rest of the group. Pam, in her interview, said she likes both listening to other students and telling others her opinion. Her resistance, although it does annoy Sam, is productive in that it challenges the others' thinking. It is a healthy counter to the 'power' in the group and probably would not surface in a whole class discussion.

Sam, like Pam, also resisted at times the dominant discourse of the group. Sam, a strong student in his first language, directly stated that he prefers speaking to listening because "like sometimes the other opinion is opposite of me and then I want to prove that my opinion is right." Sam's speaking ability is developing and Pam did mention that she had difficulty understanding Sam, but neither Eddie nor Trisha mentioned a problem. Sam's need to assert his correctness was evident at the end of the discussion when he disagreed with the rest of the group about a character's possibility for change. He was

strong in his resistance to the group's understanding and blocked Eddie's attempt to move to the next question. The group then debated Sam's response. Both Trisha and Sam remembered this exchange in their interviews. Sam said he eventually agreed with Trisha, although he did not explicitly state agreement. Sam when discussing his behaviour said that "maybe . . . I think Trisha is right but like kind of like trying to saying that maybe my opinion is better." Sam's resistance to the dominant discourse is healthy despite the fact that he doesn't strongly believe that he is right. It is healthy in that it shows students that there can be other responses and not to swallow whole the first response on which the students collaborate.

Eddie was a solid and conscientious member of the group who took the task seriously and, consequently, found the situation stressful. Eddie took on the role of conciliator, sometimes resolving arguments and moving the group to the next question. However, he was critical of his performance. This was evident in his questionnaire response when he wrote "I think I was fine, not very good, just so-so, because I was very tense and couldn't speak very well." He also stated in his interview that he was the worst member of his group. The other group members spoke highly of Eddie. Sam said he would be happy to be with him in a group again and Trisha enjoyed listening to Eddie the most "because sometimes other people doesn't they don't explain their opinions they just kind of don't want to say things but I think every time when Eddie had to say something he will say something and explain in details." However, the seriousness of the task seemed to overwhelm Eddie. In his interview he said that while in the group he enjoyed listening most because speaking was too stressful, but that he does like speaking in more

relaxed situations. However, his participation was active, despite his reservations about his performance.

Overall, the group dynamic created by these four students was positive. They were collaborative, supported each other, challenged each other, and seemed to genuinely enjoy working together.

4.1.5 Effects on Meaning

Overall, this group's discussion was productive for the students involved. Transcripts show a high level of engagement and an in depth exploration of the text under study. There are a number of possible explanations for the positive results this group experienced, including the way in which they managed the task, and the range of social and intellectual skills in the group.

This group's management of the task worked well for this group. This pattern was independently constructed by the students and, therefore, all the students in the group supported and adhered to the structure. Although Eddie expressed discomfort speaking, all students were able to perform under the conditions which were set up. This structure also seemed to control for students quickly advancing to the next question without each student contributing his or her perspective. This structure also forced students to explore each question in detail as each student had to add something to the understanding students were constructing and to try not to be too repetitive. This supported the layering of understandings and also allowed for students to consider alternate understandings.

The range of social skills in the group also resulted in a productive interaction. Trisha, although all the other students in the group were slightly awed or intimidated by her English skills and intellectual skills, did not dominate the group's discussion, asked

other students questions, and was a good listener. Pam and Sam's resistance was productive in stimulating discussion and their intellectual and English skills seemed within an appropriate range of Trisha's. Eddie, who often attempted to resolve conflict, successfully kept the peace. One important point to notice is that the roles that students in the groups adopted evolved in context. Trisha emerged as the most influential in the group because in this context her English skills are strong and her responses are thoughtful. Pam, with less serious groupmates, may behave even less seriously than she did with this group. With this group, her resistance was a good antidote. Eddie, in another context, might be more relaxed. Sam seemed to be struggling a bit with taking a subordinate role because his English is developing, but his need to assert himself was productive for the group. This illustrates that students need to be put with students who will complement them and encourage them to participate in a positive and productive way in the learning environment.

The collective text that these students constructed was rich in complex understandings of the literal and inferred meanings of the text, much richer than what the students would have constructed individually. These students also formed opinions on the text and made personal associations with the text. This shows that meaning is social as no one student owns the understanding constructed by the group. All the students in this group, with the exception of Pam who completed her questionnaire quickly and didn't respond to all the questions, strongly agreed that group discussions are useful before writing about a short story. Sam, who responded with an emphatic yes to the usefulness of the process, wrote the following in his questionnaire:

> At first I thought it would not be useful but after the first group discussion I realized that it is very very good for us to understand stories. The other member of group help us to fix our opinion and help us to understand it better.

The social nature of literary understanding is often ignored as the common stereotype of reading is the individual, sitting alone in a chair, reading. The above exemplifies that meanings can be arrived at both individually and socially but that deep, felt meaning is negotiated socially and that collective exploration of meaning allows for in depth exploration of understanding and also an appreciation of difference in understanding.

4.2 Group Two

This section describes the members of the second group, their pattern of interaction, their scaffolding, the roles they adopted and concludes with an analysis of the effects on meaning.

4.2.1 The Members

Jason, a 16 year old Taiwanese student, is a highly motivated student who says he was a top student in Taiwan. He began the year with limited English, but progressed well throughout the year. His writing and reading skills are stronger than his oral skills. He had studied English in Taiwan for 4 years before arriving in Canada in September, 1997. Susan, 17, is a quiet Japanese student. She had studied English in Japan for 5 years before coming to Canada. This was her second year in the school. Sheila, a 17 year old Iranian student, is a conscientious student and quick worker. She was new to the school in September and had studied English in Iran since the second grade. June is a 16 year old Taiwanese student. She had studied English in Taiwan for 4 years and this was her second year in the school. She is an inconsistent student.

4.2.2 Management of the Task

This group did not share the questions like the other group. Rather, Sheila read each question out loud. This group also did not regulate who spoke first. Therefore, because of a number of reasons which will be discussed in detail in the next section, Sheila and June did almost all of the talking.

This group was the least successful of the three groups in the full participation of all students. Sheila and June participated the most, while Jason participated a little and Susan participated almost not at all. Consequently, only Sheila rated the group's discussion good in her questionnaire, while June and Jason rated it satisfactory and Susan rated it poor. Sheila's justification for her rating was the following:

> There are four people in our group. Me and June are talking and we discuss things and the problems but Jason and Susan, actually Susan don't talk very much. We have to tell them to speak. And it's hard to understand what they say. Because they can't have the accent of American's or Canadian's English.

June, Jason and Susan all mentioned in their rating that all members did not express their opinions and also that the group moved too quickly. Jason's response was the most telling:

> Two of my partner are good at speaking, so they talk all the time. Sometimes when I'm speaking, they usually interrupt me. They are not on purpose, but it makes me embarrass. So the other partner and I usually close our mouths. They make the speed too fast.

4.2.3 Peer-to-peer scaffolding

The scaffolding discussed in detail in the analysis of the first group's scaffolding was also evident with the second group, although to a much lesser extent. This was

mostly due to the imbalance in the group which will be discussed later. This group did layer textual details, inferred understandings, opinions, feelings and personal experience.

However, what this group did not engage in was argument. Unlike the first group which engaged in some substantial debate, many of the alternate understandings which were suggested were quickly dismissed by the more powerful members of the group. Eventually, this resulted in the silencing of the two quieter members of the group. The first direct disagreement occured when Jason mentioned that thieves are often rich, questioning the interpretation that Alfred steals because he is poor. This suggestion is quickly dismissed by June who says that "if they are rich they will always have thing - they will always have money to spend - they don't need to steal things." June and Sheila continue to explore their disagreement with Jason, with Sheila saying that sometimes the children of the rich do steal because they want money for bad things. However, June says this does not apply to this story because Alfred is not rich.

The next disagreement occured when Jason suggested that Alfred was stealing lipsticks and a compact for his girlfriend. Sheila directly disagrees with this saying that "no he just sell them to the to to his friends in school - the compact and the yeah the lipsticks because they're just for girls - he can sell them to girls (sic)." The final disagreement occured when the group was discussing Mrs. Higgins's treatment of her son after the incident in the drugstore. On the way home, Mrs. Higgins asks Alfred to be quiet and doesn't speak to him. Jason suggests that this is "normal" but Sheila asserts that this is not normal: "Normal, I don't know - but she doesn't advise him in the drugstore she told that she would advise him little bit but she didn't advise him she just told her told him to shut up and don't talk." At this point Jason drops out of the group's discussion until he

is asked directly by June what he thinks about the second to last question. Unlike, the first group, discussion was not stimulated by disagreement in this group.

Generally, the scaffolding that occured with the second group was similar to the first group in that they did layer textual details, implied details, understandings, opinions, and personal experience. However, unlike the first group, disagreement resulted in the silencing of some group members rather than productive debate.

4.2.4 Group Composition

Group two is an example of an unsuccessful group interaction. As stated previously, group interaction is essential to successful learning experiences. Much attention needs to be paid to grouping to maximize student learning. Unfortunately, with group two, both the social differences and language differences between the students were too great to make the group functional. As a result, the zone of proximal development was lost.

Sheila was identified by June, Jason, and Susan as the most powerful in the group. She was identified as most influential by Jason because she "has much confidence" and "led" their group each time. June said she was influential because she speaks English very well, and Susan said she liked to lead the group and liked to tell the others her ideas. However, although Sheila was the "expert" member, she was too dominant to encourage the active participation of the other group members. A number of explanations could be given for this. First of all, she did struggle with the reticence of Jason and Susan. There were often long pauses after she read out the questions. There are a number of possible explanations for these pauses. The students did comment that it was difficult to understand the questions when they were read to them and that they needed to read the

questions themselves in order to understand them. Sheila, by being in control of the questions, was at an advantage and would be able to more quickly respond, and this problem could also have been compounded by the fact that Jason and Susan are quiet. Sheila also is very articulate and a quick thinker who does not hold back. Often it is difficult for students to slow down both a fast and dominant member. Sheila and June also were quick to disagree with Jason and not good at entertaining his ideas, therefore, discouraging his participation.

Susan, the quietest member of the group, did say in her interview that she is shy and needs a lot of time to feel comfortable with people she does not know. She said she enjoys listening more than speaking and that she sometimes purposely kept silent because she thinks she does not have many ideas and she is too shy to share her ideas. Her response that the structure they set up was familiar because it was like students with a teacher also indicates that a hierarchical structure is familiar to her. However, her rating of the group's discussion was the lowest, indicating perhaps that she would have liked to participate more. Susan's inactive role is of concern because she was not able to work on developing her understanding and voice.

Jason, also a quiet group member, was more forthright in asserting that he felt excluded in the discussion:

Teacher:	Uh huh, okay, um, when you're in a group do you enjoy listening or speaking more?
Jason:	I hope to ah speak more but I don't have the chance because my English is not as good as them so they speak almost ah over all time
Teacher:	Right, they spoke a lot
Jason:	Yah
Teacher:	Yes, and you didn't say much
Jason:	Yah
Teacher:	Yes, and you think that's because your English is not as good as theirs

Jason: Ya, because I have some I think I have some very good idea but when I talk maybe they can't realize me
Teacher: Uh huh
Jason: so, they may skip me
Teacher: Uh huh, did you feel they were sort of ignoring you?
Jason: A little
Teacher: How did that make you feel?
Jason: Feel like a silly guy

Jason did say that he doesn't like to "show out," probably meaning he doesn't like to show off, but did say that he would have liked to have been noticed more. He also said that he didn't speak because he felt his English wasn't good enough. Unfortunately, Jason was eager to participate but felt too self-conscious in this group.

