

**Fostering Aesthetic Response Discourse through Literature Circles  
in the Secondary Classroom**

by

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**Abstract: Fostering Aesthetic Response Discourse through Literature Circles  
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Literature circles are being used in the classroom as a student-centered method to teach novel studies. There are many different approaches to literature circles that teachers may employ. This qualitative case study examines four of these approaches: Daniels' (1994) Role Sheets; Kooy and Wells' (1996) Response Journals; Post-It Notes or "stikkums" described by Simpson (1995), Samway and Whang (1997) and Paulsen (in Daniels, 1994); and the Placemat approach.

The question guiding this study is which of these approaches is more effective in promoting high school students' aesthetic responses, enhancing their discussion, deepening their understanding of a text, and furthering their critical-thinking skills in terms of literary analysis.

The study took place in my grade 9 English classroom where students were placed into small groups for a novel study and each group used one of the four approaches, with a fifth group trying a different approach each time they met for discussion. These discussions were tape-recorded, transcribed and then analyzed using two theoretical lenses.

The first lens examined the data using Wilhelm's ten dimensions of response in order to see if all approaches promoted the same dimensions. In my second analysis, I analyze data through the lens of my own theoretical construct that is based on Barnes & Todd's (1995) exploratory and presentational talk, combined with Rosenblatt's (1995) notion of the aesthetic, lived-through response.

This case study reveals that the various approaches promote different dimensions of response as well as different levels of aesthetic and efferent discourse. Not all approaches achieve Rosenblatt's (1995) aesthetic, lived-through response to literature. The implications for teachers centre around the learning outcomes they seek when implementing literature circles in their classes.

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## CHAPTER I: Where I Began

*I need you, the reader, to imagine us, for we won't really exist if you don't.*

(Nafisi, 2004, p. 18)

### 1.1 Introduction

*I search the restaurant for my party hoping I haven't kept them waiting too long and then I see frantic waving from the back of White Spot. So there they are: three young women, around 17 years of age, dressed in men's business attire smiling from their booth. One tips her fedora as I approach and so begins our 6 pm business dinner meeting, our journey through Miller's (1949) Death of a Salesman.*

This is not a flashback of my earlier school days playing dress up, but a more recent activity that I assigned to my Advanced Placement English 12 students. They were to choose a novel or play and a meeting place that complemented the ideas of the text, and I would join them. Then, it was up to them to lead the discussion in whatever manner seemed fit. It was one of the best assignments I have ever given and had the pleasure to be a part of. Not only did I get to discuss *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813) at Queen Elizabeth park, *Nineteen Eighty-four* (Orwell, 1949) at the Vancouver Art Gallery, and *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Kesey, 1962) at a local drop in centre for the mentally disabled, but I got to experience real life book clubs with my students.



## **1.2 Book Clubs in the classroom**

*Book Clubs* have been around a long time, but have been highlighted in the media and in education over the last ten to fifteen years. Outside of the education field, TV talk show host, Oprah, has re-popularized the idea across North America. I too have been party to groups reading interesting books worthy of conversation. What goes on in this forum? A common book is selected, a meeting place is chosen, food is ordered or brought, and the books are opened, examined, exalted, tossed, shared. It is this sharing of reading that is of importance. It opens communication, perspectives of the world and the mind. This connectedness does not have to be full of deep hidden meanings, but of clarifying meaning, or even shared frustration of a poorly developed story. Ultimately, it is about having a conversation – sharing ideas.

In education, the terms *Book Clubs*, *Literature Discussion Groups*, *Literature Study*, or *Literature Circles*, all refer to essentially the same idea; thus, for this paper the term *Literature Circles* will be used to define small groups of students reading a student chosen novel, discussing various chapters in that novel, and building understanding of what and how they read.

The sharing of ideas came readily for most of my AP students, and with very little guidance; but that is to be expected of students who are lovers of literature and enjoy discussion. For the “regular” students, achieving this same excitement and willingness is often met with difficulty. Thus I was excited when I went to a workshop lead by Mary Kooy from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. In her workshop she was discussing research she did with college level women who were in book clubs and used reading response logs or journals to write

down their thoughts, feelings, and ideas about what they were reading. They used these journals to guide their discussion. Profound interactions came out in these discussions: they were emotional, critical and exploratory – a reflection of what Rosenblatt (1978) would call a *lived through* experience.

What I like about Kooy's approach is that she uses the response journals as the tool for discussion: something that I have been using in my classes for the last nine years; however, I've used them mostly as a way for students to respond to specific, teacher generated ideas about a book.

Around the same time, a colleague of mine introduced me to Harvey Daniels' (1994) Literature Circles approach to discussions. He sets clearly defined roles for each student in the group. These roles guide students in their response to the reading and shape the discussion that then follows when they meet.

I began using Daniels' format in 2000-2001 with my English 10 class with the reading of *Into Thin Air* (Krakauer, 1997). The book was challenging for most of the students, so I wanted to focus their talk. The Literature Circles roles – Discussion Director, Literary Luminary, Illustrator, and Connector (Daniels, 1994) – gave that focus. Unfortunately, what I found was that students approached the roles as a work sheet to complete and thus the discussion turned into a reporting out of what they did on the sheet. There was little back and forth interaction. I was not entirely discouraged; however, so I tried the approach again, but with my English 12 classes and the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell, 1949). This time I modeled more clearly how I wanted students to handle their role. I had them make their "reports" more open-ended. For example, the illustrator was to show their picture and ask the group what they thought

of the illustration and how it was significant to the chapters being discussed. This promoted more exploratory talk which will be defined later in Chapter 3. Finally, I had my Literature 12 classes use this format with Victorian novels of their choosing. However, I did not give them the role sheets, but gave Daniels' general descriptions of them and they were to tape record their discussions on their own time. Of these three classes, the Literature students discussed the book more openly and with wider range (i.e. they went beyond the specific role and discussed character, theme, author's craft, etc.). They also seemed to take a more lived through approach as some groups could be heard preparing a meal while discussing *The Major of Casterbridge* (Hardy, 1962).

### **1.3 A First Look at the Theory**

These two approaches to literature circles are consistent with reader response theory that I had only heard about, and began studying in courses for my Master of Arts in Language and Literacy at the University of British Columbia. Approaches stemming from reader response theory encourage students to be active participants in their learning. They are not merely getting answers from the teachers, but are creating meaning through writing, speaking, pausing, arguing, and questioning (Karolides, 2000). "As students talk, they undergo a process of mutual discovery and affirmation . . . . They connect their own experiences to the novel . . . and connect this to what they already know" (Kooy & Wells, 1996, p. 67). As Rosenblatt explains:

The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition. These and many other elements in a never-to-be-

duplicated combination enter into the reader's relationship with the text

(Rosenblatt, 1978, cited in Karolides, 2000, p. 7).

Thus, using response logs or journals as the springboard for discussion melds well with Reader Response theory and especially Rosenblatt's notion of aesthetic response: the reader adopts an attitude of readiness to focus attention on what is being lived through *during* the reading event (Rosenblatt, 1978, cited in Karolides, 2000, p. 9). Daniels' (1994) Literary Circles roles, while serving as prompts for students, tend to be "efferent" which "designates the kind of reading in which attention is centered predominantly on what is to be extracted and retained after the reading event" (Rosenblatt, 1978, cited in Karolides, 2000, p. 9). Perhaps that is why the conversations in my classes tended towards a reporting out.

Eeds and Wells (1989) examined the types of conversations students had when discussing literature. They too looked towards a reflection of an aesthetic reading versus the usual efferent approach where "comprehension of the story is judged by how closely [student's] answers match those in the [teacher's] textbook." Reading "to pass the test" (p. 4-5). "The creation of the aesthetic object" was Eeds and Wells' interest as well as what Peterson calls *dialogue*: "The literature study group (teacher and students working together) constructs and discloses deeper meaning, enriching understanding for all participants" (p.5). "In this study of four literature discussion groups, children and teachers built meaning by working together. Student teachers became members of an 'interpretive community'", showing that "talk helps to confirm, extend, or modify individual interpretations and creates a better understanding of the text"(p. 26-27).

Eeds and Wells' (1989) different approach to *literature circles* or *book clubs* peaked my curiosity. They did not use response logs, nor did they assign roles for the participants. Moreover, the groups were able to discuss the book from any starting place, and yet, they still managed to make connections, interpret meaning and critique. And while they had "expert" student teachers working with each group that may have played a role in the discussions, this still suggests that Daniels' roles may not be the most effective or aesthetic approach to discussing literature. With the many types of approaches to literature discussion groups, what is the most effective in promoting aesthetic response? This is my general question.

#### **1.4 A Pilot Study: *Getting my feet wet***

In a pilot study that I did in the fall of 2001 for a project in a Master of Arts in Language and Literacy course, I began to examine which approach was the most effective in promoting a more aesthetic response with a group of grade 10 students. I used a similar format presented in this research study that is outlined later on in the procedures section. Over the course of eight weeks, the class read the same novel, *Z for Zachariah* (O'Brien, 1974), discussed it in small groups, but used different approaches to literature circles: a Daniels' Role Sheets group used predetermined roles; a Response Journals group used logs as starting points for discussion; a Post-It Notes group marked key passages/reflections as they read to later discuss; a Placemat response group met around a large piece of paper and wrote responses immediately prior to their discussion; and finally, a group tried each of these approaches. The students met on five occasions and tape-recorded their discussions.

Unlike this research study, in my pilot study I only summarized what I found from their tapes and transcripts. In the Daniels' Role Sheets group, I found that the more the students used the roles, the shorter their discussions became and the less developed they were. In the Response Journals group, students tended to elaborate more on their ideas than the Daniels' group. The Post-It Notes group's discussions were more text-centered, discussing character motivation, plot, and the novel's structure, but the discussions tended to be brief due to group dynamics – something which will be discussed later on in comparison to this research study. The Placemat group wrote and discussed the novel at length every time they met; I was most impressed by how the group collaborated in creating meaning from the book. Finally, I also had a group that rotated the types of approaches used during each meeting. This group's discussions were the most lively and elaborate when they used the post-it note approach. When given the choice of approach to use for their final discussion, they used the Post-It Notes approach which one student said helped her remember what she really wanted to talk about.

Based on a preliminary review of the tapes and transcripts, I concluded that when groups had opportunity to write down their own thoughts, they managed to discuss a wider range of aspects in greater detail than the Daniels' Role Sheets group which sounded like a listing of ideas, not a "grand conversation" (as described by Eeds & Wells, 1989).

### **1.5 A Preview to the “Real” Study and Its Questions**

In this research study I strove to examine the approaches more thoroughly, using a different group of students, analyzing data for the content covered in the discussions, as well as the discourse itself. My goal was to evaluate which approach to literature circles was more effective in promoting high school students’ aesthetic responses, enhancing their discussion, deepening their understanding of a text, and furthering their critical thinking skills in terms of literary analysis.

### **1.6 Previews of Upcoming Chapters**

What follows in the next chapters is the theoretical background and research on which this study is based. I conclude Chapter 2, *Theoretical Background*, with specific questions guiding my research. Chapter 3: *Methods* includes a description of the participants, procedures, and data of the study. In Chapter 4, *Results*, I analyze the data from two lenses: the first analyzes the content of student discussions in the various reading groups using Wilhelm’s (1997) ten dimensions of response; the second analyzes the data through a second lens of my own theoretical construct that is based upon Barnes & Todd’s (1995) exploratory and presentational talk, combined with Rosenblatt’s (1995) aesthetic, lived-through response. In this chapter, I also present summaries of students’ surveys on each of the approaches used. Finally, in Chapter 5, *Conclusions and Implications*, I draw conclusions based on my findings and what they mean for teachers and their classrooms.

## CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 *The Aesthetic Response*

Rosenblatt (1978) defines an *aesthetic* response as the reader adopting an attitude of readiness to focus attention on what is being lived through *during* the reading event: what sensations, feelings, and/or images are being evoked in the reader? Rosenblatt acknowledges that readers bring many contexts to their reading including memories, current need and issues, emotions, and so forth. These all help shape the meaning students make as they read. They respond intimately and spontaneously.

Sadly, she acknowledges that most English classrooms focus on an *efferent* response in which literature is treated as something from which the reader must gain answers to questions such as, "In what setting does the book take place?" That does not equal something the reader lived through.

### 2.2 *Reader Response Theory*

As one adolescent put it: "Most teachers must not read . . . or they'd know how to teach reading and not ruin it for us" (Wilhelm, 1997, p. 34). Teachers are obviously missing something crucial when teaching literature. To teach readers, then, we must value the readers themselves and allow for them to have the opportunity to respond to the text. There is an emotional and intellectual connection with the text, a situation of mutuality – meaning "the reader and text mutually act on each other" (Karolides, 2000, p. 5). The reader's background as well as the reading situation help shape the transaction that takes place between reader and text (p. 7). By looking at Rosenblatt's



transactional theory of literature (1978), one gets the clear definition of what reader response theory sets out to do; it is not solely about the reader, but brings the reader's ideas back to the text:

The transactional nature of the reading act recognizes the mutuality of reader and text. Validity of a reading is identified in relation to a consistent set of criteria, implicit or explicit. Adequacy of interpretation can be measured against the constraints of the text: to what degree does the individual response include the various features of the text – situations and events, character behaviors and attitudes – and the nuances of language; to what degree does it include aspects that do not reflect the text; to what extent have personal memories or images derailed the response; to what degree has the reading evoked a coherent work? Thus, the out-of-context response . . . takes the reader far afield or the strongly skewed response leads to the neglect of features of the text . . . these may be valuable responses for the reader but, given the criteria, invalid or less valid transactions with the text. (Karolides, 2000, p. 15)

Hence, teachers should rest assured that students are not merely associating anything they can with the text, but their responses are in fact supported and based on the text. Teachers help students learn how to support these responses.

The strength of approaches that draw on reader response theory is that they encourage students to be active participants in their learning. They are not merely getting answers from the teachers, but are creating meaning through writing, speaking, pausing, arguing, and questioning. "As students talk, they undergo a process of mutual

discovery and affirmation . . . They connect their own experiences to the novel . . . and connect this to what they already know” (Kooy & Wells, 1996, p. 67).

Still, a large worry and misconception for teachers is that students engaged in response-based approaches to literature are not learning proper literary analysis; however, they only need to read Chapter 3 of Wilhelm’s (1997), *You Gotta BE the Book* to see that this is not the case. Here Wilhelm outlines the ten different dimensions of response his students “seemed to use as they created, experienced, and responded to literary worlds” (for detailed explanation see Wilhelm, 1997):

*Evocative Dimensions*

1. Entering the Story World
2. Showing Interest in the Story
3. Relating to Characters
4. Seeing the Story World

*Connective Dimensions*

5. Elaborating on the Story World
6. Connecting Literature to Life

*Reflective Dimensions*

7. Considering Significance
8. Recognizing Literary Conventions
9. Recognizing Reading as a Transaction
10. Evaluating an Author, and the Self as Reader (1997, p. 46-47)

These dimensions allow for a much more in-depth response than a teacher-centered question that asks, “What happened to the protagonist at the end of chapter 2?”

### **2.3 Discourse and Aesthetic Response**

Understanding aesthetic response and reader response theory frames the first part of this thesis. The second part has to do with small group discourse. Thus, it is important to understand the theoretical framework on which this type of learning is based.

Nearly all educational psychologists nowadays accept in one form or another the view of learning called *constructivism*: [This] implies that each of us can only make sense of what goes on around us, and of our part in it, by actively constructing a world for ourselves (Barnes & Todd, 1995, p. 10).

Resnick (1991), presented in Barnes & Todd (1995), states, “it is not possible to experience the world solely through one’s own actions because our actions are mediated through the social setting we inhabit” (p. 137). Bruer (1994) claims that this “social interaction . . . make[s] hidden thought processes public and shared” and that “communal interactions allow students to share and distribute the cognitive burdens of thinking” (cited in Cazden, 2001, p. 75). Moreover, discourse is also part of a larger context, such as one’s background, knowledge, and situation (Barnes & Todd, 1995).

In an English classroom how would students construct their understanding of the world in the text in light of their own social experiences (Beach & Phinney, 1998)? It is important to allow discourse in the classroom and not just by way of the traditional or teacher-centered forms of discourse where the teacher uses it as an “opportunity to

teach particular academic frames” (Cazden, 2001, p. 20) or to be the “giver of knowledge, the bringer of all the meaning” (Miller and Legge, 1999, p. 12). In this latter form, the discourse tends to be of the IRE (initiation, response, evaluation) method in which the teacher asks a question, the student offers a response (something specific the teacher is trying to elicit), and then the teacher accepts or rejects that response (Cazden, 2001). This “gentle inquisition” (Eeds & Wells, 1989) is the type of discourse that many secondary school teachers rely upon, often due to their own educational background, the amount of curriculum they have to cover, or their feeling the pressure of teaching to the test.

Instead, there needs to be more “non-traditional”, or student-centered discourse where students explore ideas, make meaning together, and where the teacher acts as more of a facilitator in both large and small group discussion, allowing for a “grand conversation” (Eeds & Wells, 1989). There needs to be a fundamental shift in thinking of how students learn and in the questioning of students.

#### ***2.4 Teaching Readers vs. Reading***

The literature circles approach can only happen if the shift from traditional to non-traditional teaching practices occurs and if students share the power of discourse. Only then will students’ views of school reading also change. Wilhelm (1997) points out, students do not find school reading enjoyable and may only read for pleasure at home. Teachers may “ruin” a book by asking unnecessary questions, or students may find that the teacher’s questions have “very little to do with what [a student] is thinking and feeling and caring about” as he or she reads (p. 26). These statements come from

some of Wilhelm's proficient readers. What is even more disturbing is that for the "poor" readers, "the factual or interpretive questions typically asked by teachers and commercially prepared materials appeared to be no help in revealing, developing, or extending their reading abilities" (p. 27). Miller and Legge (1999) state that students in nonacademic classes have fewer opportunities "to think about their responses to literature" and . . . "they receive less instruction than other students do in comprehension strategies and fewer opportunities to develop them through discussion and writing" (p.14). So how can teachers change their focus to student-centered learning that meets *all* students' needs?

## **2.5 Literature Circles**

There have been many conceptual and empirical publications on Literature Circles (Eeds & Wells, 1989; McMahon, Raphael, Goatley, & Pardo, 1997 as cited in Galda & Beach, 2001; Daniels, 1994; Kooy & Wells, 1996; Lewis, 1997; Martinez & Roser, 1995). Again, Eeds & Wells' (1989) influential study examined the types of conversations students had when discussing literature. They hoped to engage students in conversations that supported more *aesthetic* reading versus the usual *efferent* responses. "In this study of four literature discussion groups, children and teachers built meaning by working together. Student teachers became members of an 'interpretive community'", showing that "talk helps to confirm, extend, or modify individual interpretations and creates a better understanding of the text" (p. 26-27).

These interpretive communities are similarly defined in Danielson (1992); Raphael, Goatley, Woodman, and McMahon (1994); Roser & Martinez (1995), to name a few. Other commonalities include not only the structure of heterogeneous groups (Danielson, 1992), and the goals of honest (Gilles, Dickinson, McBride, & Vandover, 1994), aesthetic discussion (Tiballi & Drake, 1993), but also the roles of the teacher and benefits to students. Gilles, et al. (1994) describe the teachers as facilitators, Tiballi & Drake (1993) and Martinez & Roser (1997) call the teacher a model, and Noll (1994) calls for teachers to provide mini-lessons on how to talk about a novel and what to talk about, keeping in mind that what students discuss is not prescribed as it is essential that “students raise their own questions about literature” (Hanssen, 1998). These mini-lessons or scaffolds are important because they help students and teachers move toward “grander” conversations (Brabha & Vallaume, 2000). The teacher, once a model, then becomes a discussion participant (Tiballi & Drake, 1993).

Benefits cited in the research are that students tend towards more aesthetic responses, and that literature circles seem to provide students with “valuable opportunities to find answers to their questions and to develop new perspectives on social issues that were important to them” (Noll 1994, p. 89), encouraging the free expression of readers’ opinions, even disagreements with one another (Mizokawa & Hansen-Krening, 2000).

What all literature circle models strive to stay away from is the traditional, teacher-directed form of “hunt and peck” dissection of the class novel, or basal reading groups in which one drills isolated skills (Gilles, et al. 1994), and “recitation

type talk in which the teacher asks a question, the students answer, and the teacher evaluates" (Mehan, 1979, cited in Gilles, et al., 1994).

Thus, literature circles seem to be a logical choice when seeking to acknowledge that learning is a social act and that student response to a text is valuable when studying literature. As stated earlier, Mary Kooy (Kooy & Wells, 1996) studied book clubs in a university setting and talks about the effects of book club discussions in a classroom:

What excites me about these discussions? Three aspects are important: the talk process, talk strategies, and the content of the discussion. Students stay on task and are committed to the talk. Their discussion is interactive and animated, and resembles real-life conversations about texts (p. 67).

Daniels (1994), also echoes the value of these types of groups: "Small groups can be efficient, energizing, sometimes almost magical structures for learning . . . The limited size invites – almost compels – every individual to be an active participant in sharing ideas and constructing interpretations" (p. 10). Finally, Samway and Whang (1996) state that literature circles allow students to use their own intellectual skills and experience versus a regurgitation of information, or what Rosenblatt terms efferent response, that the skills sheets often ask for. Instead, literature circles have the potential to promote spontaneous conversations.

As spontaneous as the discourse may be, there is plenty of scaffolding, or establishing of routines (Samway & Whang, 1996) that goes on when setting up literature circles. Teachers need to teach students to ask open-ended questioning; they need to encourage and ensure that students come prepared for discussion; based

on discussion, teachers can introduce students to literary terminology in context, as well as guide follow up activities; and finally teachers need to allow for debriefing during which students synthesize what they have learned. Samway and Whang (1996) also acknowledge that the teacher's role changes and takes time to learn:

We need to learn to share our opinions, experiences and reactions to a book, but without dominating a discussion. We need to learn to follow the lead of students. Sometimes, this means that we have to put our own interests on hold. We need to learn to trust that students have thoughtful, intelligent, and interesting insights into books (p. 60).

Not all students are ready and willing to open up in discussion, however. Thus, working in a small group benefits those students who are not as likely to speak out in a large group discussion by providing a more comfortable setting in which to participate in these discourses: "It's a lot easier discussing books in a small group, than in a whole class. The teacher tends to do most of the talking with class novels . . . . [and it is] less threatening for many students who may volunteer opinions they would be reluctant to voice in front of a class" (Simpson 1995, p. 290).

Other researchers have also looked at how discussions may get derailed due to power struggles within groups (Carico, 2001; Lewis, 1997) reinforcing one of the key notions that trust within a group must be established for good talk to occur (Martinez & Roser, 1995). Still other publications look at difficulties teachers have allowing for student-centered approaches (Hanssen, 1998). These small groups take planning to make room for heterogeneity around issues of gender, race, and power; and to ensure (as much as possible) a safe and supportive environment as one student expressed it:



I youse [sic] to be very shy and I always thought that what I was going to say was wrong but I have realize that everyone has difrent [sic] opinions and it doesn't mean they are wrong. Now I believe in myself and I share as much as I want to (Samway & Whang, p. 48).