June, the final member of this group, was also a strong member. She, however, recognized that it was a problem that Susan and Jason were not participating. Sheila, identified June as the group member she found most influential and as the person to whom she most enjoyed listening. June also said she both enjoys speaking and listening in a group:

June: Um, when I listen to other people's opinion sometimes it's sometimes their opinion I've never think about so I feel wow it's new for me I've never think about that and so I quite like to listen to other people's opinion and when I say mine um I would like some other people to say they agree with me or they refuse what I said

June likes to hear other opinions as well as her own and identified this being a problem in their discussion. Her confidence to share her ideas and discuss the story was useful with this group, although sometimes her objections did silence Jason. June also mentioned that they should have shared the questions because it is easier for the student reading the questions to understand the question than those listening. This was a theme that came up in other groups as well.

4.2.5 Effects on Meaning

Overall, this group's discussion was the least productive of the three groups'. Transcripts show minimal involvement of Jason and Susan, with Sheila and June dominating the discussion. The students' discussions of the various questions are limited in scope because only two members fully participated. There are a number of possible explanations for these less than positive results, including the way the group managed the task and the range of social and language skills in the group.

This group's management of the task was not productive. Sheila's reading of all the questions was identified as a problem. Although students were encouraged to ensure the participation of all students, this group did not create a structure for the interaction, so Jason and Susan were able to drop out of the discussion. Jason said that the leader should rotate because if "Sheila talk so much other member in the group can't grow up." Jason also said that students lack the confidence to share their opinions if the strong member of the group always speaks first:

Jason: Because ah if someone always said always represent the ideas for us we will feel ah feel some failure, she is so good and I am so bad, maybe I should be quiet

However, Susan said she felt that Sheila's leading was good because it was a familiar situation for her because it was like Sheila was the teacher and the rest of the group were the students:

Teacher: Okay, um, I noticed in your group that one person read the questions and then answered the questions, do you think that influenced the discussion?
Susan: No, it's okay, like we can hear the question then answer it so like the group is like teacher and student or something like the class
Teacher: Okay
Susan: So like nothing change in class

Teacher: Okay, so you think having one student read the questions is like having that student be the teacher
Susan: Yah
Teacher: Uh huh
Susan: It's good

This is obviously reflective of the hierarchical system that Susan has experienced in Japan, but helps to explain her reticence in discussion. In addition, also commenting on the positive aspects of Sheila, both Susan and June pointed out that having a student like Sheila in a group is sometimes a blessing because she is useful when no one is answering the question because she will answer it. Furthermore, for June, who is a more confident student than Jason or Susan, Sheila's responses motivate her to participate:

Jason: Well, because, um like, when I read the question and then she when she say her opinion and then I will feel our opinion sometimes is similar and I also want to say mine it makes me feel more interested in the question because sometime some people when some people say their opinion I will feel when it's very quiet you will feel how come nobody is saying the answer when somebody is talking I will feel I want to talk too

However, the negative side is that her responses are so thorough that other students just respond by saying I agree after she responds. Sheila, when questioned about the fact that she led the group each time, said that she felt they expected her to lead and she didn't see any problems with the fact that the same person spoke first as long as each member of the group participated. However, Jason, very much like Sam in the other group, wanted to assert his opinion, but felt he was unable to because he was over-powered by the other group members. Furthermore, he also did not speak highly of the understandings the group came to, feeling that the group only looked at "common" understandings which is perceptive of him in that this group, because two members were relatively silent, did not probe in depth into the understandings it was constructing:

Teacher: Um, did your did being in the group ever change the way you thought about a story?
Jason: Ah, I don't think so because their ideas is are common ideas
Teacher: So you had the same
Jason: Sometimes I got good ideas like we have a story about a guy steal the things in the store
Teacher: Uh huh
Jason: But they always think maybe he poor so he steal something but in my idea I think in this in modern time many thieves are rich people
Teacher: Right
Jason: They just want to steal for some funny so they they ah just think less about this ideas so I sometimes . . . like this but they that's not

Unfortunately, this group was too unbalanced, both socially and in language ability to be productive. Sheila and too some extent June were too quick in their pace and too assertive in their understandings to allow for a productive exploration of understandings.

With this group, the differences in social styles and English ability were too great for the members to work productively. Interestingly, Susan said that the most important thing for a group to work well is for the members to be friendly, while Jason said members need to be good listeners, and both Susan and June said members need to be assertive with their opinions. This shows that opinions are fluid and evolve in context and that it is really in this context that students would need the above conditions. Furthermore, this group, like the last, showed that social roles evolve in context and that individual differences are partially the result of the social context. Unfortunately, for this group, the differences in combination with the structure they used did not create healthy conflict, but rather constructed a hierarchy that frustrated both those who were powerful and those who felt they weren't. This, in turn, affected the collective text that these students constructed which had some depth but lacked the richness and complexity of the text constructed by the first group.

4.3 Group Three

This section describes the members of this group, their pattern of interaction, their scaffolding, the roles they adopted and concludes with an analysis of the effects on meaning.

4.3.1 The Members

Sharon, a 16 year old Iranian student, is a conscientious student. She had been in Canada for ten months and had studied English in Iran for two years in high school and one year in elementary school. She began the year with limited English but progressed quickly through the year. John, a 17 year old Taiwanese student, is a quiet student. He had studied English in Taiwan for 6 years and had been studying in Canada for eight months. Veronica, a 18 year old girl from China, is a hard-working student. She had studied English in China for 6 years and in Canada for one year. Jane, a 17 year old Korean student, is an enthusiastic and hard-working student. She has been in Canada for 14 months and, previous to this, she studied English in Korea for 5 years.

4.3.2 Management of the Task

Except for John, who kept quiet for much of the discussion, this group had a lively discussion. This group, like group one, shared the questions. However, unlike group one, this group did not devise a system for reading out the questions and responding. Rather, they decided in the moment who would read the next question and allowed anyone in the group to respond to the question. Their management of the questions was also different from the second group, which allowed one member to read out all the questions.

Students had mixed feelings about the way their group managed the task. Sharon felt that some people were difficult to understand and this necessitated the group passing

the question around so everyone could read it. She felt someone with a "loud" voice should read the questions. John, the more silent member, felt that reading the question helped the more quieter members feel better about responding to a question. Jane felt that the group "wasted time" because they didn't have a system and that it was too "complicated" to figure out each time who was reading the question. Veronica also mentioned that it was difficult to understand the questions when they were read out loud, so it was better if they shared the questions because then each person was able to see at least two questions. She also said that in general they had to read the questions to understand them. This problem was also mentioned by the second group. Veronica and Sharon also highlighted that the person who responds first has more influence than the person who responds last because the people following often feel like they are repeating the main ideas of the first speaker. Veronica also said that people should limit themselves when they speak. Veronica did mention in her questionnaire that Jane spoke too much, limiting other members' participation.

4.3.3 Peer-to-peer scaffolding

The social processes discussed in detail in the analysis of the previous two groups were also evident with the third group. This group's discussion was as productive as the first group's, but its overall shape was different. Its explorations were not motivated as much by conflict as by in-depth sharing of understandings.

Like the first and second group, this group did layer textual details, inferred information, opinions, feelings, and personal experience. They layered details from the text as they constructed Alfred's financial background. The layered inferred information as they constructed Mr. Carr's character. They discussed their personal opinions of the

effectiveness of harsh parental punishment. They layered their opinions of Alfred's character and they probed extensively into the greater context of the story.

Argument did occur and did cause group members to defend their interpretations. However, in the case of this group, one group member's interpretation seemed to violate the information in the text, which was not as much the case with the other groups where argument was over competing interpretations. In this instance, Sharon asserted that Alfred should go to University but that he is working and stealing to help his family. Jane and Veronica immediately dismiss this interpretation and quickly remind Sharon that Alfred doesn't have to go to University and that Alfred directly says he is stealing because he wants money for going around with his friends. After this explanation, Sharon accepts this understanding. This was the one example of argument with this group. There was no other argument and only one instance of clarification when Veronica didn't understand the meaning of one question which needed to be explained to her. Furthermore, this group was the most empathetic of the three groups. More so than the first and second group, this group often discussed the emotions of the characters and their own emotional reactions. When agreeing that Alfred's mother is the most powerful character in the book, Sharon commented that Mrs. Higgins made everyone in the drugstore "sad." Jane, in their discussion of Mrs. Higgins' life, says she feels "sorry for her." Both Jane and Sharon say that Mrs. Higgins' life has made her tired and angry. Sharon is "so glad" that Alfred will change his behaviour towards his mother.

4.3.4 Group Composition

With the exception of John, this group had a lively interaction. Unlike group one, which did experience resistance and conflict, overall this group was collegial and

cooperative. The only time there was direct conflict was when Jane and Veronica felt that Sharon's understanding violated the details in the text.

The most powerful member of the group was Jane. John, Veronica, and Sharon all identified her as the most influential member because she talked a lot, was a leader, and answered clearly and thoughtfully. Veronica, however, did express that she did interrupt and talk too much sometimes. John, the quietest member, liked listening to her. Jane stated in her interview that she likes speaking more than listening because other students' accents are difficult to understand. She also stated that her personality is very "active" and she needs to be in a group with students who like to listen to her. She said that if she is in a group with students who like to talk as much as she does, there are sometimes problems. Jane is a strong student and did model articulate and thoughtful responses for the other students. In this case, however she did not so much emerge as an "expert" in Vygotsky's framework but a "co-expert" because her peers, with the exception of John, were, if not equal, a close match in social gregariousness and intellectual and language ability.

Veronica, the second most dominant member, spoke quite a lot. In her questionnaire, she did mention that she sometimes felt that she couldn't express her ideas clearly. Veronica likes to participate, but her English is not quite as fluent as Jane's. Veronica said she did not have problems understanding other students and that she enjoys both listening and speaking. She likes hearing others' opinions but she also likes to have people listen to and agree with her ideas. She was not shy in asserting her opinions and was an active participant in the discussion.

Sharon, although she did participate quite a bit, did not participate as much as Jane and Veronica. Sharon said she likes speaking more than listening because she wants other people to know her feelings and opinions about the story. Sharon was quite happy with the group and felt that they talked "almost equally" and did "argue about different questions." Her opinions were respected by her peers.

John was the quietest member of the group. John stated in his interview that he doesn't "like to talk too much." He said he is "used" to listening. He also said he often feels "uncomfortable" when speaking and he feels he is not "good at explaining." John was the only student who said he was more comfortable in a passive role. He also said that he felt having Jane as a leader was good but that he often just said he agreed with what had been said rather than talking because he would have repeated her ideas. He also said he likes to be in a group with people who talk a lot because he doesn't. The dominance of the girls allowed John to keep quiet.

4.3.5 Effects on Meaning

With the exception of John, this group had a productive discussion. The discussion was pushed along by all three girls who enjoyed working together. The girls tended to interrupt each other so this was the hardest discussion to transcribe. There was a tendency by Jane to dominate the discussion but this did not inhibit Veronica or Sharon who, for the most part, participated. Only John was unable to participate in this group. Because John was fairly reticent in his interview, it was hard to probe deeply into his reticence.