## ***2.6 Gaps in the Research***

What differs in the various approaches to literature circles is what students do to prepare for discussion. For example, in Eeds and Wells (1989) students did not write prior to discussion, but had a teacher-facilitator to help guide discussion. Samway and Whang (1997) have students use idea bookmarks and journals to help organize their thoughts. A major influence on the teaching of writing, Nancy Atwell (1987) suggests, "written dialogues about literature can work to open up texts to young readers and complex reflection" (p. 171). Similarly, Hughes & Kooy (1997) discuss the value of written response:

The written dialogue becomes a natural bridge to class discussions. Students' talk enables them to monitor their thoughts, reshape them, and see issues and concepts from broader and different vantage points. Meaning is negotiated with others through a social process . . . the knowledge thus moves from a preliminary, investigative state [through writing,] to a socially constructed form [through group discussion] (p. 188).

As Miller and Legge (1999) argue, "when one writes, one thinks"; yet, because different writing approaches related to Literature Circles are usually discussed separately and are often considered a minor component as long as the purpose for Literature Circles

remains constant (Brabham & Willaume, 2000), a gap in the research exists regarding these written approaches. They have not been examined for their effects on spoken discourse. Nor do many studies deal with high school level students.

## **2.7 Research Questions**

In light of these gaps in the literature, the different writing completed prior to students moving into literature circles discussions is the focus of this study. The approaches that are of interest to me are reading response journals as discussed by Kooy and Wells (1996); role sheets as designed by Daniels (1994); and post-it notes or “stikkums” described by Simpson (1995), Samway and Whang (1997) and Paulsen (in Daniels, 1994). A fourth approach, the placemat approach, suggested by a colleague, will be described in further detail in the procedures section.

These forms are common as they offer students a chance to write before discussing, but what and how students write is different. To be discovered is which of these approaches is more effective in promoting high school students’ aesthetic responses, enhancing their discussion, deepening their understanding of a text, and furthering their critical thinking skills in terms of literary analysis. After all, teachers should not encourage writing that is, in fact, efferent in nature – thus teacher-centered – under the guise of student-centered response. Based on the theory and research, literature circles in general appear to be more than a fad; they are a valid student-centered approach to teaching. The question is which version of written response fosters more aesthetic oral discourse about a literary text.

Specific research questions include the following: Does Daniels' role sheet approach lend itself to a more *efferent* reading? Does Kooy and Wells' response journals approach encourage thoughtful *aesthetic* reflection that is demonstrated in discussion? Does the post-it-note approach *limit* discussion or does it provide a *concrete* starting point?

Ultimately, which approach best puts theory into practice?

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Questions and the Case Study

The goal of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the various approaches to literature circles, in light of *reader response theory* (Rosenblatt, 1978), in terms of enhancing *aesthetic* discussion amongst students, deepening their understanding of a text, and furthering their critical thinking skills in terms of literary analysis. More specifically, each approach to be examined employs a different writing activity prior to group discussion of a novel; therefore, the analysis shows how that writing promotes certain types of discussion.

This is a qualitative case study (Merriam, 1988). This study involves both student and teacher/researcher preparation for, participation in and reflection upon discussion groups. Because all parties have a voice in determining best practice, this is considered *action research*. Some data is categorized and quantified; however, the essence of this study is qualitative because the nature of the student discussion is described. Further details are provided in the *procedures* section.

### 3.2 The Site: School and Community Context

The school used in this study is an inner city school located on the East side of Vancouver, serving low-working class to middle-class families and is one of the largest secondary schools in Vancouver with approximately 130 staff and 1700 students, grades 8 to 12.

Recognized by the Canadian Education Association in 1995 as one of twenty-one “exemplary” secondary schools in Canada, [it] is a comprehensive

secondary school . . . Over 52 languages are spoken in the homes of [this school's] students. The school offers a diverse academic program which includes [the following]: Advanced Placement courses in English, French, Calculus, Chemistry, and Physics; electives in Business Education, Fine Arts, Home economics (including the only Hairdressing Career Preparation and Apprenticeship program in the District), Physical Education, and Technology Education; and second language instruction in English, French, Mandarin, and Spanish. (School Growth Plan, 2004)

Within the school are several mini-schools: two focus on the academics from grade 8 to 10; French Immersion; two alternative schools serve at-risk students; modified programs; First Nations programs; and Special Needs programs.

One of the school's growth plans, which has been in process over the last five years, is improving school-wide literacy. Based on grade 8 cross-grade writing results, 95.4% of students are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations in writing and based on the Foundations Skills Assessment given to grade 10 students, 75% of grade 10s are reading at or above grade level. (School Growth Plan, 2004)

### ***3.3 Participants and Classroom Context***

The class used for this study was a regular English 9 class with four students in a modified "stream" built within the class, and one student with a B.C. Ministry of Education designation of Gifted Learning Disability with attention deficit disorder and a written output learning disability (this student's written language was at a grade 4.2 level, reading was a grade 9 level, and oral language was a grade 10 level). Academic

achievement according to report card marks in this class ranges from 31.1 % to 88.3% with the fourth term average at 74%. Of the 16 females and 12 males from low working to middle class families, students' ethnic backgrounds include Caucasian, Vietnamese, Indo-Canadian, Venezuelan, and Chinese. The socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, although given for context, are not part of the analysis of this study. Nor are issues of group dynamics and power struggles in classrooms (Lewis, 1997).

### **3.4 The Teacher**

*I had explained to them the purpose of the class: to read, discuss and respond to works of fiction (Nafisi, 2004, p.18).*

I am an English teacher. I was drawn to teaching high school English because I wanted to share my enthusiasm for literature with students. I want students to be excited about what we read in class. I want them to feel that what they bring to the class is valuable: they have voices, opinions, feelings, knowledge that they can bring to and add to the literature that we read. In my senior English class in high school I remember a lot of silence and a lot of answering questions from the back of the text. I was good at this. The questions were sometimes challenging. I knew how to look back at a story and interpret it the "correct" way. But in upper level university courses, for the most part, I was allowed to explore, to respond to literature. I loved to discuss the levels of possibilities in texts. This is what I want for my high school students. This is my role in the classroom. To achieve these outcomes, I must show my students the

different ways they may respond to, discuss, write about and analyze literature. They cannot all do this intuitively, but should be given the tools, and more importantly, they should be given the invitation.

I have taught English at this inner-city school for six years, and am the English Department Head. In all I have been teaching for nine years. In each of my classes (Humanities 8, English 9, English 11, Literature 12, and Advanced Placement English 12) I am guided by *reader response theory* (Rosenblatt, 1978) when teaching the curriculum. I tend not to focus on teacher-centered activities, but encourage students to engage in the literature through writing and voicing their opinions and ideas. Activities in my English 9 class were plentiful and provided many ways in which students could respond to literature: whole-group and small group discussion, journaling, Sustained Silent Reading (S.S.R.) of their own and class novels, creative visual and auditory projects, drama, direct instruction of grammar and punctuation skills, and regular writing assignments such as paragraphs and essays. It is common for me to invite student participation in class on a daily basis and have their responses drive discussion.

This is where my second role comes in: the researcher. As both the teacher and researcher in this study, I was sometimes a complete participant in the class maintaining my teacher role and providing feedback and instruction to each group. Still, I tried not to be a participant in their discussions. Instead I was an observer only for procedural purposes ensuring that the groups felt they knew how to begin their discussions and that they were not disturbing other classes in session. I listened to

their taped discussions outside of class time, transcribed them and provided verbal feedback in subsequent classes.

### **3.5 Procedures**

Permission forms for the study were distributed to students in December 2003, a month prior to commencing the study to give ample time for questions and collection of forms. Collection was done by a colleague and UBC master's student at the school to ensure that participants did not feel pressured by me – their teacher and researcher – to be part of the study.

The common structure of literature circles currently in practice was employed in this study (see McMahon, Raphael, Gatley, & Pardo, 1997; Martinez & Roser, 1995). I placed the students into five small heterogeneous groups based on their academic and verbal/communication abilities. I wanted students in each group who could help start discussion as well as guide discussion. By attempting to control this heterogeneity, theoretically there should not have been one strong group, or one weak group. Students were also not allowed to choose their own groups to control for possible conflicts; for example, a group of close friends in a discussion group could affect the discussion results because they could be more talkative or they could derail discussion by being off topic (Barnes & Todd, 1995).

My teaching colleague then reviewed the groups I organized to ensure there was a good number of consenting study participants in each group. Overall, 21 of the 28 students gave permission to be included in this study, but all students were a part of a discussion group as literature circles are a common activity in my classes. These



discussions were not part of students' class assessment. The novel unit began in January 2004. For a look at the complete unit and day-by-day activities, see Appendix 1.

Each group studied the same novel. This controlled for the possibility of one group having a book that was more or less engaging, or difficult than another group. Also direct comparison of the discussions and then hypotheses regarding the approach used could be made. The class novel used for this study was *In the Heat of the Night*, by John Ball (1965) and is on the B.C. Ministry of Education's recommended reading list: "This story of an orderly investigation and solution of a murder mystery presents a close study of the racial attitudes of a small town in the southern United States in the 1960s" (B.C. Ministry of Education). It is a good novel for a grade 9 class because, first, it is an exciting murder mystery novel, and second it teaches students about the consequences of stereotyping, racism, prejudice and how people need to break down these barriers. Immediately, students were cautioned about the racist language used by some of the characters in the novel to describe African Americans, and how this language is not acceptable for use. Some of this language appears in the transcripts as students were discussing the racism in the novel.

The novel was divided into 4 sections for discussion: Chapters 1-4, 5-7, 8-10, and 11-14. Each discussion group was assigned a different approach to literature circles: Daniels' Role Sheets (1994) used predetermined roles; Response Journals (Kooy & Wells, 1996) used journals as starting points for discussion; a Post-It Notes group (Samway & Whang, 1996; Simpson, 1995) marked key passages/reflections as they read to be discussed later; a Placemat group met around a large piece of paper

and wrote responses immediately prior to their discussion; and finally, the Everything group that tried each of these approaches. These roles were formally outlined on a handout given to each student (see Appendix 2).

Daniels' Role Sheets members were given a package of Daniels' role sheets, the Response Journals group used the journals they have been using since September, the Placemat group was provided with poster paper, and the Post-It Notes group was supplied with post-its. The Everything group received the role sheets and post-its, and poster paper as needed. Each group was given a tape and they tape-recorded all of their discussions during class time. They were allowed as much time as needed (approximately 30-40 minutes/session). I was not a discussion participant in the groups. Instead I participated as a procedural observer ensuring groups understood how to start and organize their discussions, and scaffolding students' learning so they were able to engage in exploratory talk (Maloch, 2002). I listened to, transcribed, and provided verbal feedback on the taped discussions.

At first I gave explicit instruction about the literature discussion group concept to the entire class. I also reviewed with them what types of things we had discussed when talking about literature in the previous five months of school. This included character, plot, theme, conflict, and setting, as well as feelings, thoughts, personal connections. I also asked what makes a good discussion. Students suggested allowing everyone to talk, to take turns, and to listen to each other. I added that they question ideas presented.

After their first discussion was completed and transcribed, I posted all the questions posed by the discussion groups, the general areas of focus, and interesting

issues discussed. Finally, I gave the class some tips for future discussions (See Appendix 3):

- Answer questions posed.
- Everyone needs to participate or you're allowing people to speak for you – allow yourself the power of an opinion.
- Have your journal, notes, placemat, role sheets and novels in front of you so you may refer to it/them when discussing ideas.
- Try not to talk over one another, so everyone may be heard.
- Ask “why”.

The purpose of this was to reinforce discussion procedures and also for students to learn from one another. Also, students may not have been given this discussion opportunity in previous school years. I strove to give these tips in a positive light, so students would not feel pressured, or feel incompetent, but would know what is required of them for this to be effective for their own learning and for the study.

Martinez and Roser (1991) suggest:

The teacher who conjectures, connects, appreciates, muses, challenges, and questions aloud shows the child how the mature responder interacts with text. By modeling these responses both during and after the reading of stories, the teacher encourages children's active participation . . . [The] teacher must value interactions and provide time and opportunities for these negotiations, joining the community of responders as an equal partner who also proposes, retracts, and amends thinking in collaborative situations (p. 652).

Afterwards, as students set up for their second discussion several classes later, I spoke with each group and gave specific feedback and scaffolding, based on their first discussion, to act as a discourse guide as these students attempted to engage in exploratory talk (Maloch, 2002). As stated in Maloch (2002), this transition to a structure in which students were responsible for discussion leadership while I was away from their particular group was not straightforward or easy.

The following are my written comments that I made as I listened to the groups' first discussions. I then verbalized these to each group:

*Daniels' Role Sheets:* Good discussion from those who finished their roles. James and Frank, try to jump into the conversation more often. You bring up good questions about racism that need investigation. Perhaps someone could do a research project on it.

*Post-It Notes:* This was a five-minute discussion. I heard one comment from Edgar. No comments from Morrison. Frances controlled the discussion and Christine and Joanne interjected. Go through each of your post-its. Tell about the passage and why you flagged it. Perhaps start with one person who speaks to his/her notes in a given chapter and then move onto the next person.

*Response Journals:* Rachel leads the discussion by asking questions. People talk over each other. The tape quality is poor. Talk closer to the recorder so I can hear your discussion. Why didn't Arthur say anything? The group taunts Arthur for not saying anything. Encourage one another to share ideas. Don't force it. I wonder if your journals are open as you're discussing. What did you write about? I don't get a sense that people have something prepared.

*Placemat:* You ask good questions. Don't forget to explore possible answers to them. Don't worry if you're correct or not, you're discussing possibilities. I asked if you were done and that unfortunately ended the conversation. Continue it until the group can't say any more.

*Everything: (Journals)* This group is quite articulate. They bring up good issues and examples from the text. Current stereotypes of east vs. west side schools/areas addressed. Alan doesn't share response. (February 9, 2004)

I gave feedback only one other time and that was after the second discussion to ensure the groups were on the right track. Students didn't know what was expected, or how to deal with their discussions being taped, so I thought it appropriate to respond to them. Conscious of this being a study, I wanted to see how the final two discussions evolved on their own without further teacher influence. We also did not discuss the discussions as a whole class with the exception of the first discussion. The usual practice in literature circles groups is to report to the whole class on their discussion; however, I omitted this step as I wanted to reduce outside influence on the individual discussions.

The discussion sessions were only one component of this novel study. As shown in Appendix 1 describing the lesson plans, the class work focused on comprehension activities, thematic discussions, character analyses, creative visual/verbal projects, literary essay writing, and a unit test. It is on this class work that students were assessed.

The entire novel study was to be four to six weeks in length, but in actuality took place over seven weeks as classes were interrupted due to two guidance classes during which the students' counselor taught the class, professional days, and a semester turn-around day.

### **3.6 Data**

Data included audio-taped recordings, my teacher day-book, lesson plans, overhead notes, transcripts, reflections, student feedback forms, and artifacts (e.g., Daniels' role sheet examples, student response logs, sample post-it notes, the placemat papers, handouts, and written assignments). See Appendix 10 for complete transcripts of Discussion 3.

### **3.7. Analysis**

#### **3.7.1 Analysis 1: Wilhelm's Ten Dimensions of Response**

Upon initial review of the transcribed tapes, I used Wilhelm's (1997) ten dimensions of response to categorize what each of the groups read, wrote, and spoke about. I saw this as a suitable measure as Wilhelm created them from studying what readers did to achieve an aesthetic reading and to determine what "moves" constituted the aesthetic stance (p. 23):

##### *Evocative Dimensions*

1. Entering the Story World
2. Showing Interest in the Story
3. Relating to Characters

#### 4. Seeing the Story World

##### *Connective Dimensions*

#### 5. Elaborating on the Story World

#### 6. Connecting Literature to Life

##### *Reflective Dimensions*

#### 7. Considering Significance

#### 8. Recognizing Literary Conventions

#### 9. Recognizing Reading as a Transaction

#### 10. Evaluating an Author, and the Self as Reader (1997, p. 46-47)

Thus, if students covered these dimensions, one could argue that groups and individuals were demonstrating Rosenblatt's (1995) aesthetic, intimate, spontaneous, lived through, and enjoyed response to literature. Additionally, these dimensions cover the critical analysis that teachers want their students engaged in while reading literature: an "awareness of the function of the various characters or episodes or images illuminat[ing] what the work as a whole 'means'" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p.47). To see sample utterances that fit a certain category, see Appendix 11. For a detailed explanation of the categories and sample utterances, see Wilhelm (1997).

### **3.7.2 Eight Dimensions of Response**

As categorization of utterances took place, I decided to combine several dimensions as they often overlapped. Entering the Story World is combined with Showing Interest in the story. Recognizing Reading as a Transaction is combined with

Evaluating an Author, and the Self as Reader. I did not create a category for utterances that appeared “off-topic” or task.

As I analyzed the transcripts for these eight dimensions, the initiating utterance on a topic was flagged and counted towards a particular dimension. If the next utterance initiated a new dimension I flagged it, and so on.

### **3.8 Analysis 2: The Discourse Lens**

While the first analysis of content shows groups attained a “range of understanding” (Barnes & Todd, 1995), and promoted certain dimensions of response, it does not show how the discussions played out. As Eeds & Wells (1989) themselves note, “mere quantification of this data does not address the essence of what occurred in these literature study groups” (p. 14). Nor does the frequency address how the writing done prior to each discussion affected the depth and breadth of the discourse. Which approach allows for the “elements of literature [to] emerge as a natural part of the conversation” (p. 14)? (“Natural” being the key qualifier.) Which approach allows for students and teachers to “engage in talk about literature that reflected what they had lived through, . . . as aesthetic experience” (p.14)? Thus it is important to analyze the discourse itself. Did it reflect more aesthetic or efferent readings? Were students engaged in the discourse occurring in the group? Were they participating in an organic conversation that includes initiating, eliciting, extending, and qualifying (Barnes & Todd, 1995)?

The quality and nature of the groups’ discourse is a reflection of the aesthetic response. Thus one must question if the talk was predominately exploratory or



presentational, and if the students seemed to learn from talking together (Barnes & Todd, 1995). Any teacher would agree that one-word responses or closed responses do not make for good conversation in which learning is to take place. Instead the goal of group discussion, or collaborative inquiry is that it is reflective and allows for a range of ideas, rather than a presentation of certainties or regurgitation. The emphasis is on the journey (Barnes & Todd, 1995, p. 91).

Because I found that the eight dimensions left did not show the nature of the responses given, I decided to analyze the data using a different lens. In my second analysis of the transcripts I examined them through the lens of my theoretical construct that is made up of Barnes & Todd's (1995) exploratory and presentational talk, combined with Rosenblatt's (1995) aesthetic, lived-through response. I define aesthetic conversations as more exploratory, with markers such as conversations in which initiating, eliciting, extending, and qualifying take place, while efferent conversations include more presentational talk that sounds like a report instead of a "natural", "lived-through" conversation. Table 1, that follows, outlines my definitions of aesthetic and efferent response. For each of the groups I analyze if the discourse is exploratory or presentational, giving examples from the transcripts; I also give an example from the transcripts during which a topic of conversation was sustained in order to give the essence of what transpired in each group.

**Table 1: Characteristics of efferent and aesthetic discourse**

<b>Efferent Discourse</b> <b>has the following characteristics</b>	<b>Aesthetic Discourse</b> <b>has the following characteristics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presentational talk</li> <li>• closed</li> <li>• reporting out information</li> <li>• listing information</li> <li>• clipped/short utterances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploratory talk</li> <li>• open ended</li> <li>• initiating conversations</li> <li>• eliciting information</li> <li>• extending comments/ideas</li> <li>• qualifying statements/ideas</li> <li>• sustained</li> <li>• reflective</li> <li>• shows a range of ideas</li> <li>• organic conversational flow</li> <li>• lived through</li> <li>• natural</li> <li>• spontaneous</li> </ul>

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

### ***4.1 The Questions***

My goal in this case study was to evaluate which of the different approaches to literature circles groups is more effective in promoting high school students' aesthetic responses, enhancing their discussion, deepening their understanding of a text, and furthering their critical thinking skills in terms of literary analysis. The approaches used were reading journals as discussed by Kooy and Wells (1996), role sheets as designed by Daniels (1994), and post-it notes or "stikkums" described by Simpson (1995), Samway and Whang (1997) and Paulsen (in Daniels, 1994). The fourth approach was the placemat approach. I included a fifth group that tried each of these four approaches as a kind of "control" group. These forms are common in that they offer students a chance to write before discussing, but what and how students write is different.

### ***4.2 The First Analysis: Eight Dimensions of Response***

In my first analysis I analyzed the transcripts for eight dimensions based on Wilhelm's ten dimensions of response. Table 2 below shows the results for each of the discussion groups. Table 3 results are based on the percentage of the frequency of utterances of a particular category.

Table 2: Eight Dimensions of response (utterances/discussion)

	Entering/ Showing Interest in Story World	Relating to Characters	Seeing Story World	Elaborating on Story World	Connecting Literature to Life	Considering Significance	Recognizing Literary Conventions	Recognizing Reading as a Transaction/ Evaluating Author & Self as Reader
<b>Daniels' Role Sheets</b>								
Discussion 1	2	3	1	2	2	1	0	0
Discussion 2	5	2	1	0	1	2	0	0
Discussion 3	2	7	4	4	3	4	1	1
Discussion 4	1	3	2	4	5	5	0	5
<b>Overall</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

<b>Response Journals</b>								
Discussion 1	8	1	0	1	0	0	1	2
Discussion 2	6	4	0	1	1	2	0	1
Discussion 3	4	3	0	1	0	3	0	2
Discussion 4	1	2	0	2	1	8	0	2
<b>Overall</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

<b>Post-It Notes</b>								
Discussion 1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Discussion 2	4	6	0	3	3	5	0	1
Discussion 3	1	10	0	9	3	5	0	3
Discussion 4	3	5	0	2	0	5	0	0
<b>Overall</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>Placemat</b>								
Discussion 1	6	2	1	2	0	4	2	0
Discussion 2	5	8	5	9	3	3	0	0
Discussion 3	4	4	0	4	2	6	1	0
Discussion 4	1	4	0	3	1	4	1	3
<b>Overall</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Everything</b>								
Discussion 1	1	6	1	1	3	3	0	3
Discussion 2	3	4	1	5	0	3	3	2
Discussion 3	3	18	3	13	2	9	0	3
Discussion 4	1	2	1	5	2	1	2	3
<b>Overall</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>

Table 3: Eight Dimensions of response (total percentages)

	Entering/ Showing Interest in Story World	Relating to Characters	Seeing the Story World	Elaborating on Story World	Connecting Literature to Life	Considering Significance	Recognizing Literary Conventions	Recognizing Reading as a Transaction/ Evaluating Author & Self as Reader
Daniels' Role Sheets	14%	21%	11%	14%	15%	10%	1%	8%
Response Journals	33%	17%	0%	9%	4%	23%	2%	12%
Post-It Notes	13%	31%	0%	20%	8%	23%	0%	6%
Placemat	19%	21%	7%	21%	7%	20%	2%	3%
Everything	7%	28%	6%	22%	7%	15%	5%	10%

Upon closer examination of these tables, it appears that particular approaches encourage particular kinds of dimensions. In this discussion of the first analysis, I highlight the more “popular” dimensions covered by each group and give an excerpt from the transcripts for an example of the more frequent (or typical) dimension to give a picture of the group.