This group's pattern of interaction was more varied than either group one or two. Their interaction did not have the structure and predictability of the first group but was

more equitable than the second group's. Unlike the first group which had a structure for sharing and responding to the questions and unlike the second group which allowed one member to control the questions, this group varied who read the questions and who responded first. Their unsystematic approach was criticized as awkward because after each question they had to newly decide who was going to read the next question.

With the exception of John, this group was well-matched socially and in terms of intellectual and language skills. Their interaction did have a decidedly "feminine" flavour in that, much more so than the previous two groups, the girls interrupted each other, often completed each other's thoughts, and discussed feelings. Although John was reticent in explaining why he didn't speak, he could very much have felt awkward and silenced in this gendered culture. The collective text constructed by this group was rich in both literal and implied understandings. The group also shared personal experience and opinions and responded empathetically to the characters' situations.

4.4 Collective Text: Conclusions

Each group constructed a text that was similar to the other group's text but was unique to the group. The difference between the text constructed by each group attests to the importance of functional groups committed to mastering the essentials of a text and exploring their understandings of that text. The collective text is the layering of textual details and individual's varying understandings, opinions, responses, and feelings. From this, students pull what fits into their own personal framework for the story. This sharing is essentially democratic and attests to the subjectivity of interpretation and is dependent upon a diligent community of readers committed to exploring collectively the making of meaning.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE INFLUENCE OF STANCES ON LITERARY DISCOURSE

This chapter will address the second research question which asked how questions from various stances affect the discourse. The three stances used, post-structuralist, response, and literary, will be analyzed separately. An exploration of the thinking patterns students engaged in while responding to the questions is offered as well.

5.1 What is a Stance?

A stance is like a theoretical perspective. Depending on your perspective, you will ask different kinds of questions about a text. If you take a literary stance to a text, you will ask students questions about imagery patterns, point of view, conflict, and theme. If you take a reading comprehension stance to a text, you will ask students to replicate the 'facts' of the text. If you take a reader-response stance to a text, you will ask students for their responses to the text.

The questions I gave the students to discuss were intended to cover a variety of different stances although only two questions were traditional literary questions. The dominant stances to the text are post-structuralist and response-based. The questions were written to probe into students' individual frameworks for understanding text and to probe into their responses or evaluations of the characters and their behaviour. Therefore, the questions asked students to construct the implied content of the text, the character's financial background, the character's motivations for stealing, power in the text, and the character's possibility for change. The questions also asked students to respond with opinions on a number of characters' behaviour and situations. The final two questions took a more literary stance to the text and asked students to construct why the author

chose the limited omniscient point of view and to generalize the purpose of the story. This chapter will look at how these questions from multiple stances shaped the discourse. The thinking processes the students engaged in while discussing the questions will also be discussed as additional insight. I will look first at the questions from post-structuralist stances, then the response based questions, and then the literary stances. This section will then use schema theory, theory from brain-based learning, and reading theory as the framework for understanding the discussions' form. The students' discourse did exhibit trends consistent with brain-based learning theory, these trends being the searching for patterns, exploring familiar understandings before more novel ones, while simultaneously processing parts and wholes (Caine & Caine, 1991). These processes are similar to ones described in schemata theory, namely testing hypotheses or interpretations, evaluating their fit, and testing their parameters (Rumelhart, 1980) and similar to processes described by Langer (1995) in her research of how people read.

5.1.1 Post-Structuralist Stances

The questions which took a post-structuralist stance to the text asked students to both attach meaning to the text and to fill in the inferred meanings of the text. Post-structuralism, like reader-response theory, sees the text as something created in time by each individual reader (Langer, 1992). With group discussion, this 'virtual text' is created collectively by the group. The purpose of post-structuralist questions is to make explicit students' ways of making meaning and to allow students to collectively explore their personal cognitive beliefs. The first three questions the groups discussed were designed to probe into students' concepts on socioeconomics and criminal behaviour. In hindsight the questions are repetitive, but, because I did not want to assume that students would make

certain connections, I posed separate questions on the financial background of the protagonist, how this financial background affected his life, and why he stole. An unanticipated effect of these somewhat repetitive question was that students probed deeper into their understandings and explored different ways to make sense of the character's behaviour. The fourth, sixth, and tenth questions, which were also written from a post-structuralist stance, probed into how students constructed power, how they constructed Mrs. Higgins' experience, and their beliefs around the possibility for people to change patterns in their behaviour.

In response to the first question, which asked students to construct the financial background of Alfred's family, these students agreed that Alfred's family was on the poorer side. Generally, the textual details which supported this assumption were that Alfred's father was a printer and worked at night, that Alfred was working at a low paying job and stole relatively incidental items for which he could get little money, and that Mrs. Higgins was not working and therefore not contributing income to the household. It is interesting to note that in North American culture a stay at home mother was traditionally the norm, rich or poor, and not the sign of poverty, whereas, for one of these students, a Chinese boy, a stay at home mother is a sign of poverty, demonstrating the influence of one's personal cognitive beliefs on the construction of meaning. This also illustrates that despite the agreement of the students on their interpretation of Alfred's background, this interpretation is by no means the 'right' one but particular to these students who come from wealthy backgrounds and are not familiar with the North American working class. The above illustrates that people have varying ways of understanding and making sense of the world and these differences influence how they construct the meaning of a text.

As the students explored the second and third questions, which asked the effect of his economic background on his life and why he stole, despite the seeming repetitiveness of the questions, students explored alternate ways of understanding Alfred's reason for stealing which they initially, in their discussion of the first question, attributed to his poverty. These questions allowed students to activate other schema or ways of understanding why people might steal. Alternate ways of explaining Alfred's stealing included the idea that he steals for fun, that he has a 'bad personality,' and that he steals to get money for going around with his friends. The second group probed more in depth into why he needs money, since he does have a job, and why he steals lipstick, compacts, and toothpaste -- relatively cheap items for which he will get little money. The first group also, in an effort to explain his behaviour, tried to construct the immediate past, stating that Alfred probably thinks he won't be caught because he has obviously stolen before this particular incident and has not been caught. The above illustrates that there are alternate ways of understanding a situation and that a text is both filled with indeterminacies which demand readers to 'fill in' what is missing and a plethora of details which must fit into the reader's overall understanding.

The fourth question asked students which character in the story was the most powerful. I was interested whether students would see Mr. Carr -- the boss -- as the most powerful because he has more 'status' or whether they would see Mrs. Higgins as powerful because she manages to get Alfred out of trouble. Students were given no direction in how to think about power. Overall, most students agreed that the mother was the most powerful because she expertly controlled the situation, convincing Mr. Carr not to involve the police. This is perhaps not surprising since the focus of the story is Alfred's

expectations for his mother's behaviour and then his surprise and delight as she appears to manage the situation confidently. Students noticed that her ability to control her emotions, appear strong, and garner sympathy from Mr. Carr made her powerful. Sharon said she made everyone feel sad; Susan said she went right to the heart; Trisha said that she was able to make the storekeeper feel sorry for her. Only Pam resisted this interpretation, stating that Mr. Carr had the power to "call a cop and arrest him." She sees Mr. Carr as holding power but not using it. The students discussion does bring up individual differences in the understanding of power and the question of whether power is something static that someone holds or is it something more fluid and dynamic.

The sixth question, which asked students to discuss what they thought the mother's life was like, elicited common responses. All groups evaluated her life negatively, labelling it poor, hard, not good, boring, and miserable. After this initial evaluation, groups then, using textual information, constructed the conditions of Mrs. Higgins' life, including the facts that her son has been getting into trouble, her daughter married young and against her wishes, and her husband works at night. After constructing the mother's life, students then considered how such a life might make the mother feel. As the major purpose of this story is to show the effects of "all the years of her life" on Mrs. Higgins, it is not surprising that students agreed on her difficult life.

The tenth question, which asked whether or not students thought Alfred would change his behaviour, was designed to probe into their beliefs about the ability of people to change their behaviour. Most of the students stated that Alfred will change his ways in the future because he finally sees the effect of his behaviour on his mother and because he was fired from his job. Only one student, Sam, was skeptical about Alfred's possibility for

change. In the discussion of the previous question, which anticipated this question, Sam said that "I don't think he will change his way - he used to - steal the thing and he will continue with that" and "I don't think it will change him because he always see his mother angry when he did a bad." Sam is resisting the common assumption that when one sees the pain they cause, they will change their behaviour.

Overall, questions written from a post-structuralist stance were successful in probing into how individual students constructed the more indeterminate parts of the text and were also successful into probing into students' personal ways of making meaning. Generally, individual differences did affect the discourse as different readers had varying ways of constructing meaning and filling in the implied portions of the text. The question on Alfred's mother did elicit fairly straightforward responses, possibly because her situation is described in detail in the text and is fairly familiar. An alternative question on her character would probably have been more successful.

One issue with post-structuralism is how wide is the range of possibility for meaning. Generally, a range of possibilities exists for understanding, depending upon each reader's cognitive beliefs, but not everything goes. One example of this was in the discussion of the second question. Sharon, a student in the third group, in response to the question which asked if Alfred's family's financial situation affected his life responded that Alfred should go to University but he wants to help his family so he works and steals because he wants to help them. Jane immediately responded that University is not a possibility and that he is not working to help his family. In order to resolve this conflict, Jane and Veronica brought up the fact that Alfred says he is stealing to get money for going around with the guys, not to help his family, which is never mentioned in the text.

Sharon accepts this understanding. This was an example of two phenomena. First of all, Sharon's interpretation for the text violated the collective pattern the group was constructing and Sharon's interpretation also did not incorporate all textual details into it. The group's strong reaction to Sharon's understanding illustrates that incorporating all textual details into one's interpretation is important when coming to an understanding of a text and that while a range of possibilities does exist for meaning, these possibilities need to be consistent with the information in the text.

The thinking processes engaged in by students are those predicted by both brain-based learning theory, schemata theorists, and literary theorists. Students first explored familiar understandings before more novel understandings (Caine & Caine, 1991). In this case, the idea that Alfred steals because he is poor is explored before other understandings, the idea that the mother is the more powerful is accepted over the idea that Mr. Carr is more powerful, and the idea that Alfred will change is more common than being skeptical of this change. Students were continuously looking for consistency in the story as they fit the various textual details into the understanding they were constructing. Discussions always included processing the details of the text. When students asked why he stole such cheap items if he wanted money, they were trying to fit that detail into their overall interpretation of why he was stealing. Schemata theory describes these processes as testing hypotheses and evaluating their fit. Langer (1995), an educational researcher who has investigated how readers construct text worlds, has called the above stepping into envisionment, moving through an envisionment, and stepping out and rethinking what one knows.

5.1.2 Reader Response Stances

The questions which took a reader response stance to the text asked students their opinions or evaluations of characters and their behaviour. The purpose of these questions was to probe into students reactions to the characters and their behaviour rather than their understanding of this. There were four questions which took a reader response stance to the text. These questions asked for students' responses to Mr. Carr's behaviour, Alfred's mother's behaviour, and Alfred's behaviour and explanations of their responses. The discourse generated by these questions illustrated that before responding, students must first construct an understanding of what they are responding to. This discourse also illustrated that students respond in a variety of ways to the content of texts.

With two of the questions, the question that asked students their opinion of Mr. Carr's behaviour and the question that asked students their opinion of Alfred at the end of the story, students first constructed an understanding of the characters, rather than immediately responding to or evaluating the characters. "All the Years of Her Life" is told by an external narrator who only reveals Alfred's consciousness, not any other character's, and, because students had to fill in quite a lot of information, there were different ideas about Mr. Carr's character. Veronica, in the first group, says that "maybe outside he's cold but actually he has a - kind heart." John, also in this group, says that Mr. Carr just wants to "scare" Alfred. Sheila, in the second group, says that he was "nice to Alfred . . . because he can tell the cop and they took Alfred to jail but he didn't do that I think he's nice man." The students in the third group also agree he is kind, although Pam first says she thinks he is angry at first, similar to the first group. Her group, Trisha in particular, convinces her that this is not the case. This question, although not intended to be from a

post-structuralist stance, went in this direction because students had to construct an understanding of Mr. Carr's character before they responded to him. The students took the textual information and from that information constructed his motivation and past behaviour.

This also happened when groups were asked their opinion of Alfred's behaviour at the end of the story. The second group's discussion is brief and involves no opinion of the character but rather a discussion of how Alfred will change his behaviour in the future: "I think he was sorry to do these things because he saw his . . . mom's hands trembled and she can't control herself." Sharon in the first group responds by saying she's "so glad he changed." Trisha says the same thing in the third group. This response is, however, challenged by Sam who doesn't believe Alfred will change his behaviour and this in turn initiates a discussion of whether or not Alfred will change. Both these questions illustrated that sometimes more subjective aspects of a text must be constructed before students respond to them.

Students had the strongest personal response to Mrs. Higgins' treatment of Alfred after the incident in the drugstore and responded in a variety of ways. Mrs. Higgins doesn't speak to Alfred as they walk silently home. Sharon, in the first group felt that this was "the best way to teach him." The students then discuss why they think her behaviour is good, using a number of personal reasons including the reason that walking in silence might make Alfred think and that when their mothers yell they hate it. In the second group, Jason says he thinks her behaviour is "normal" while Sheila says that it is not normal because she should advise him. June just tries to make sense of the behaviour, saying that she thinks the mother is worn out. The third group takes a different

perspective on her behaviour; Sam says that she should "be more rough on her son because [he] steals things." Trisha, like June in the second group, tries to make sense of the behaviour, but Pam and Eddie agree with Sam. The discussion of this question shows that students have strong reactions to behaviour they have personal experience with, in this case parental punishment, and because personal experience is so varied, so are responses. Students frameworks for understanding this behaviour were rich and, therefore, so were their responses to it.

Students also had a strong response to Alfred's behaviour at the beginning of the story. The second group unintentionally skipped this question, so only group one and three's discussion will be explored. Generally, students were unimpressed with Alfred's behaviour and felt it was terrible. One student, Sam, was shocked that he could even speak when Mr. Carr accused him. Students' judgements had a strong moral tone and students did not spend time exploring possible explanations for why Alfred behaved as he did except for one student, Veronica, who said that "he doesn't know he's wrong." As with Mrs. Higgins' behaviour, students did not spend a lot of time constructing an understanding of Alfred's behaviour, but rather quickly made judgements of it.

The discourse produced by the response stances was more varied than the discourse produced by the post-structuralist stances. Unlike the post-structuralist stances which primarily engaged students in an analysis of the text, the response stances, which asked students to evaluate characters' behaviour, prompted discussions of personal experience, opinions, and the text. Depending on what the students were asked to give their opinion of, discourse varied. With behaviour they had extensive personal experience with, like the mother's treatment of her son, students gave strong opinions which they

backed up with personal experience; with behaviour that was not fully explained in the text, students worked to construct an understanding of the behaviour. With behaviour they perceived as wrong, judgement was quick. This indicates that there is a continuum of difficulty with response and that while some areas of text are recognizable and easy to connect to and offer opinions on other areas of a text require comprehension and analysis before response.

These discussions also took the shape predicted by both brain-based learning theory and schemata theorists. First of all, these discussions illustrated that first and foremost texts need to make sense to readers and this sense making must come first. With the more subjective elements of the text, students bypassed the actual question which asked for an opinion and worked to make sense of the text. However, these discussions also illustrated that students respond and judge very quickly "familiar" aspects of a text and do not work to construct or deconstruct their understandings of these aspects of a text. Students sometimes have similar and sometimes have very different ways of responding to the recognizable parts of a text.

5.1.3 Literary Stances

There were only two questions which took a literary stance to the text: the first asked why the students thought the author chose the limited omniscient point of view and the second asked students to infer a purpose for the story. These were the last questions students responded to because they were designed to be summative in nature.

Groups inferred different purposes for the use of a limited omniscient point of view, suggesting both literary purposes and moral purposes. June, in the second group, says the author wants to "leave us space to guess." Jane, in the first group, comments on

the effectiveness of the narrator first describing Alfred's expectations for his mother and then his surprise at her behaviour. All groups commented that the adolescent point of view was effective in communicating the moral purpose for the story which they felt was to show the effect of children's behaviour on their parents and to instruct children not to behave as Alfred did. Trisha identifies teenagers as the audience for the story and sees the text's role as being instructional for teenagers. Students' responses to the question on the purpose of the story were similar to their responses to the reason for the point of view.

Literary stances were the only questions that did not involve the discussion of personal experience and cognitive beliefs. Rather, these questions moved students to a more abstract discussion. In regards to the thinking processes of the students, students, in order to answer these questions, looked at the text as having both an aesthetic and social purpose. However, the social purpose of the text was discussed by the students in more depth than the aesthetic purpose. This is also consistent with brain-based learning theory which states that for something to be understood it both has to make sense and be meaningful. Social purposes for texts are more concrete than an abstract discussion of literary qualities of a text. Furthermore, these students are also developing their schemata about the construction of literary texts and the purpose of literary texts and are at a stage where they see texts as having primarily didactic purposes.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter will synthesize the findings and discuss issues which emerge from the findings outlined in chapters four and five. Implications for my teaching will also be identified. I will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of the study and suggest future research areas.

6.1 How does social interaction, the management of the task, and group composition influence the co-construction of the literary work?

The present study first investigated the role of social interaction, the management of the task, and group composition in the co-construction of the literary work. The findings suggest that the social context is influential in the construction of the collective text and that the way in which students manage the task also influences the productiveness of students' discussions.

6.1.1 Peer-to-peer Scaffolding

The discussions of the students illustrated that students did model for each other the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for in depth literary analysis. The knowledge necessary for a successful discussion was an understanding of the details of the text and a certain knowledge of people and the world. These students seemed to have a mastery of the details of the text, probably because they did complete comprehension questions prior to the discussion. They also demonstrated a good understanding of the meaning of the situations in the text. The questions students responded to pre-supposed certain orientations to the text, directing students toward both analysis and response. As a result, the academic skills socialized by this activity were the ability to construct and infer

meaning and to respond to the text. Through the exchange of responses to the questions, the students constructed a text which was more complex than what they would have constructed individually. This "interplay of differences" (Miller, 1993), which was called layering in the analysis of the peer-to-peer scaffolding, allowed for the creation of a rich collective text.

Sometimes, the differences also stimulated conflict between students. In most of these cases, conflict promoted a search for understanding and this pushed students further into the details of the text as they explored their understanding. Generally, conflict was managed well and prompted an active and detailed search for information, supporting research on the productiveness of cognitive controversy (Johnson & Johnson, 1982; Straw, 1990). The dispositions necessary for successful small group discussion were the ability to tolerate alternate viewpoints, a willingness to participate, to take turns responding, and to listen to peers. There was considerable variation in these abilities across the groups, despite efforts made to train students in these abilities. However, in some of the groups, students did model these behaviours.

6.1.1.1 Implications for Teaching

The first implication for teaching is that knowledge of the details of the text is important for an in depth discussion. Specifically with questions from a post-structuralist stance, scaffolding involved a layering of textual details. Although, some argue against the use of literal comprehension questions, it was obvious from these discussions that a detailed knowledge of the text enhanced the discussions. When a student did not have a familiarity with the details of the text, the other students had to spend time clarifying that student's lack of knowledge, rather than discuss more complex questions. This indicates

that students need to rehearse the facts of the text before moving to a more complex discussion. This study by no means suggests that comprehension questions are the only way to achieve this, but rather suggests that students' knowledge of the text must be built before moving to more complex questions.

The students' successful discussions also indicated that students are more than capable of independently discussing complex questions and that a small group setting is suitable for this activity. Obviously, much more student talk was generated in the small group discussion than in the large group discussion. The small group setting also gave students a safe environment to explore understandings. Many of the questions that emerged in the small group setting would probably not have emerged in a large group setting because students are more self-conscious speaking in whole class discussions. Also the disagreement that was explored in the small groups probably would not have surfaced to such an extent in a large group discussion.

Furthermore, disagreement or conflict was found to be productive. When conflict arose, students often reconsidered the text as they worked for consensus. This allowed for students to explore alternate understandings of the text. This has implications for the grouping of students and indicates that grouping students together who may have differences in understanding has the potential of being productive. The groups that had members who "stirred" things up were more productive because the conflict these members introduced motivated the other members to clarify their positions.

6.1.2 Group Composition

The finding that group composition highly affects the discussion, and, therefore, the collective text which is constructed by the group has already been mentioned. Both

group one's and group three's discussions were more productive than group two's. In all three groups, one student emerged as the most powerful or influential. Their power came from their fluency in English and their thoughtful and detailed responses. Both Trisha and Jane's 'power' was productive while Sheila's got mixed reviews. Trisha was sensitive to the other students and never dominated the conversation. Rather, she encouraged other students to participate and encouraged debate. Jane was not as sensitive as Trisha to other students, but had a good match in Veronica and Sharon who comfortably asserted their opinions. Sheila was a good match for June, but seemed to over-power Jason and Susan, suggesting there is a fine line between being powerful and over-powering. Sheila was not sensitive to Jason and Susan who were quieter and struggled with the speed of her speech. Although she probably didn't do this intentionally, she did shut down conversation. The students' generally positive response to the influential group members indicates that articulate people are productive in a group. They are the necessary "expert" members.

However, the fact that Sheila did over-power Jason and Susan and that Jane had this potential also indicates that students who are strong also need to know when to assert their opinions without silencing others and when to be quiet and encourage others to speak. Unfortunately, this is not always possible with adolescents who are sometimes highly competitive. This study indicates that it is not so much the presence of a powerful member that is important in a group but that there is a balance of power. Otherwise, one person does end up dominating a group. Trisha's and Jane's power were both matched by other members of their groups while Sheila's power was only matched by June and not the other two members of her group. The gap between students' fluency in English and

intellectual skills also cannot be too great or the group does not function well. It is also important to note that the individual differences of students evolved in context. Fluency in English and the ability to express one's opinions had high currency in this context and directly influenced which students took a powerful role.

6.1.2.1 Implications for Teaching

There are a number of pedagogical implications which arise out of the findings on group composition. The study illustrates one highly successful interaction, one good interaction, and one poor interaction. The concern here is the disadvantaging of students in groups that are not functioning productively. How does a teacher support students who are in groups that are not functioning productively? At what point in the process should a teacher intervene if a group is not functioning well? I set up this unit to purposely exclude teacher intervention because I was interested in seeing how groups functioned and what the students constructed independent of my influence.

Students indicated in interviews that they would have been interested in hearing my interpretation of the story because they see me as an expert reader; however, they also indicated that they might privilege my opinion over their own because I am the teacher. This suggests that teachers should be very cautious with telling students their understanding of a text. One suggestion might be to let groups report out on their responses so other groups can hear what they discussed and add this scaffolding to the scaffolding that has already occured in the small groups. At this point, the teacher's role is to facilitate the large group discussion and help highlight the possibilities for understanding, modelling both an attention to the details of the text and the disposition of considering alternate viewpoints by showing students how texts can invite multiple

interpretations. However, with regards to intervening when a group is not functioning well, in the future I will try to ask for feedback from the groups and to support groups that are not functioning well by giving them more direct feedback on how I think they are doing.