#### **4.2.1 Daniels' Role Sheets**

Daniels' premise regarding this popular format is sound:

In literature circles, while we are always interested in the details of what we read and always take care to build our interpretations on a close reading of the text, we begin our conversations with personal response. We connect with one another around divergent, open-ended, interpretive questions . . . . [S]tudents have worked through a book together – sharing their views from a variety of angles, listening to selected passages read aloud, looking at one another's drawing, talking over particular vocabulary, connecting the work to their own

lives, searching out questions of common interest among peers. . . [Writer's] craft [is] being studied in a very deep, though implicit way (Daniels, 1994, p. 24).

Daniels' Role Sheets read pre-determined portions of the text and each group member prepared a specific role for the upcoming discussion. The roles were Discussion Director, Literary Luminary, Illustrator, Connector, and Summarizer and were fully explained in the package of handouts given to each student (see Appendix 5). During group discussion everyone was to come with the role sheets completed to help perform that role. The discussion roles rotated from one student to the next for each session, so that each student had a chance to respond differently to the text (Daniels, 1994).

It appears that Daniels' Role Sheets had a more democratic, or "even", distribution of utterances across all of the dimensions, with the exception of Recognizing Literary Conventions. As the role sheets clearly outline what students are to look for while reading (plot summary, illustration of a scene, important passages, discussion questions, personal connections) and are based on reader response perspectives, collaborative learning and scaffolding theory (Daniels, 1994, p. 34-46), it makes sense that the students' responses would cover the eight dimensions. But, while *what* the students choose to illustrate, or discuss for example, is up to them, the fact that they are instructed to illustrate or lead the discussion determined by a role sheet (see Appendix 4), means that in essence the response is teacher directed; hence this almost guarantees certain responses (all names are pseudonyms):

James: I am the connector and I'm supposed to connect stuff to the world. Um, Sam went to jail for something he didn't do is the same as t.v. shows that we see where not the real criminal is sent to jail and yah, that's all I got.

Phoebe: What? Like I think he meant like how Gillespie just didn't want full on evidence. You know how he shows how cops just frame the guys and end the case? What do you guys think about this?

Marlene: I think that it's true. Kind of.

Ingrid: I think that it happens but maybe before it happened a lot but it's not that much now. 'Cause people know what to do to get advice on how to get the cops to get motivated to make it public and the public will say if you don't solve it then what the heck, right? So I don't think they'll try to get just anyone.

(Discussion 3, February 26, 2004)

#### **4.2.2 Response Journals**

This group used the *reader response journals* as the focal point in their discussions. Kooy and Wells, in *Reading Response Logs* (1996), focus on the value of personal response: "We all come to a text with unique life and reading experiences that color our perceptions of the literary worlds we enter . . . Responses are filtered through the grid of personal experiences; hence, each response is unique" (p.12). Kooy and Wells use response journals because they "[enable] us to hold an interactive conversation with the text while talk with others helps reshape and extend our understanding . . . Interpretation is a dynamic, co-operative process that has students reading, writing, and talking about literature" (p.12).

Students in this study wrote responses to the chapters read prior to their discussion and then used their journals as the source for small group discussion. They had been writing journal responses to stories and issues discussed in class since the beginning of the school year, so they were familiar with the format. I also gave them prompts, such as “This chapter makes me feel. . .”, to help them start their journal entries. Also, during whole class activities around this novel study, I posed journal topics that asked all students to put themselves in certain characters’ shoes and write about how they would feel or react; thus, students seemed comfortable with the task. I did not respond to their individual journals because I did not want to lead their responses in any way. However, if I were to use this method with an entire class, I would collect the journals to respond back to them: a mini-grand conversation so-to-speak.

Interestingly, in the Response Journals group, students spent 33 percent of their time Entering/Showing Interest in the Story World, with the next highest dimension, Considering Significance, at 23 percent. In regular class sessions, we spent time journal writing on topics asking students to put themselves in the characters’ positions (Relating to Characters), yet this only appeared in their discussions four percent of the time. As for Entering/Showing Interest in the Story World, part of Wilhelm’s definition is that students summarize events of the novel, and with this group, many journal entries focused on a summary of what took place (See Appendix 5 for a sample entry):

Vanessa: (reading from journal) It’s seems to me that Virgil Tibbs is finding what every suspect did. If it were up to me, I’d keep some stuff for future questioning. He asks many individuals questions. They may be telling the truth or making it



up. However, once they answer, Virgil will believe anything they say. I think at one point more information about the murder will be informed and Virgil will have to ask a suspect who was released for questioning. When trying to find a suspect he/she will be in no sight. Virgil will have something up his sleeve waiting to be revealed and this may be part of the plan.

Glenda: (reading from journal) Virgil went to Endicott's house starts to question Eric Kaufmann and Endicott and Sam volunteered to look after Dueana and she knows that there is racism in this town and they don't like Italians.

(Discussion 2, February 17, 2004)

In this excerpt, Vanessa summarizes events, connects literature to life and starts to elaborate on the story world. Glenda only gives a summary. At this grade 9 level, it is quite common for students to write a basic response through summary; it's easy to do. Maloch (2003) and Eeds & Wells (1989) also cite this as a strategy students often engage in when discussing literature. Maloch (2003) attributes this to students being unfamiliar with working through "confusing details . . . because they were not sure what else to do" (p. 101). Thus further scaffolding from the teacher would help encourage students or show them how to move beyond a summary to perhaps more analysis of what was read.

Still, students managed to move beyond summary to Elaborate on the Story World (9%), Consider Significance (23%), and ask questions of the story and each other:

Victor: I have a question. Do you think it [would be] fair [if] was Sam was thrown in jail for 3 months, 3 years, and then released...(inaudible)...and then attacked a girl, and he spent two years in jail, but he took someone else's life? [This does not take place in the novel]

Arthur: No.

Glenda: It's not fair. He should stay in jail forever you know.

Rachel: Since he did say the crime was killing someone right, then yah, because really it depends on the crime, and if you killed someone you might of just go to jail for the rest of your life.

Vanessa: Well, it depends on if the person is willing to change into a nice guy.

Arthur: It could be a device sentence so they'd have to know where he is at all times.

Victor: A tracking device.

Peter: You could take it out too you know. (Discussion 4, March 5, 2004)

#### **4.2.3 Post-it Notes**

This group used post-it notes to guide discussion. As they read and came across something that intrigued them, made them question the text, or disturbed them, for example, they were to put a post-it note, that was supplied to them, on that page and write a brief response on the note (see Appendix 6). They came to the discussions with books and post-it notes in hand. The post-it notes encouraged students to look back to the actual text and talk about why they chose a particular passage. They often would read out the selected passage first and then a discussion ensued. Many of the

passages students chose to mark with a post-it note Relating to Characters (31%), Elaborating on the Story World (20%), and Considering Significance (23%). They were grappling with the text, trying to figure out what it meant and why it was important:

Morrison: I like one of the lines Tibbs says (reading from novel), "After you've lain in the ground for a few months no one will care if you're black or white."

'Cause he was questioning the guy and he was like, "who the hell are you, some black guy" the suspect and every time he asked him a question he would say, "who do you think you are, you're black". I think it was a good line because it's kinda true. (Considering Significance)

Frances: Yeah, if you're in jail no one's going to care about your skin colour, they won't even know who you are anymore. (Connecting Literature to Life)

Joanne: Sam, he wanted the crime solved, but he wanted it solved by someone he could look up to and respect.

Christine: He doesn't want Tibbs to solve the mystery.

Frances: He's in a confused state right now. (Relating to Character)

Morrison: 'Cause Sam was like the top cop maybe.

Joanne: He was struggling because he confused.

Frances: Obviously if Tibbs was white he'd respect him.

Christine: He'd respect him more, because I think he does respect him.

Morrison: No one else respects him. (Discussion 2, February 17, 2004)

#### **4.2.4 Placemat**

The premise of the placemat method is similar to the response journal group. This group was given the task of reading the pre-determined portions of the novel. Then at the start of the class during which the discussion would occur, they got into their group and simultaneously wrote a response around the same piece of poster-paper (See Appendix 7). They were invited to write their ideas, opinions, thoughts, and questions about the section read. Finally, they would begin their discussion immediately after writing their responses. They would state what they had written and then elaborate on certain ideas or questions presented.

The Placemat group results show high percentages of utterances Relating to Characters (21%), Elaborating on the Story World (21%), and Considering Significance (20%). Instead of marking passages as the Post-It Notes group did, this group wrote questions or point-form notes on the section read. In their questions and notes they were trying to clarify events (part of Elaborating on the Story World):

Catherine: Was this case all just an accident, or did someone deliberately kill Mantolli? (Showing Interest in Story Action)

Karen: Well look at the (inaudible) if they were really trying to kill him they would do it a lot better.

Catherine: But then do you remember the weapon where he striked (sic) behind him? (Considering Significance)

Karen: Yeah, they could have picked it up in any random place. If they really planned it they would have thrown it in the river or buried it or something.

Catherine: Is the murderer crazy or something? (Relating to Character)

Karen: They're desperate.

Catherine: Desperate for what?

Trevor: Money probably.

Karen: Mr. Endicott is loaded.

Catherine: Then that would lead to Dueana which is really a suspect because if he would die then she would get all the money. (Elaborating on Story World)

Nick: Exactly.

Catherine: But why would his own daughter kill him?

Karen: Well, money is a very big motivation.

Trevor: Not always.

Catherine: Did someone make her do it? Someone like led her in to that direction?

Karen: I don't think she did though.

Catherine: Maybe she did it in her sleep.

Karen: No , I mean that if she did murder him then she wouldn't be so upset...she wouldn't have gotten involved.

Catherine: Yeah, but that could all be an act.

Karen: Why would she do that?

Catherine: To protect herself.

Karen: From what?

Catherine: From being suspected. (Discussion 3 February 26, 2004)

#### **4.2.5 Everything**

For the Everything group, each time this group met, students were given a different approach to use. Therefore, I looked at each discussion separately and measured the dimensions covered and compared them to what the other groups did.

For their first discussion, this group used the Response Journals approach. This group was Relating to Character 33% of the time and Connecting Literature to Life, Considering Significance and Recognizing Reading as a Transaction 16% each. Interestingly, they did less summarizing than the actual Response Journal group. This difference may be due to the group's ability to participate in discourse. This is analyzed in the next section. Or, it may be due to group dynamics that was not analyzed as part of this study, but is discussed in the limitations section. In the second discussion using the placemat approach, the higher dimensions were similar to the actual Placemat group: 24% Elaborating on the Story World, and 19% Considering Significance. The third discussion had this group using post-it notes. This discussion contained the highest number of utterances and the highest dimensions also matched those of the Post-It Notes group: 25% Elaborating on the Story World, and 18% Considering Significance. Finally, in the fourth discussion, this group used Daniels' role sheets. Again, every dimension was covered with the highest in Elaborating on the Story World followed by Relating to Characters, Connecting Literature to Life and Recognizing Literary Conventions:

Lucy: Did you guys enjoy the book? (Recognizing Reading as a Transaction)

John/Nancy/Tanya: Yes.