Another solution to the problem of dysfunctional groups is to change groups more frequently. Generally, educational researchers and teachers suggest keeping groups together over a sufficient period of time so groups develop a familiarity and norms for interaction. However, in individual interviews, some students indicated that they would rather that groups changed more often because they quickly got accustomed to the various personalities and points of view of the students in their groups and they would have liked more variety. Interestingly, the students who wanted the groups to stay together for a long period of time were the quieter students who indicated that it took them a long time to feel comfortable with a new group of people. Changing groups frequently has a number of advantages. First of all, students practice interacting with new people. This is perhaps more important for the socially reticent. Students are not in unproductive groups for inordinate amounts of time which can put students at a disadvantage. Finally, students are exposed to the diversity of their peers and are learning the skills for considering alternate viewpoints. This might also give more opportunity for a healthy level of conflict as students become more confident in asserting their points of view and debating points of view.

I would also like to consider the following suggestions, keeping in mind that grouping students is difficult and there are no easy answers; until you see a group in action, you never can tell how certain combinations will work. Positive, socially outgoing

students should be spread out. These students are sometimes not your top critical thinkers, but rather are those students who have well-developed social skills and will work to make the group dynamic positive. Disruptive, negative students should be put with students who are good role models and not grouped together. Domineering students should be grouped with students who will challenge them and should not be put with quiet, reticent students. Quieter students should be grouped with students who are patient and who will encourage them to speak.

I would also like to suggest that the gap between students' language abilities should be such that students speak at appropriate speed for each other and understand each other. The reason I suggest this is that the groups that functioned productively did so because the students who were fairly outgoing and competent communicators in English were challenged by other students in the group who were also outgoing and competent communicators in English. Strong students need this stimulation. Weaker students were silenced in these groups. Perhaps in a group of students closer to their ability, these students would have participated more and then would be more equipped to participate and benefit from a whole class discussion, scaffolded by the instructor. This idea is supported by (Vygotsky, 1978) who asserts that the thinking skills modelled to students cannot be too far out of their range but must be in that optimal zone. These groups of quieter or weaker students would not be deprived of the quality of thinking modelled in the other groups of stronger students because this thinking would be modelled in the whole class discussion.

These students were put in groups of four which functioned quite well. First of all, this size allowed for an exchange of opinions, but this exchange did not become tedious

because the size was too large. Secondly, this size kept the time of the discussions to approximately fifteen to twenty minutes and this time is optimal for any activity.

6.1.3 Management of the Task

The management of the task did influence the students' discussions. Of the three groups, the first group had the most equitable interaction with all group members participating. The second group's interaction was the most unbalanced with only two members participating. The third group was better than the second, but one student was able to withdraw from participating. Students were not directed as to how to manage the questions and response structure, except that they were encouraged to share the questions in some way. The first group's management of the task which the group devised worked well for a number of reasons. This group took turns reading the questions and responding. First of all, because the students devised the system themselves they were all committed to maintaining it. Secondly, it did encourage the participation of all the students in the group. Initially, the first group's discussion seemed highly formalized and almost repetitive, but later it became more varied; the structure did help all students feel comfortable taking a role in the discussion. The second group's management of the task was the least productive. In this group, Sheila controlled the question sheet and read all of the questions out loud. This was identified as a problem by group members because it was difficult to understand the question when it was being read out loud and therefore difficult to respond. The third group shared the questions which was identified as positive because students gained confidence when reading the questions. However, the lack of structure was described as complicated because they had to keep deciding who was going to read the questions.

6.1.3.1 Implications for Teaching

The pedagogical implications for the findings on the management of the task are fairly straightforward. Giving the students one copy of the question, rather than creating interdependence, privileged one member of the group and subjugated the other three. This was a surprise for me as I expected this would force the students to work cooperatively. Interviews revealed that the student reading the question was at a definite advantage while those listening were at a disadvantage. Students stated that often students' accents were difficult to understand and their oral processing was weaker than their visual processing. Students also said that being in the position to respond first was also a great advantage. The first group's structure seemed the most productive although it was successful because the students in the group were able to maintain it. One way of dealing with the problem of students not understanding the questions when they are read out loud is to give each student a copy of the questions. There are a number of ways in which the second issue can be dealt with. Students can be told to negotiate a fair and equitable way of reading out the questions and responding or students may be given a way of managing the task, perhaps similar to the first group's.

6.2 How do questions which take different stances towards the text influence the discourse produced by groups?

One finding of the study is that questions from different stances produced different kinds of discourse. Generally, questions from a post-structuralist perspective were successful in highlighting differences in how students constructed the implied content of the text, including their understandings of the socioeconomics of the characters, human behaviour, and power in the text. These questions were analytical in that students had to

analyze a number of textual details to arrive at a conclusion. The finding that students will construct a text differently, depending on the personal experience and cognitive beliefs they bring to the text, supports a post-structuralist theory of reading and is also consistent with schemata theory and reader-response theory.

Questions from a response stance produced discourse that had quite a bit of variation. In the case of the question that asked students to respond to the mother's treatment of her son, the question prompted a rich exchange of personal opinion on the effectiveness of various methods of punishment. Sometimes response was bypassed as students constructed understandings of the story, and sometimes response was very quick and judgemental. With Mr. Carr, whose internal motivations are not stated, differences in response prompted students to an analysis of his character, while with Alfred's 'criminal' behaviour at the beginning of the story, students quickly inflicted a moral judgement on his behaviour without probing deeply into his motivations. This may have to do with the fact that Alfred's behaviour is familiar to the students, while Mr. Carr's behaviour needs more analysis for understanding. Overall, response stances in this study asked for evaluation of the character's behaviour. This cognitive activity is considered by Bloom (1956) to be the most complex of all thinking activities. However, this is dependent upon the difficulty of comprehension of the character's behaviour. Students' discussions indicated that when student's comprehension of a character's behaviour, for example Alfred's, is rapid, then evaluation can be straightforward. However, when students have not yet comprehended a character's behaviour, for example Mr. Carr's, then comprehension will first take the place of evaluation. This supports Bloom's assertion that evaluation comes after knowledge, comprehension, and analysis.

Questions from a literary stance demanded the most abstract thinking. Students were able to both consider the purpose for the point of view from an aesthetic perspective and from a social perspective, commenting on the fact that limited omniscient point of view gives the reader the 'opportunity to guess' and helps the reader to understand the message of the story. The purpose of the story was considered primarily from a social perspective. Students saw the purpose of the story as teaching adolescent readers to behave appropriately and not disgrace their parents.

6.2.1. Implications for Teaching

There are a number of pedagogical implications from the above findings. The first is that questions from a number of stances are productive. Students identified the questions as important in influencing the group discussion in their questionnaires. Reading is a complex cognitive activity and it involves a number of different cognitive operations. Questions given to students should cover a range of these activities (i.e. take a number of stances to the text) depending upon the purposes for reading the text in the classroom.

Questions which took a post-structuralist stance to the text were successful in probing into how students constructed the more indeterminate portions of the text. The key is to write questions which successfully explore the more subjective portions of the text. The question which probed into Alfred's motivation for stealing was successful because it is not fully explained in the text why he steals. The question on power was fairly successful although perhaps too straightforward. The next time I use these questions I will ask how is power exercised in the story and students' opinions of its use. The question on Mrs. Higgins's life was meant to probe into their responses to her situation but her situation was too straightforward to prompt any rich discussion.

However, despite the fact that some question were more successful than others, these kinds of questions offer much possibility.

Response questions were the most successful in encouraging a rich discussion of personal experience and opinions. However, while response to familiar aspects of a text is easy for students, students cannot respond to something which they don't fully comprehend. This indicates that response-based questions can be used for a number of different purposes, some simple and some more difficult. Often response is recommended as a way into a text, asking students to comment on whatever they wish. Teachers, myself included, however, are often not satisfied with the sophistication of these responses because students tend to respond to the recognizable aspects of the text and do not, initially, jump right into the more difficult aspects of the text. This study indicates that complexity of thought about a text evolves as students process the text in more and more depth. Therefore, there is a place for response both in the beginning and final stages of reading, with more simple response opening the discussion of a text and more complex response completing the discussion of a text. Another challenge with questions from a response stance is not to let response over-shadow an analysis of the text. With questions from a response stance, the danger is to let students respond to the text and to stop with that, therefore, validating student assumptions and prejudices without a critical analysis of them. The key is to be able to use a range of analytical and response type questions which allow students to both analyse and evaluate many aspects of the text.

Questions from a literary stance, because they often involve the synthesis of a number of concepts, are better discussed at the end of a discussion rather than the beginning, depending on the complexity. Students usually need time to make sense of the

text before they explore more abstract literary concepts. These questions are also the ones which involve the building of subject knowledge. The building of these knowledge frameworks is best done after the students have an in depth understanding of the meaning of the text. The danger in discussing concepts like theme and irony too soon is that students do not have a strong enough understanding of the story to come to a complex and accurate understanding of theme and irony in the story.

Furthermore, the reasons for questions should also be made explicit to students so they know why they are being asked the questions. Students need to understand that texts can be read for a number of different purposes and meanings will vary depending on purpose.

6.3 Additional Insights: Post-Structuralism

Overall, the findings did support a post-structuralist theory of reading. Individual differences did influence the discourse because individuals had different ways of constructing the indeterminate portions of the text and responding to the text. The most productive discussions involved an animated discussion of individual differences in understanding, opinion, and personal experience and these differences also caused students to re-examine the text in order to clarify their differences. These findings reinforce schemata theory and post-structuralist theory which both assert that meaning is constructed by the subject and that individual differences will cause a range of understandings.

6.3.1 Implications for Teaching

The obvious implication of the above is that groups should be composed of students with differences. This may seem to contradict the previous suggestion that

students need to be somewhat close together in English ability and intellectual skills in order for the group to function properly. However, what I would like to suggest is a hierarchy of considerations. In the best world, students of different backgrounds and genders who range somewhat but not greatly in English language skills, intellectual skills, and social skills would be grouped together.

6.4 Additional Insights: What thinking processes are involved in building an interpretation?

The thinking processes students engaged in were those predicted by brain-based learning theorists, schemata theorists, and literary theorists. Brain-based theorists assert that pattern-building is the foundation of learning and that as students build patterns they consider first common understandings and then consider more novel understandings. In the building of a text world, readers first consider familiar understandings of situations and then move to other understandings if the details of the text do not fit their initial understandings. Schemata theorists call this making a hypothesis and then testing its fit. Langer (1995), a literary theorist, calls this being in and moving through an envisionment, and then stepping out and re-thinking what one knows. This pattern of thinking was evident in all the students' discussions and illustrates that students cannot quickly jump to a complex interpretation. They must spend time building an understanding of a text.

6.4.1 Implications for Teaching

The above has implications for both the writing of questions and classroom instruction. First of all, questions should be such that they encourage students to build rich, detailed text worlds and explore a number of ways of thinking about those text worlds. Teachers need to be able to, with students, work to identify the areas of a text

which will be open to a discussion of differences. Teachers and students also need to work at spending time exploring alternative understandings. Group discussion proved to be a useful activity for these explorations. Students should not be asked to comment on more abstract notions or to respond to the complexities of a text until they have been given time to come to an understanding of the text. Group discussion seems a good context for students to spend some time exploring their understandings of a text and building detailed text worlds.

6.5 Limitations to the Research.

There are a number of limitations to this research. First of all, the data sample is limited. These twelve students discussed only one story. These findings should be explored with other groups of students and other stories. In addition, the use of the tape recorder limited the study. I considered using a video recorder, but decided against it. However, having made that choice, I recognize that the tape recorded transcripts only provide a limited perspective on the discussions. The research is also limited to my classroom and my perspective. Another limitation to the study was the interview questions. Although I felt the questionnaires were successful in probing into the students' responses to the discussions, the interview questions had to be formulated quickly and, although I was pleased overall with the interview questions, I missed a number of issues that I identified after having spent time doing an in depth analysis of the small group discussion transcripts. If I were to do the study again, I would probe more in depth with students on the questions from different stances and I would also probe more in depth into grouping students with mixed abilities and into grouping students from different cultures and different genders.

6.6 Suggestions for Future Research

The issues that I think are most interesting and worthy of future exploration are peer-to-peer scaffolding in the English classroom and the issue of stances. Much more detailed research should take place on the grouping of students to better understand how to group students for productive interactions. Also, the study illustrated the cultural nature of questioning practices and the complexity of questioning practices. More research into stances needs to happen, especially in regards to difficulty and challenge and to the appropriate use of questions from a variety of stances.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of the research project on small group discussion. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is appreciated. Thank you.

Part 1: Background Information

Name: _____

Demographics

1. How old are you? _____

2. What is your gender? male female (circle one)

3. What is your first language? _____

Academic Information

5. Where and for how long have you studied English? List all schools, not only schools in Canada.

_____

_____

_____

6. Did you study English literature before this course? If yes, what kinds of literature have you studied?

_____

_____

_____

7. How many years have you studied literature in your first language?

_____

Part 2: Small Group Discussion

1. How would you rate you group's discussion?

excellent good satisfactory poor (circle one)

2. Explain your rating. Why was your discussion excellent, good, satisfactory, or poor?

3. In your own words, describe a good group discussion.

4. Describe your participation in the discussion.

5. Describe the other members' participation.

6. How useful do you find listening to other students' ideas about the story? Explain.

7. Did the small group discussion broaden (make greater) your understanding of the story? Explain.

8. Are there any questions that weren't discussed that you would have liked to have discussed?

9. What do you find difficult about small group discussion?

10. What do you like about small group discussion?

11. How useful is small group discussion in developing your ability to speak about and understand literature? Is it useful to have group discussion before you write about a short story or a novel?

12. What do you think is important for a good group discussion? Think about all parts of the discussion -- the story, the questions, the people in the group, and the instructions that the teacher gives. Explain your answer.

13. What do you think is the purpose of small group discussions?

14. How is this way of studying literature different from your experience in your first language?

Appendix C

Group One Transcript

Sam: What do you think is the financial situation of Alfred's family? Are they rich or poor? (3) um I think they are um like they are not rich and not poor so so but uh - I think - a little bit poor because Alfred was working and his father is a printer and that's it.

Eddie: I think um what his name Alfred he's very poor because his father is a printer his job is a printer and - his mother - is a housekeeper so she didn't make money and and - Alfred work in the drugstore and that's and that's why he stole some thing from the drugstore if if his family very (x).he won't he won't do that

Trisha: What do you think?

Pam: Oh my opinion is as same as Eddie, uh - uh - Alfred's family is very poor because his father is a printer and he has to work at night and his mother is a housekeeper and uh - and this time he had fired so he's gonna lose some money so that's very poor.

Trisha: I think Alfred's family is not rich cause he steals things and those things are quite small things and it's easy to buy so their family is not be very rich. Number two: Do you think Alfred's family's financial situation affects Alfred's life? In what ways? (2) I think Alfred's family's financial situation affects him because um his family if his family is poor then he might steal things - and that's probably why he steals some things and sometimes do bad things but if their financial situation is ok then he might not do - might not steal things.

Pam: (5) Uh I don't think so because his father is a printer and he he can he can he can afford to buy like what he stole - this uh compact and two lipstick that is - that's are too cheap so I think - I think Alfred family can afford that - maybe he's - I don't know - he like to he like to steal things from the store.

Trisha: ((laughs))

Eddie: And I think Alfred had a bad personality because whether his father is a printer or something and maybe they're his family's not very rich but he want steal things and he's bad so if his family is very rich then I think he will still steal something because it's his habit.

Sam: I think - uh - he steal because his family is poor - if they were rich uh they - his parents give him money and uh he wasn't - he shouldn't - uh steal something for money and that's it.

Eddie: Why do you think Alfred steals? (14) Because he want to earn some money and - like um (3)

Pam: Or because he's (xx)

Eddie: Yeah for his allowance but

Sam: Because he need money and - or maybe he like to steal things.

Pam: He likes to steal things he's =

Sam: =He's mad he's crazy
Eddie: Yeah crazy maybe=
Trisha: =Maybe he thinks - maybe he thinks that he works at that store and nobody will knows - so he steal things.
Eddie: But his boss his boss very smart.
Trisha: Yeah.
Sam: Because I say
Eddie: I think he stole many times and his boss noticed thing - so=
Pam: =Yeah this is not the first time I think
Eddie: Yeah it's several times before
Sam: But he steal very cheap things
Eddie: Easy to sell
Trisha: Because maybe he doesn't get many - like much money and sometimes when he needs things he just steal them so that his money can
Pam: Can export for another thing
Trisha: Yeah, so use for other things.
Pam: OK, next question. Which character do you think has the most power? Explain why you choose the character.
Trisha: (4) I think um Alfred's mom has the most power because when she gets into the store and the storekeeper um feels sorry for her and his son is afraid of her so he has she has the most power.
Sam: Yes because she in that situation everyone would be very angry and but she was only calm and very she control herself.
Pam: The most what does it mean the most power
Trisha: Has the most power like can control things
Eddie: Everything
Pam: Oh
Eddie: Powerful
Pam: Powerful
Trisha: Yeah, yeah
Pam: I think it's the guy who own the store has power.
Eddie: No
Trisha: You think so,
Pam: Cause he I don't understand
Eddie: He has power to call cops=
Pam: =To call a cop and arrest him
Eddie: And arrest Alfred but his mother can solve this problem - this is big problem but his mother can just explain what how bad for Alfred and so the can make the shopkeeper feel very sorry about his mother and let him to let her take his son take her son home right so I think his mother has more power.
Trisha: Mhmm me too I think
Eddie: Next one
Sam: Number five what is your opinion of Mr. Carr's behaviour?
Pam: Mr. what,

Eddie: Carr's the boss.
Pam: Oh he uh he he he was he was very angry when he when he was very angry right,
Trisha: Mmm not very
Pam: Angry and when he met when he met Alfred's mother he he talked to her no he talked to her very what talked to very
Trisha: [laughs]
Pam: I mean like the guy the own the store he talk to when he talk to Alfred's mother - he's very kind but kind and understanding her and and he he said that uh we I'm sorry we have to meet this way remember, it's mean he's understanding her
Trisha: I think Mr. Carr is kind and he was speaking like nicely to Alfred and that he didn't like yell at him very loud and or angry like
Pam: He didn't call the cop
Trisha: No he didn't
Pam: Just call him like calm and
Trisha: Like he speak softly and say
Pam: Just [leave what you got on the table
Eddie: [Just a moment
Pam: And you can leave
Trisha: Yeah yeah
Pam: Then he's kind
Trisha: Yeah, I think he's kind he's right if Alfred is - he doesn't like he lies to Mr. Carr- so he should call the cops if Alfred is bad - so I think he's right
Sam: Yes he is yes I think he's a kind man and uh he did a good thing to call her his mother first before calling the cop and mm (4)
Eddie: Next question
Trisha: Number six what do you think Alfred's mother's life is like? Explain your answer.
Pam: Her mother life is very boring
Trisha: ((laughs))
Pam: She has to stay at home and look after look after
Eddie: His son her son
Pam: Her son and her son's friend - always get into trouble
Trisha: I think her mother is miserable
Eddie: ((laughs))
Trisha: Miserable like
Eddie: Terrible
Pam: Yeah I think it's very bad
Trisha: Because like Alfred and her sister is not very good and they don't listen to her mother and Alfred always do does something wrong
Pam: Get into trouble
Trisha: Yeah get her to into trouble - and her sister is not very nice either want to get married so in her young age

Sam: I think she is very patient to I think someone should be very patient to have such a children like Alfred and his sister - mm - and she had very difficult times in her life.

Eddie: I think she's a good woman but - her her son and daughter is not very good for her because they always do something bad and get trouble so and at first mother need to stay at home and waiting for call maybe somebody will call call her to go to the police office to get her son

Trisha: Her life is terrible

Eddie: Uh huh terrible

Trisha: Next question

Eddie: What is your opinion of Alfred's mother's treatment of her son after the incident in the drugstore?

Pam: What treatment means?

Sam: Punishment like I think she should be more rough on her son because steal things and shopliftings is very bad crime - she should be more rough on him

Eddie: Yeah she is too kind - just tell him to go to sleep - take a shower and go to sleep he need to she need to explain what's wrong with him and - tell him don't do that again

Sam: Like telling his father and so his father punch him out

Eddie: Yeah if he she didn't punish him maybe he would do it again.

Trisha: I think her mother gives up here ((agreement)) he did that every time and after after she like forgive him and then he did it again so her mother his mother just gave up

Pam: If I was her I would fight I would fight him in the house

Trisha: ((laughs))

Eddie: I would say you are not my son anymore

Pam: Yeah I would punish him - give him a punishment. What is your opinion of Alfred's behaviour at the beginning of the story? Explain your answer.