Lucy: Why or why not?

Tanya: I think this is the only book that I'll ever enjoy.

John: It was easy.

Lucy: I liked it.

John: Compared to the *Lord of the Rings* (inaudible)

(suggestion on not liking it)

Lucy: It made me want to read on.

Tanya: (responding to John) For a class study though.

John: Oh, I guess.

Nancy: You didn't want to stop half way through, you know with *Singularity* and what's it called.

Lorraine: I hate that book! (Elaborating on Story World – connecting to texts)

Lucy: *Singularity*, I thought it was so stupid.

Lorraine: Did you read *Inside Stories* last year?

Tanya: No this year. *Singularity* wasn't that bad actually. It was pretty ok. It was interesting. But then this book was pretty good comparatively.

Lucy: Why do you like it? (referring to *In the Heat of the Night*)

Tanya: The author is so good with the tool of suspense. (Recognizing Literary Conventions)

John: I think it got irritating he ended every chapter with like something //

(indicates overlapping or interrupting utterances)

Tanya: That's how people cling to the book.

John: I found it annoying. I enjoyed it earlier, but then it just got irritating.

Lorraine: It's not so much that was irritating, it was like coming like...//

John: It's like ok, so the chapter is almost over, what am I going to find that's shocking now?

Lucy: My next question is how do you think Sam and Bill look at Virgil now?

(Elaborating on Story World)

Nancy: They respect him a lot. (Relating to Characters)

Tanya: Gillespie shook his hand.

Lucy: I think they have a new view on African Americans.

John: Sam definitely does, but Gillespie was like. He just wanted to make it for show.

Tanya: When Gillespie gets in the car to go with them to look around and then he noticed that Tibbs is like his partner in solving the crime. So yeah, I think they respect him a lot more and stuff. (Considering Significance)

John: They didn't really have any respect for him in the beginning, so //

Nancy: He proved himself. (Relating to Characters)

Tanya: He deserves a lot of respect. (Discussion 4, March 5, 2004)

### ***4.3 Summary of Analysis 1***

Looking at the table showing the percentage of utterances in the eight dimensions of response, one can see that each of the literature circles approaches allows students to enter each dimension (perhaps with the exception of Seeing the Story World, or Recognizing Literary Conventions with the Post-It Notes group).

The Daniels' Role Sheets covered all eight dimensions somewhat equally, demonstrating a more even range of utterances in each of the eight dimensions (with



the exception of Recognizing Literary Conventions). The Response Journals group tended to spend most of the time Entering/Showing Interest in the Story World (33%), Considering Significance (23%), and Relating to Characters (17%) as they summarized the novel. The Placemat group spent equal amounts of time Entering/Showing Interest in the Story World (19%), Relating to Characters (21%), Elaborating on the Story World (21%), and Considering Significance (20%) by examining possible scenarios and asking questions of the text through their written responses on the placemat. The Post-It Notes group demonstrated high percentages in Elaborating on the Story World (20%), Considering Significance (23%), and Relating to Characters (31%) through reference to specific quotes or passages marked in their texts. These results were consistent, for the most part, when the Everything group tried each of the approaches to literature circles. Implications in this data will be discussed in the conclusion.

#### **4.4 The Second Analysis: Discourse**

This first analysis, which quantified aesthetic response according to the eight dimensions of response, failed to show the true nature of those responses.

In my second analysis of the transcripts, I examined them through the lens of my theoretical construct that is made up of Barnes & Todd's (1995) exploratory and presentational talk, combined with Rosenblatt's (1995) aesthetic, lived through response. I define *aesthetic discourse* as more *exploratory* with markers such as conversations in which initiating, eliciting, extending, and qualifying take place, while *efferent discourse* is more *presentational* where talk sounds like a report instead of a

natural, lived through conversation. Refer to Table 1 on page 35 for definitions of efferent and aesthetic discourse.

#### **4.4.1 Daniels' Role Sheets**

Again, the Daniels' Role Sheets format encouraged students to cover the eight dimensions outlined by Wilhelm (1997), but it was more efferent in nature as the tasks were teacher – or role sheet – directed. And while the Daniels' Role Sheets group demonstrated a range of understanding, they only participated in exploratory talk during the Discussion Director's role. In the other roles, their talk was presentational. Therefore, discussion sounded like a report, as in the following example:

Phoebe: Last time I drew how Gillespie always tries to be, like, solving the case and how Virgil called the hotel where Kaufmann stayed. Gillespie called it after and tried to figure out info and stuff and then he keeps on trying to solve it before Virgil, but he's not experienced. Ok Summarizer. (asking Summarizer role to begin reporting)

It was only in the Discussion Director role that students were required to pose questions that helped their fellow students extend the conversation and become exploratory:

Phoebe: (in role of Discussion Director) What would have happened if Tibbs popped back to, you know when Tibbs was first brought back to the station and the chief guy, what would have happened if he talked back to him? 'Cause he was screaming, did you do it? And stuff like that.

Ingrid: He would have got so mad because he doesn't want a black guy talking back to him because he's so racist.

Phoebe: But what would have happened to him?

Ingrid: He probably thought he was guilty.

Phoebe: If he actually talked back they would have had a fight.

Ingrid: Maybe he was looking for a fight to prove that he was //

Frank: more powerful.

Phoebe: I think he wanted to fight with the black guy. If he beat Tibbs at anything that means he's more powerful.

Marlene: He wanted to make himself feel better.

Phoebe: He just had the job for three weeks or 9 weeks.

(Discussion 1, February 3, 2004)

During the exploratory talk it seemed that students in this group learned from each other during the discussion of the issue of racism and even connected it to life:

Ingrid: Do you think there are still places like Wells today where racism is so like strong like that?

Frank: Probably.

Marlene: There might not be places like that, but there's still probably people like that.

Phoebe: But you know how Afghanistan and stuff you know how certain parts hates (sic) Americans and stuff like that?

Ingrid: Do you think, just say if everyone was racist and one person wasn't racist, do you think they'll act racist just to fit in or will they stand up and be like, "oh no that's all wrong?"

Marlene: If that person is smart or just trying to go with the flow, then I don't think they would stand up, but if they were like I don't know...//

Phoebe: I think it's more about morals and principles. 'Cause then if they ever were mature and thought about it, like about life and stuff, they would know more people would stand up rather than go along.

Ingrid: Next question, just say if Tibbs was white, right? Um, would you think Gillespie would be just as much threatened or more?

James: Gillespie would respect him more if he was white.

Madeline: What is the question?

Ingrid: If Tibbs was white do you think Gillespie would be just as much threatened for his job, or no?

Madeline: Kind of 'cause he wants to solve the case himself.

(Discussion 4, March 5, 2004)

This group even discussed the small group discussions themselves:

Phoebe: Did you actually enjoy this?

Marlene: I did.

Madeline: The discussions or the //

Ingrid: It's different. Finally something exciting.

Madeline: No writing.

Phoebe: It think it worked our brain more.

Group: Yeah.

Phoebe: We actually thought about it. (Discussion 4, March 5, 2004)

What teacher wouldn't be pleased with students saying that they had to think about things more? Still, as demonstrated in these transcripts, the danger is setting "some stereotyped form [such as the role sheets that] will probably focus the students' attention on what is to be required of her after she has read the book rather than on the work itself as she evokes it from the text" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 64). Thus, teachers might use this more effectively as a scaffold and encourage students to move away from the roles quickly. This will be discussed further in the implications section.

#### ***4.4.2 Response Journals***

As stated in the first analysis, students were familiar with the response journal format from work done earlier in the school year. When they were to meet with their discussion group, students were to use their responses as the basis for their discussion. Interestingly, this group tended to write summaries as responses to the sections read, so their discussions were limited in scope and depth. And while they might have made personal connections, the dimensions analysis did not show the quality of those connections. At the first discussion, most did not have their journals open in front of them and one can see their discussion contained closed, presentational utterances:

Peter: Talk about the murder, about Mr. Mantolli.

Rachel: Oh yeah the murder case.

(speaker unidentifiable) I'm not sure who he was.

(speaker unidentifiable) Mr. Tibbs is smart.

Rachel: He kind of does all the solving, the chief is kind of useless.

Glenda: He actually observes closely to like people to what they do and stuff.

Victor: Well.

Glenda: They bring a prisoner in?

Rachel: No they, they have his cash.

Peter: Harvey Oberst.

Glenda: He has Mantoli's wallet.

Arthur: Who do you think did it?

Rachel: Well obviously, how could we know?

Victor: We only have a few clues, like Harvey has money.

(Discussion 1, February 3, 2004)

This excerpt from the group's first discussion shows that they are Showing Interest in the Story Action, Relating to Characters, and Recognizing the Text as a Transaction; however, the first three discussions tended to stay in Wilhelm's "Evocative Dimensions" and then the last discussion included more connective and reflective dimensions as well as slightly more open, exploratory talk:

Rachel: I have a question, you know at the end of the story how Gillespie just took Virgil to the train station and like you know all they did was like "yah, ok, whatever" kind of thing, then like they walked passed each other and then like nothing really happened. Did you think that was a strange ending?

Victor: In a way, yeah.

Rachel: 'Cause all he did was like you know, he wanted to shake.

(misunderstanding of "hand shake" as a greeting)

Victor: He was afraid.

Rachel: I know he was like, I wanted to do that but then again he just walked away and went home and went to sleep, so that was a strange ending.

Later, they concluded their discussion by examining the significance of the issues in the text:

Victor: What do you think the moral of the story is?

Rachel: Don't kill.

Glenda: I think it is you shouldn't judge people by how they look. You shouldn't just say they are bad when they are good inside.

Rachel: Just don't judge anything before hand.

Glenda: You should know them first before you should judge them.

(Discussion 4, March 5, 2004)

What appears to be at issue with this group is its group dynamics (which will be discussed in the limitations section) and with being familiar with generating a conversation by initiating, eliciting, extending, and qualifying (Barnes & Todd, 1995). They tended to engage in presentational talk when reading from their journal response, but when they asked each other open-ended questions, exploratory talk developed. Exploratory talk did improve for the group, especially in the last discussion. Perhaps they felt more comfortable with the activity and each other by that point in time.

#### **4.4.3 Post-It Notes**

Even though students had their novels with them, which they had marked with post-it notes, this group had difficulty getting the first conversation started. One member of the group read a statement from their post-it note without context:

Edgar: He had been a police chief and resident of Wells for nine weeks. You don't have to be trained for a long time to be chief.

Frances: Who is he?

Christine: Sam?

Frances: Sam. I just think that Sam should stop stereotyping people.

Joanne: He started liking him.

Frances: The chief guy is so stupid. I don't understand how he achieved such a high position. And he never had any experience.

Joanne: Because he's white.

Frances: And he said the only thing he did because he heard it from some other guy.

Joanne: He's pretty mean to Sam.

Frances: He's so cocky.

Frances: Remember they also visited the house, the Mantoli's house and then when he went back the guy it shows that not everyone was racist because the Mantoli guy's friend actually gave the black guy respect, "hi nice to meet you//

Christine: Was Enrico white?

Joanne: Yes, Italian. Latino.



Frances: He wasn't black.

Christine: He's in the middle.

Joanne: Middle class.

(Discussion 1, February 3, 2004)

This is the entire first discussion for the Post-It Notes group. It was mostly presentational and contained closed responses. Fortunately, after reviewing their discussion with the group and with suggestions from me, they found a format to use in the discussion: a single person would start at the beginning of the chapter and would discuss their first post-it note, and the group would move sequentially from there.