Trisha: I think Alfred is not honest so he lies to Mr. Carr that he didn't steal anything - I think that's wrong and he's he's not ashamed - he's bad he's very bad

Eddie: Yeah when his boss say uh take some take those take something out of your pocket and he say I don't know why what you are talking about I didn't steal anything and - at the end the boss say sees the things he stole so he know he knew he know the boss found out he stole some things so he talk bad

Girls: ((laughter))

Sam: He was very relaxed then someone being such a trouble like I if I was him I can't speak anymore I can't speak anymore but he wasn't honest because at first he said I didn't do it uh or uh I didn't steal anything and second - when he was calling uh his mum he said uh it's not necessary to call him but uh she wishes for someone to come and help him

Pam: Uh I think my opinion is uh his behaviour is very bad because he steal thing and then he liar to to uh - to Carr to Mr. Carr and his brother and his

	brother uh his mother - yeah he make his mother feel bad about about this situation
Eddie:	Number nine
Trisha:	Number nine what is your opinion of Alfred at the end of the story? Explain your answer. (3) I think Alfred finally finds his fault and I think he will become better than before because he now realized that his mother is really sad about her about him and that hurts her mother's heart so I think he will become better and I think that's good because he regrets himselves - he won't do it again
Pam:	I think Alfred will change his behaviour eh because uh he see - oh yeah he saw uh his mother is with a broken face
Trisha:	Broken face,
Pam:	Broken face yeah he saw his mother with a broken face and he knows that he really hurt her so he's might not going to get her into trouble
Sam:	(3)I think it doesn't change my opinion about Alfred at the end of the story I think I don't think he will change his way - he used to - steal the thing and he will continue with that.
Trisha:	But before he didn't see his mother's mind
Pam:	Yeah this is his uh first time
Sam:	I don't think it will change him because he always see his mother angry when he did a bad thing his mother is become angry
Trisha:	But this time his mother was calm and then he was like it's a secret - so her mother his mother didn't let him know
Eddie:	I think Alfred know that he is wrong because on the road to home on the way home and - his mother didn't want to talk with him and so he find chance to talk with his mother his mother and at the end he found out her mother's was very sad and very weak in the - garden he realized that he he need to be better and better than before - if not maybe her mother will get sick or something maybe ok next question.
Sam:	Do you think Alfred will behave differently in the future? Explain your answer. We answer this,
Eddie:	Yes
Sam:	We answered this also
Trisha:	(3) Yes he will act differently
Sam:	No no no no ((singsong))
Pam:	Uh I I think so
Sam:	I don't know
Pam:	I think so
Eddie:	OK next
Sam:	I don't think so.
Eddie:	I think so
Pam:	I think so
Trisha:	((laughs)) Explain your answer
Pam:	I think so because this time her her no no his mother mm like - his mother is very very hurt about about his his behaviour

Trisha: I think this time is different from the last several times because
Pam: His mother right
Trisha: Well sometimes that person when they really feel they hurt somebody they will regret and they will change their behaviours - not like everyone or sometimes teachers five let students chances so like - the first time they don't do their homework the second time they might do their homework is so I think sometimes people will change their mind after a long period of time if they have suddenly like something changes them so I think Alfred will change
Pam: I have question if uh if Alfred's mother going to mad at him punish him and yell at him I think next time he will do it again
Eddie: Yeah
Pam: Because it's it's as my feeling - if my parents punish me uh yell at me
Eddie: I will do it again
Pam: Hit me I will do it again
Trisha: ((laughs))
Pam: If they say oh come on don't do that - and something
Eddie: I will excuse you this time but don't do it again or say oh you are so good and I will be a good child
Pam: [Maybe don't use any punishment
Trisha: [Yeah when you feel someone is really kind to you then you you don't want to hurt them
Pam: Yeah because if I tied to you right - [you don't want to hurt my feelings right of course
Trisha: [Yeah if I feel you might be hurt I don't want to do it yeah ((laughter))
Pam: You don't mind my feelings right
Sam: OK but she wasn't sure that he will see him
Trisha: ((laughs))
Sam: She didn't she wasn't sure that Alfred will see him she don't know Alfred would see her
Students: (xxxx)
Sam: She was he was not sure
Eddie: No she doesn't want let him to see he just feel very bad see in the garden and just offer just offer finish his shower and walk walk to the garden and see that
Trisha: Not garden it's kitchen.
Eddie: Kitchen garden,
Trisha: Kitchen she is drinking her tea
Eddie: In a I think garden no,
Pam: No chicken in the kitchen in the kitchen.
Eddie: In the kitchen ok so in the kitchen
Trisha: It's at night how
Eddie: I don't know why I think the garden
Pam: Maybe she's she's drinking and

Eddie: OK why do you think the author only tells the reader what Alfred is thinking and feeling? ((checking question)

Trisha: I think the author want us to think about it by ourselves by not telling us the result - because like nowadays many teenagers is like Alfred and do many things bad and don't understand their parents

Eddie: Feeling yah

Trisha: Yeah so and this book is for teenagers so

Pam: Yeah I think

Trisha: I think the author wants [us to

Pam: [To remind us to show us

Trisha: To think about our parents

Pam: How our parents sacrifice for them for for us

Trisha: What do you think,

Sam: Yes I agree with Trisha

Pam: (xxxx)

Sam: I agree with the first girl I see

Trisha: ((laughs))

Sam: Alfred was the first subject of the story and she was the most important one ((mmm))

Pam: Number twelve

Trisha: Number twelve

Pam: What do you think the author is trying to show the reader with this story?

Sam: He want to tell us we should care about our parents we should pay attention to them don't do anything to hurt their feeling

Pam: Similar huh to the number (x)

Trisha: Uh yeah (3) what do you think, ((laughter))

Eddie: I think the author want to show talk talk us - we need to more time for our parent and don't do any don't get in trouble for your parents and - mm - be a good child

Pam: Yeah

Eddie: That's all

Pam: And the author is trying to tell us how to how to how to - no I mean the author is trying to tell us must respect our parents and and and

Trisha: ((laughs))

Eddie: Don't get trouble and they will get better

Trisha: You have to think every time when you when you want to do things so you won't hurt anyone.

Eddie: Yeah

Sam: We all agree with Trisha ((laughter))

Group Two Transcript

Sheila: Do you want me to read the questions. What do you think is the financial situation of Alfred's family? Are they rich or poor?

June: (2) I think not very rich, probably the middle

Sheila: Yah, I think they're poor because- ah his father works at nights - he works for himself and just ah sister his sister's married

June: I don't know

Sheila: They don't seem rich.

June: I think or yah probably he's poor that's why he steals things

Sheila: Yes

Jason: Yah because his father is a printer

Susan: He doesn't - he doesn't get that much money

Students: Yah

Sheila: The second one is do you think Alfred's family financial situation affects Alfred's life? In what ways? (5) I think yes because if the boy's rich they can help their child child - or give them the money to spend but because they're not rich - he have to work - and he have to steal things because he wants more money

June: (9) Ya, I think so

Jason: Sometimes in the store the the storekeeper ah - catch a thief - the thief ah - is usually ah rich

June: If they are rich they will always have thing - they will always have money to spend- they don't need to steal things.

Sheila: Yeah

June: They will never think about that- so -[

Sheila: [But I think that there are many peoples that they are rich but they're um - I don't know - the child steals things because they want to spend the money in bad ways - they're parents didn't let them to spend money in bad ways and what they steal they spend in bad ways.

June: But I think in this case - like since his father is a printer - I don't think they will get (xx)

Sheila: OK - the third one is - Why do you think Alfred steals? (4) They tell that he is spending money with his friends but we don't know in good ways or bad ways (2) because he I don't know he earn money for the working - I don't know why he wants more money

June: I just wonder how - because he works that means he can get money but he still want to steal things and he steals the the the compact - she say that's like for women for the make-up. [laughter] I just wonder how come he steals that

Sheila: Yeah - maybe he - I don't know - he sells them to[

Jason: [Maybe he has a girlfriend

Sheila: No he just sell them to the to to his friends in school - the compact and the yeah the lipsticks because they're just for girls - he can sell them to girls

June: He just wants more money.

Sheila: He can sell them cheaper than the drugstore so they buy from him - he can earn money

Jason: But because he steal uh - ladies things but so I think maybe he just - like the action of ah stealing

June: Or maybe he take drugs and it gives him money to buy the drug.

Sheila: Yeah, maybe

June: Most people does like that

Sheila: The fourth question is which character do you think has the most power? Explain why you chose that character

June: (2) Power

Sheila: Yeah

June: In this story

Sheila: (4) I think Alfred's mother has power.

Jack: Yeah.

Sheila: Because he can when she talks to Mr. Carr she can make him relax and get him to he doesn't to tell cop - she has the power

Susan: And also um she doesn't have to go to the police because she goes right to the heart to know the storekeeper so she has the power.

Sheila: OK the next question is what is your opinion of Mr. Carr's behaviour?

June: (5) He I think - I feel - I don't know how to say that word - um - it's the way he did things is different from - he did one way to Alfred and another way to his mum.

Sheila: Yeah

June: Because he's nicer to his mum

Sheila: Yeah he's nicer but he was nice to Alfred too because he can tell the cop and they took Alfred to jail but he didn't do that I think he's nice man because Alfred work there for six months and he knew that he stole things but he didn't tell him - he just wait if he stops=

June: =But he doesn't so he's quite nice.

Sheila: What do you think Alfred's mother's life is like? Explain your answer.

June: I think for other people they always think she has she has uh she's very brave um - she can control things very well from other people but in fact I think her life is very hard

Sheila: Yeah because her daughter married but she doesn't like him to marry and his sons just steal things and his husband just work at night she doesn't have a good life

June: Mhmm.

Sheila: She can't relax

June: And her husband has to go out to work at night

Sheila: Yeah

Sheila: What is your opinion of Alfred's mother's treatment of her son after the incident in the drugstore? In the street,

June: In the street (2) I feel she wishes that she doesn't need to she doesn't need to care about anything about Alfred if he is any other boys but she can't because he is her son ((mumbling 5))

Jason: I think it's normal

Sheila: Normal, I don't know - but she doesn't advise him in the drugstore she told that she would advise him little little bit but she didn't advise him she just told her told him to shut up and don't talk

June: I think she is tired of - she is tired of um mad being mad at him - he did those kind of things lots of times and after so many times she just she's just tired of talking to him

Sheila: Yeah - the next one is what is your opinion of Alfred at the end of the story? Explain your answer. (2) I think he was sorry to do these things because he saw his mom his her his mom's hands trembled and she can't control herself just that she was sorry about these things that he would do. I think just he promise himself he didn't steal he doesn't steal things anymore

June: That's the first time he saw his mom like that

Sheila: Yeah

June: So he it's a shock for him so he would change himself.

Sheila: Do you think Alfred will behave differently in the future?

June: I think so

Sheila: Yeah - I think because he saw his mom like that it will change his behaviours

June: Yeah (2) At the end of the story he said Alfred was surprised that her mom is like that - different from him the one he knew before

Sheila: Yeah why do you think the author only tells the readers what Alfred is thinking and feeling?

June: (2) Because the author want us to think about what is going to happen by ourself

Sheila: I don't know - but he tells about Alfred's mother's feeling too

June: (2) The author just leave us a space to to guess I don't know - when I read the end of the story I just think oh my god I'm I'm getting interested in this story but then it's finished

Sheila: Yeah maybe he just to tell us the feelings that the child has and do the bad thing and the mothers or fathers or the parents how they feel about them just to show us not to do bad things like that

June: The purpose is telling us telling us how the parents will feel

Sheila: Yeah

June: But not the not the ending or the result

Sheila: Yeah the last one is what do you think the author was trying to show the reader with this story? This is the answer we already said

June: Yah - what do you think,

Jason: I think the author want to tell we are we are not just ah children ah sometimes we must take the responsibility - ah on everything we we have done ((yeah)) so not not just depend on our parents I think

June: And like - when we were children everytime when we did things wrong it's always the parents help us to carry it but - we we just think oh the parents

can just carry it carry it for us but in fact - the inside of the parents they are very tired but they just didn't show us

Sheila: Yeah no we should learn it how to uh how to do things because we will be parents soon we should advise our children - so we have to having to do bad things because it's I don't know it's (x) to our children so they behave theirselves to act like they're good and we can I don't know we can learn from them the good things

Susan: Yeah I think like we have to we should know how to tell the parents our parents and just when we grow up and when we are parents we have to give them advice

Group Three Transcript

Veronica:	What do you think is the - financial - ah financal financial situation of ah Alfred's family? Are they rich or poor?
John:	I think they are poor.
Students:	Yah I think so
John:	His father is printer.
Students:	Yah
Jane:	His father is printer and - like - I don't know if Alfred's family is rich then he's not gonna like steal something
Veronica:	Yah and [I don't think the printer will earn so much money
John:	[Maybe for fun
Jane:	I don't know it be for fun but like - I don't know
Veronica:	He steal the little things not just once he had been stealing little things many times
Jane:	And like Alfred's says like it is it is for for hanging out with his friend - to spend money
Veronica:	Yup
Jane:	for fun
Veronica:	um hum
Jane:	right - so if he has like so much money - from like his parents - then he doesn't have to steal something
Veronica:	Yah
John:	Do you think Alfred's family's financial situation affects Alfred's life? In what ways?
Jane:	Um - yah sure
Veronica:	Like he the last part it mentioned that he changed his mind - he will change his mind for the rest of his life - um - what's the question again
Jane:	Financial situation affects Alfred's life
Jane:	(3) As that I said for number one (2) um I think Alfred also like has been living like tough days and tough years not just mother and father cause like - if - if Alfred's family is rich then he could be like living other way not just like steal something and and yah so I think it affect affect
Veronica:	(2) Just it says financial situation does that mean the last part of story
Jane:	No no no financial means the money thing
Veronica:	Oh
Jane:	Like economics=
Sharon:	=Okay now my opinion I think - yes - of course it affects because I think Alfred he should go like to University or this but he like wants to help his family so he works and uh - because of the financial of his family he like steals something he wants to help them but he doesn't know which which way he can - of course it affects him.
Jane:	I don't think like he doesn't have to go to University and I don't think he's working for his family
Veronica:	He's working for himself to have fun with the money

Jane: For himself - yeah I think so
Sharon: OK - but he wants to like - he wants them to pay him money for himself or for his family, maybe he wants to help I think
Jane: OK - number three is Why do you think Alfred steals?
Sharon: It's the same as the other question
Jane: Yeah - it's for fun
Veronica: Yeah it's for fun
Jane: Yeah to have like for friends and
Veronica: And he needs some change for use
Jane: Yeah for fun like to
John: ((laughter))
Jane: (xxx)
Jane: But like he wants to
Sharon: help
Jane: No go out with his friends like to go out and to spend money so he's gonna like exchange it to money, the stuff, I think - yeah it is for fun.
Sharon: So why does he steal something for fun,
Jane: Like to play - to play with his friends - to go shopping or something like that - he doesn't have any money
Sharon: Oh, he steals to get like=
Jane: =Yeah he says that - like why - like his mother asks him like why you stole something,
Sharon: Oh yes - he says I wanna get along with that - ok
Jane: Number four which character do you think has the most power? Explain why you chose that character?
Sharon: I think his mother
Students: Yeah his mother
Jane: You have to say why I think (2) um, because Mr. Carr was I think a little bit proud like he can he can fire him and he can call like a cop right to arrest him but after - the - his mom came ((uh huh)) he changes his mind ((buzzing, recording not clear)) he has not expected like - her her her behaviour ((uh huh)) because - I don't know - I thought like his mom's gonna be really angry and=
Veronica: =Yeah, I thought=
Jane: =But mad, but she was so like
Veronica: [Gentle
Jane: [Yah, under control
Sharon: She was sort of unusual.
Students: Yeah exactly
Sharon: It makes everybody sad.
Students: ((agreement))
Jane: Yeah I think Mr. Mr. Carr was going to like call a cop to arrest him but I think=
Veronica: =Because of the mom his mom
Jane: His mom changed her his mind

John: I agree.
Sharon: What is your opinion of Mr. Carr's behaviour? I don't have any special
Veronica: I think he's like maybe he's outside looking he's cold but actually he has a - kind heart ((buzzing, tape not audible))
Sharon: He doesn't want to see his employees to like steal something ((buzzing, tape not audible))
Jane: And his mom came he was a little bit stupid I mean - like - I don't know like - he just changes his mind because of his mother
Veronica: Yeah, it could but=
Sharon: He has to be strong
Jane: Yeah I think
John: I think at first he doesn't really want to call the cops
Jane: Yeah I think so yeah
John: He just wants to scare ((yeah, uh huh)) Alfred and - after his mother comes they
Jane: He just yeah
John: He let him feel attacked ((laughter))
Jane: Number six what do you think Alfred's mother's life is like? Explain your answers.
Students: Poor
Jane: Poor?
Veronica: Poor and like she has a daughter
Jane: She has
Veronica: Yeah she has a daughter and she keeps saying I'm getting married I'm getting married kind of like against the home I don't know exactly but it's kind of it's against her mother's idea and
Jane: I think I feel sorry for her ((yeah)) cause like - if I'm - if I were like his mother I'm not gonna live - I'm gonna die ((laughter)) ok like her her son is stealing everything - like every - like so many times and her her daughter says like 'I'm gonna marry I'm gonna marry like every every time ((Yeah)) it's so like tiring and so bothering and they don't respect to her
Sharon: She has not a quiet life - always maybe his son always involved with like stealing something and his daughter involved with not involved with but keeps saying I'm getting married I'm getting married and I think this makes a mother - like feel tired and angry and makes her life difficult
Veronica: She don't know how to trust them (xxx)
Jane: At first at first like she got married she is get married I mean not married I mean angry she used to get angry but right now it's just the usual thing right ((yeah)) so she's so accustomed to be like be gently gentle and quiet so like - I feel sorry for her
Sharon: Yeah because whenever his son um get a new job
Veronica: He is getting worried about his son
Sharon: So that's difficult
Veronica: Also I think he now he doesn't know how to act anything for them - even though he she is angry nobody cares

Jane: But I think the last part - the last part I think Alfred realize that she has like lived tough years so I think he feels sorry for her too in the last part ((yeah yeah)) he's not gonna do it again

Veronica: Yeah he will change then

Sharon: Because at the end of the story he understood what his mother's life was.

Jane: Number seven what is your opinion of Alfred's mother's treatment of her son after the incident in the drugstore?

John: (xxx)

Sharon: I think it can be the best way to teach him

Jane: Yeah I think so

Veronica: Like if you yell to him and show you are very angry maybe he'll sound like - he doesn't think it's a big deal

Jane: And like if she yells to him like she hitting he'll be thinking like OK I'm just if after this point and she'll be like all right and she'll be like saying but she like changes like her treatment to him and like it makes him to think again and why does she like that so like yeah I think that's good

John: My mother does this also

Jane: Like this

John: Yah

Jane: Yeah my mom is like this - my mom doesn't yell at all

Veronica: Oh my mom always yells

Jane: Really,

Veronica: Yeah I hate it and that's why if she do this like you will feel sorry for our mom yeah

Jane: Yeah right

Veronica: But if they yell like I always was against the idea like that

Sharon: It depends on the situation if you steal something of course they will yell ((laughter, agreement)) mum I stole like

Jane: But I don't know if like my daughter or son ((uh huh)) steal something then I'm gonna be like this because like if I yell then they're gonna do it again

Veronica: Yeah

Sharon: It depends on the family ((uh huh)) they are a poor family so

Veronica: And it depends different people have different ah mind

Jane: Yeah, right

Sharon: Number eight what's your opinion of Alfred's behaviour at the beginning of the story? Explain your answer

Veronica: I think he [doesn't

Jane: [He sucks ((laughter))

Veronica: He doesn't know he's wrong ((Uh?)) I think he doesn't know he's wrong he steals things and he thought his mom were be very angry

Sharon: I don't know what happened the last situation when he stole something

Jane: I think I think

Veronica: The last situation,

Sharon: Yeah because that was not the first time he stole something

Jane: Like when when when Mr. Carr I mean noticed ((John coughing, laughter)) that he was stealing to steal something then he he talked to him like like take it out take those out what did you like stole - and - like after that he was like how I didn't steal when I talk about like that so sucks

John: I think he doesn't do that stealing thing I think ((laughter)) steal so small things

Veronica: Maybe he it's not his first time like ((Uh huh)) maybe (xx) he stealed something before and like - he (xx) he just realized that he always steals little things

Sharon: I have a question - I don't know - we know that it was not the first time he stole something ok the last time that he stole something what did his mother do, he yell or just did something like this he was quiet strong control

Veronica: I think her mum before I don't know but (xxx)

Sharon: I mean his mother like change her mind this time she was quiet strong control or last time was exactly the same as this one

Veronica: I think last time was different and ((yeah)) and this time she's getting tired

Sharon: She found out it doesn't work so she changes ((laughter)) I don't know

John: Do you think that maybe the first time he steals Mr. Carr's store,

Students: I don't think so

John: I think Mr. Carr watching for a long time

Jane: Number nine what is your opinion of Alfred at the end of story? Explain your answer.

Sharon: I'm so glad he changed

Jane: Yeah he changed cause like he sees his mother - and trembling and like I think she had been crying - I think - like she she like certainly got mad but she also really sad that all of his her children like is so like bad ((yah)) and like their behaviour is so bad so she feel like sad I think

Veronica: Tired

Jane: Tired and she is really annoyed ((uh huh)) so she doesn't want to care about anything anymore like just feel tired

Veronica: Yeah just relax herself - but it's difficult

Jane: What do you think,

Sharon: I agree ((laughter))

John: Number ten do you think Alfred will behave differently in the future? Explain your answer

Students: Yes sure

Jane: If he has real I mean in his right mind he has to be changed

Veronica: Yeah (xxx)

Jane: He saw his mother's like broken face ((h huh)) and he - like felt like - his mother was so sad and - so

Sharon: He was fired right, so he will be start a new job with a new idea of not stealing stuff

Veronica: Yeah I think so

Jane: OK number eleven why do you think the author only tells the reader what Alfred is thinking and feeling? ((Students read over the question again))

Veronica: I think it can

Jane: Like - like Alfred is he reading his story or not I forgot ((checks book)) oh no the author

Veronica: I think the writer do it this way - that can show his mom's feelings much better than if the writer writes the feeling of his mom ((uh huh)) it's much better then

Jane: I think - to show Alfred's change of mind like the first part like he is like so sucks and like when like his mom is coming - he thinks like um - she's gonna be like this but she was not she was like so kind and so calm so I think to show to show his like mind cause like if if the author doesn't - um talk about the Alfred then we don't know what he's thinking what he's realizing right so

Sharon: We have a better idea of the story ((uh huh)) see of the character

John: I agree
[laughter]

Veronica: You agree

Jane: Don't say like I agree

John: OK number twelve

Jane: Number twelve yeah

John: What do you think the author is trying to show the reader with this story?

Jane: I think I think like our mothers' mind ((yeah)) - our mothers' like usual life like when we like do some bad thing what our mom think ((yeah)) - something like that I don't know

Sharon: He or she,

Jane: The author

Veronica: Also I think like he could teach the moms don't like when their children do things wrong don't yell at them ((uh huh)) there's a better way to talk to them

Sharon: OK maybe she wants to say that like ah being strong and being very quiet can be a good punishment but I mean better than like yelling shouting or being angry maybe

Jane: Peace is the best way I think

John: Don't disgrace your mother ((uh huh))

Appendix D

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

1. *Left bracket*[: Indicates the beginning of overlapping speech, shown for both speakers; second speaker's bracket occurs at the beginning of the line of the next turn rather than in alignment with previous speaker's bracket.
2. *Equal sign*=: Indicates speech which comes immediately after another person's, shown for both speakers.
3. (#): Marks the length of a pause in seconds.
4. (Words): The words in parenthesis ( ) were not clearly heard; (x)= unclear word; (xx) = two unclear words; (xxx) = three or more unclear words.
5. Underlined words: Words spoken with emphasis.
6. CAPITAL LETTERS: Loud speech.
7. ((Double parenthesis)): Comments and relevant details pertaining to interaction.
8. *Colon:* Sound or syllable is unusually lengthened
9. *Period:* Terminal falling intonation
10. *Comma:* rising, continuing intonation
11. *Unattached dash:* A short, untimed pause.