After the first discussion, this group's discussions, which were amongst the longest of all the groups, contained many direct references to the text, with lots of elaboration on the text, discussion about characters, suppositions, and personal connections to situations. They also enjoyed finding that they had marked similar pages – building a community of readers:

Edgar: Gillespie said, "who in the hell asked you to open your big black mouth" (the rest of the group, except Morrison, marked the same passage, and expressed excitement while he read)

Joanne: It shows he's very //

Christine: It seemed he had a lot of authority because he says you can talk when I tell you to talk.

Frances: I know. What made him all big and stuff. He's so jealous.

Joanne: But he's just doing his job.

Morrison: And you know when Tibbs pisses him off he's going to say something racist, like when he solves something you know he's going to say something about being black. (Discussion 2, February 11, 2004)

According to Wilhelm's roles, students' attention tended towards Relating to Character, Extending the Story World, and Considering Significance. With the exception of the first discussion, there was little in the way of surface or presentational responses; instead, they questioned the text with it open in front of them:

Frances: You know on page 81 he says something disrespectful, like in his head he's like, "oh I shouldn't have said that." If you're so ashamed about it why did you say it in the beginning?

Jennifer: Because he didn't actually know (sic) that //

Frances: what he's doing.

Christine: He said Virgil was the smartest black I ever saw. Is he implying that Black people are stupid?

Frances: Like what made him so much better?

Joanne: And then he added he oughta be a white man.

Christine: Is he trying to say that black people are stupid and white people are smart?

Frances: Why are white people so much better?

Christine: Yeah.

Morrison: That's what he was thinking.

Frances: That's what I don't understand either, you know how um, they know Oberst, or whatever, he's like saying he's poor white trash. If you're so proud of your race, why do you dis (sic) your own race too? It doesn't make sense.

(Discussion 3, February 26, 2004)

It seems that, by having students mark pages as they read, it gives them a starting point on which they have to elaborate, helping them examine a broader scope of the text and different story lines. Much of this group's sustained talk centered on issues of racism:

Christine: When Virgil said he was going to solve the murder that night, he was pretty determined.

Morrison: Sam was imagining that Dueanna Mantolli meant that kiss.

Frances: He has something going on with her, I swear.

Morrison: He's like imagining that she was (inaudible)

Frances: Is this the same chapter that Delores said that she was framing Sam?

Frances: It's stupid how Sam was asking if black people don't feel pain kind of thing.

Morrison: When they fight right?

Frances: The doctor came to fix him up or something and stuck a needle in his bruise and he yelled.

Morrison: And he said, "Why are there so many coloured fighters, don't they feel pain? Or is it just easier for them to fight?"

Frances: Tibbs said, "No it's not any easier"

Morrison:...(inaudible)

Frances: 'Cause they're both human, why would they think that? They're both human either way; they're both men. They have the same bodies.

Edgar: In the beginning when Sam was in the cafe and the manager came to see him, he was defending Virgil and says that Virgil isn't a nigger.

Frances: Yah, that was cool. He says he's not this; he's not that. Blah, blah, blah.

Christine: I think Sam and Virgil's friendship grew. They actually understand each other now, instead of fighting. (Discussion 4, March 5, 2004)

This group clearly learned from one another during their discussion, and they were adept at initiating, eliciting, extending and qualifying their responses. Again, that brief starting point on the post-it note appears to have encouraged students to elaborate on why they chose a particular marked passage. What was also noticeable was that students had a lot of excited energy in their discussions, and a lot of fun bantering with one another:

Joanne: Page 95 right? Sam was, like, saying that what if she were to be up and about again, that would give Virgil a good look at the Purdy girl. When they passed by that girl's house.

Christine: Delores.

Jennifer: Then he was saying he didn't want Virgil to see the dirty white girl with no clothes on.

Morrison: Because he's black he doesn't want him to see a naked white girl?

Frances: Well, like, he can check her out all the time, so //

Morrison: So if he was driving with another white guy they would go check her out?

Frances: He's so dirty.

Michael: He's still a guy; he'd still like to check out girls. Do you think he's black, so he's gay?

Frances: She's like half his age, eww.

Michael: I know it's gross, but, like, he's black, he can't check out girls?

Frances: Yah, but even though they would have passed, I don't think Tibbs would have //

Christine: looked.

Frances: 'Cause he has a lot of respect.

Christine: He has, what's the word?

Frances: He's not like some horny guy like he (Sam) is //

Christine: like Morrison over here. (laughter from group)

Morrison: Where did that come from?

Frances: All guys are like that. (laughter) Anyways, Chapter 9.

Morrison: Hold on. I want to go back to the stuff, you know some girls are really just slutty, like Christine over here...(laughter) Sorry Ms. Clark, I just had to get her back (laughter)

Christine: Oh thanks, ok, anyways.

Morrison: You're welcome.

(Discussion 3, February 26, 2004)

#### **4.4.4 Placemat Group**

After students formed their Placemat group and simultaneously wrote their own responses around the same piece of poster-paper – writing ideas, opinions, thoughts, and questions about the section they had read – they would begin their discussion immediately after writing their responses.

Each person began by stating which questions and comments they had written, and each question served to initiate the group's discourse:

Catherine: (reading out what she wrote) Why did Mr. Endicott ask so many personal questions to Tibbs? Sam has this feeling of liking Tibbs. Did Harvey have an alibi for the murder? Gillespie has prejudice towards Negroes, or in other words, African Americans. Why didn't Mr. Endicott wake up his daughter to help i.d. the body? Sam doesn't put a lot of effort into his work, just does what is ordered.

Trevor: (reading notes) Mr. Tibbs is a police officer from Pasadena, California. He's very intelligent. Mr. G. calls him a Negro. He's investigating homicide. Sam is not a trained police officer. Mr. Tibbs helps the case of Mantolli's death. Harvey stole the wallet of Mantolli. Is Mr. Mantolli really dead?

Catherine: Yes, because the doctor already identified his body as being dead for about 45 minutes to an hour. So we should talk about character, what we think of them. Sam Wood. What do you think about him?

Trevor: Not trained.

Nick: Doesn't put effort into his work.

Trevor: Yes he does. He listens to Mr. Gillespie.

Catherine: Right, he doesn't like him. He's just a person from somewhere else that saw a billboard on being chief.

Karen: He's very closed-minded.

Nick: He just does what he's ordered to, like Catherine said.

(Discussion 1, February 3, 2004)

As one can see, students were initially engaged in presentational talk as they listed their questions, but those questions led to more exploratory talk, initiating and qualifying. Throughout their discussions, the group related to characters, making judgments on and questioning their behaviours; they tried to put themselves in the role of the character and extended scenarios, they questioned the racist views presented in the text and examined the workings of the text in terms of author's craft and language accessibility.

While this group worked well together on most occasions and were engaged in the discussions working towards elaborating the story world of the novel, their conversations appeared somewhat limited in topic. What this group's sustained conversations focused on the most were the homicide investigation, potential suspects and motives:

Karen: Mr. Endicott could see that Mr. Tibbs knew what he was doing. I mean would you trust Gillespie?

Catherine: Well just say Endicott's the killer, wouldn't he want someone who's not in Wells and who doesn't understand anything in Wells to solve the case and it's not him?

Karen: Yes, but it's also proof that he's not the killer. Anything else? (asking for additional comments)

Trevor: Harvey is innocent. Mr. Mantolli's daughter is Italian. Tibbs thinks the body of Mr. Mantolli is from another place and then was put on the street.

Catherine: I put that too because if the body is killed how would it be spread out? Would it be face up or face down?

Karen: Face down.

Catherine: So it was purposely put like that cause if he was attacked from the back, wouldn't he look back or from the side?

Karen: Unless he was attacked and he didn't hear them, or it was someone he trusted.

Catherine: Well that's what Mr. Tibbs thinks.

(Discussion 2, February 11, 2004)

Still, it was their interest in the topics that drove the discussion; therefore, it was aesthetic in nature. Furthermore, the discourse was exploratory in nature.

Interestingly, however, this group rarely discussed the racist attitudes of the Wells' townspeople and the growth that certain characters demonstrated throughout the course of the novel. When explicitly dealing with the issue of race in their final discussion, it was quickly closed off:

Catherine: What do you think of the whole book?

Trevor: It was pretty interesting.

Karen: The language was pretty easy to understand.

Nick: I learned a bunch of new stuff that was said back then.



Trevor: I would recommend the book.

Catherine: Would this change our opinion with prejudice and racism, so on?

Trevor: Yeah.

Karen: Not really.

Nick: What do you mean? Restate that.

Catherine: Well, like did the book have any effect on you?

Nick: Yes.

Justin: No.

Catherine: Like how?

Trevor: Very racist.

Nick: I personally don't like racism.

Catherine: Have you guys ever been discriminated for your, you know?

Trevor: Yeah, sort of.

Karen: No.

Nick: Are we done?

(Discussion 4, March 5, 2004)

Perhaps the students were tired of the discussion format, or perhaps the topic became too personal or uncomfortable for them. This is where group follow-up would come in, or perhaps a reflective writing activity so students could flesh out these issues.

#### **4.4.5 The Everything Group:**

This group tried all four approaches to discussing the novel by using a different method per discussion. They started with response journals. But, unlike the Response Journal group, this group entered Wilhelm's evocative dimensions immediately:

Nancy: I like the part where Tibbs says he's a cop.

Lucy: And they're shocked.

Lorraine: It's like what the town needed 'cause someone gets murdered and they find this Tibbs and he's like, "I'm an expert," and he knows what he's doing.

Lucy: But they don't believe him.

Nancy: They don't want to.

Lorraine: They don't want to look like a fool around a black person.

Tanya: The funniest part was, really good, that shows that Tibbs is really intelligent is when Tibbs talks about Harvey Oberst he says he's left handed and the killer is right handed and then he used a lot of information to describe it and stuff.

Nancy: And he used a blunt object to kill him.

Lucy: I think he had a lot of respect for the white people.

John: You have to realize he has training, they don't. If he's a crime scene specialist, he's had training and they don't, so it's not really their fault that they didn't notice that.

Nancy: They know but they don't want to know.

Lorraine: They need him, exactly.

Nancy: They know he's good, but they don't want his help because he's a black person.

Tanya: Exactly.

Lucy: They don't want to look like a fool.

Tanya: I think Tibbs has a lot of respect for the white people that are making fun of him. He treats them like they're equal.

John: He doesn't care what other people think.

(Discussion 1, February 3, 2004)

Clearly, one can see that the group used a lot of exploratory talk and were at ease initiating, eliciting extending, and qualifying responses.

In the second discussion, the group used the placemat method of response. It was a slightly shorter discussion than the first, but again students were Relating to Characters, Elaborating on the Story World, and Recognizing Reading as a Transaction – three evocative dimensions:

John: Later on Sam starts to respect Virgil a lot more.

Tanya: Well they had to right. What can you do, he's there.

John: Gillespie doesn't.

Tanya: He has a bit more respect.

John: Gillespie's using him. He doesn't really respect Tibbs.

Lucy: Yeah.

Tanya: Still he has a little bit //

Nancy: He has more than before.

Tanya: Before he just shot back at him and yelled at him.

Nancy: When the guy came in and he was talking to him and Tibbs started to interview //

John: It's because Gillespie put him in charge of the case if he the guy's a suspect of the case, technically Tibbs would have some communication.

Alan: All the blame will go to Tibbs if he doesn't solve the murder.

John: Probably.

Tanya: That's what the whole plan is (everyone chimes in).

John: They're using him cause that way if he screws up and like . . . //

Tanya: They'll kick him out of there. But I don't think he will. . . //

John: He's sort of the main character of the story and that tends not to happen.

(Discussion 2, February 11, 2004)

The third discussion used the post-it notes approach. This was the longest of all their discussions, suggesting that by actively marking the text and then referring back to it, more time is spent examining the text closely and one is required to elaborate on why a passage was chosen (similar to the Post-It Notes group's results):

Tanya: You know where page 81, do you guys have your books here?

Nancy: Yup, right here.

Tanya: You want to share with them? (referring to others who don't have the book) On page 81, I think Pete is confident that Virgil is working on the case and then he also says, he's the smartest African he ever saw and I kind of disagree because he *is* smart.

John: Yeah, he says he should have been born white, which back then would have been a big compliment, especially down in the south.

Tanya: On the next page I think the reverend was very kind and understanding to him, to Virgil I mean.

Nancy: He actually had a strategy to find the //

Tanya: And you know how he says, "oh yeah, I won't say a single thing," I wonder if he says anything in the rest of the book, like he says he won't say anything about, like, I don't know, he says something about how he won't say anything. Oh yeah it says, "the minister loved to speak...'are you at liberty to go any further,' he asked. 'This isn't an official conversation,' Tibbs told him, 'and it's not to be repeated to anyone.'"

John: The minister lies to the children.

Tanya: I know, like, that's kind of strange right?

John: Not really. Well he's sort of doing it for a good reason. It's like, do you really think the kids would, "ok kids I want you to go find a piece of wood //

Tanya: With blood on it.

John: that someone got killed with, ok?

Tanya: They really wouldn't want to find it.

John: Some would, but they'd probably just keep it.

Nancy: Why would they keep it?

John: Someone got killed with it. (Discussion 3, February 26, 2004)

Finally, the group used the Daniels' Role Sheets approach to complete the text. The only extended conversation that occurred was initiated through the Discussion

Director role:

Lucy: So my first question was, what were you feeling when you found out who the killer was?

Lorraine: I was shocked.

John: I wasn't.

Tiffany: I felt like an idiot ok. I read other mystery books and when I found out in one a certain girl did it, I felt stupid.

John: I already knew.

Tanya: Technically we have the right to be led wrong, because the author made us go the wrong direction.

John: That's what he was trying to do.

Lorraine: I was like, "Oh my god from the whole beginning I thought he was a nice guy, oh look at the little poor guy, but he's mean!"

John: Ralph?

Lucy: He's not nice. From the beginning he was a total ass!

Lorraine: well I thought he was kind of //

John: How was he nice?

Lucy: He called him a nigger from the beginning

Nancy: I didn't even remember Ralph. I was like, "Who's Ralph?"

Lorraine: He was nice to the men.

Tanya: He called Sam a nigger lover when he got the sandwich! Quote --  
unquote.

Lucy: So you guys were shocked and surprised?

John: Not really.

Lucy: You knew who it was?

John: I read ahead.

Tanya: He read ahead.

Lorraine: But what did you think when you read ahead?

John: I don't know.

(Discussion 4, March 5, 2004)

The rest of the discourse consisted of brief presentations. This calls attention to Rosenblatt's (1989) warning against using stereotyped roles which tend to lead to more efferent responses (mentioned during the Daniels' Role Sheets group analysis):

Nancy (Illustrator): The first picture I drew was when Dueanna and Endicott, and Sam and everybody was sitting down with Gillespie and Tibbs. And Tibbs was, like, telling everybody that Sam didn't do anything.

Lorraine: You can draw really good!

Nancy: The second one was when Sam arrested Ralph. I drew that one because it was very shocking.

Pause

John (Connector): I noticed that the fact that the police officers ...people wouldn't normally.. There is a lot of racism in the world like there was back then.

In the south there would be a lot of racism. And the fact that the government is pretty corrupt.

Tanya: Anything else?

John: No, I only got three.

(Discussion 4, March 5, 2004)

#### **4.5 "Survey Said"**

After the four discussions, I wanted to find out how the students felt about the discussion groups. Each student filled out a "Discussion Group Evaluation Form" in which I asked students what they liked best about their discussion group, what they would have changed, how they thought their approach affected their reading, what they did not like about the approach, how they felt about being taped and if they had a choice, which approach would they like to do. Of 28 students, 20 submitted evaluation forms, and 18 of the 20 were participants. Of the 18, I separated the responses into the various literature circle approaches. What follows are the common ideas from each approach (see Appendix 8 to view a sample survey).

##### *Daniels' Role Sheets Group:*

The two members who submitted their survey liked the approach because writing helped give them a better understanding of the novel.

##### *Response Journals Group:*

All six members of this group submitted their surveys and said that the approach helped them focus on the novel by having them "think about the most important parts of the chapter" and gave them something to say during discussion. Several students said that they would have liked more arguments instead of



summaries. It is interesting that they picked up on an area in which they needed scaffolding.

*Post-It Notes Group:*

Three members submitted their forms. All three stated that the approach helped improve their reading by helping them “dig deeper” by writing what they thought, giving them a better understanding of the whole novel and they would all do this approach again.

*Everything Group:*

Like the group’s mixed approach to the novel discussions, so were their responses. In general they all enjoyed the discussions and liked writing down their feelings.

**4.5.1 Discussion of Student Surveys:**

What one can glean from the feedback is that, in small group discussions that were student led, students felt they were required to look at the text more closely; thus giving them a better understanding of the story. They also liked the opportunity to share their ideas. Therefore, for the students, each approach had some level of success.

**4.6 Summary**

It is clear that by examining the data from only one perspective, tabulating the dimensions based on Wilhelm (1997) covered by each of the discussion groups, the essence of the nature of the discussions is not known. Therefore, by doing a second

analysis in a theoretical framework of aesthetic exploratory talk, one can see the quality and style of those group discussions.

The Daniels' Role Sheets group, while democratic in dimension, only moved from presentational talk toward exploratory talk when the role of Discussion Director prompted them to do so, granted with positive results: they had to "think more".

The Response Journals group entered the story world and considered significance. As their responses tended toward summary, so was their discussion efferent or presentational in nature. When they began questioning, their discussions became more exploratory. Thus, helping students with the types of journal responses they can make may turn the discussion more exploratory.

The Post-It Notes group related to characters, elaborated on the story world, and considered significance the most in the eight dimensions and all of their discussions were exploratory in nature. This suggests that students were compelled to explain why they marked a certain passage. They also marked sections throughout the entire novel; therefore, it gave their discussions of the novel itself more breadth. They were always referring back to the text, something that literature teachers encourage.

The Placemat group focused on similar dimensions to the Post-It Notes group. But their discussions came from questions they wrote down immediately prior to discussion. It was these questions that helped make their discourse exploratory. Still, they did not cover as much of the novel as that of the Post-It Notes group.

Finally, the Everything group on the whole was an exploratory group. They did not have as much difficulty moving beyond summary as the Response Journals group, for example. It seems the group dynamics contributed to this, which is an important

factor for teachers to consider when forming groups. Still, their results mimicked those of the main four groups based on which approach they were asked to use.

Ultimately these results have implications for teaching. They may help teachers determine which literature circle approach is most appropriate to fulfill the student learning goals.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION and IMPLICATIONS

*. . . I was fond of repeating: do not, under any circumstances, belittle a work of fiction by trying to turn it into a carbon copy of real life; what we search for in fiction is not so much reality but the epiphany of truth.* (Nafisi, 2004, p. 3)

### 5.1 A Review

*As the three young women dressed in men's business suits and I finish the last forkful of strawberry cream pie, we laugh expressing how much fun this time together has been. We've discussed Miller (1949), the "American" dream, our families' personal struggles in pursuit of that dream, and life. We have lived through literature.*

This is my example of the ultimate book club, or literature circle, as we reached the ultimate goal for readers: "to transcend the text, coming to a deeper understanding of the text by connecting it with personal experience" (McConaghy, 1990, p. 55, as quoted in Tiballi & Drake, 1993). Granted, this group of students was from an Advanced Placement class where students are typically avid readers and writers, and who are used to sharing their ideas. Nonetheless, this study shows that a teacher can help her "regular" or even "modified" student reach this similar level of discourse through literature circles.

Literature circles are a heralded form of student-centered teaching. They allow students to express their own questions, ideas, connections, and opinions about the texts that they read, shaped by their background experiences. These are some ways in which aesthetic response is categorized, and can be more specifically categorized using dimensions such as those outlined by Wilhelm (1997) or in this paper. But the aesthetic experience can be seen as problematic given that there has not been

analysis of what is meant by aesthetic engagement “other than that it reflects a high level of empathetic immersion in the texts being read” (A. Soter, lecture UBC, November 8, 2004). If one only examines the transcripts of discussions that are quantifiably aesthetic in terms of the categories that utterances from discussions are placed, one does not get a true sense of the lived through experience or discourse that helps shape it. It is only herein that aesthetic discourse has been defined (see Table 1). This discourse must be a part of response in order that the whole experience is truly aesthetic in nature and not just an efferent response in the guise of aesthetic. Through elaborate, aesthetic discourse students become active participants in their learning, and part of a community of readers making meaning together without pre-established answers (Cazden, 2001).

It is important that we look at the aesthetic response and discourse in that this leads to the fundamental shift in thinking of how students learn and how teachers question students, or provide avenues for discussion, that needs to take place. Based on the conceptual and empirical publications on literature circles (Eeds & Wells, 1989; McMahon, Raphael, Goatley, & Pardo, 1997 as cited in Galda & Beach, 2001; Daniels, 1994; Kooy & Wells, 1996; Lewis, 1997; Martinez & Roser, 1995; Miller & Legge, 1999), it appears that literature circles is one method to foster this new way of thinking and learning. But what this research fails to show is not just any approach to literature circles will suffice. Some roles promote the efferent response, aiding the argument that all school reading is efferent because the teacher requires it of the students. However, as teachers, our role is to help students see how they can become engaged in literature and exploration, and foster this aesthetic response as it moves from

simple, initial utterances at younger ages through to elaborate questioning in which adults may engage:

What a wonderland it was! Sitting around the large coffee table covered with bouquets of flowers, we moved in and out of the novels we read. Looking back, I am amazed at how much we learned without even noticing it. We were, to borrow from Nabokov, to experience how the ordinary pebble of ordinary life could be transformed into a jewel through the magic eye of fiction.

(Nafisi, 2004, 8)

Thus, we must be cautious when choosing our approach, so that it is more aesthetic for our students.

## ***5.2 The Questions Revisited***

The goal of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of various approaches to literature circles and their differing writing activities in promoting aesthetic discourse amongst students: namely Daniels' (1995) Role Sheets, Response Journals, Post-It Notes, and Placemat response.

This research builds upon previous studies that have not examined the writing that students do prior to being part of a literature circle group and how it shapes the discussion that follows.

Thus, the questions remaining include which of these approaches is more effective in promoting high school students' aesthetic responses, enhancing their discussion, deepening their understanding of a text, and furthering their critical thinking skills in terms of literary analysis. Of the above approaches, does Daniel's (1994) Role

Sheets approach lend itself to a more efferent reading? Does Kooy and Wells' (1996) Response Journals approach encourage thoughtful aesthetic reflection that is demonstrated in discussions? Does the Post-It Notes approach limit discussion or does it provide a concrete starting point? Which approach best puts theory into practice?

To address some of these issues the students in this study were placed in various discussion groups on the same novel, and after all of their discussions, I analyzed the data collected in two ways. The first way examined which of the ten dimensions Wilhelm states that readers cover in aesthetic response to text. After reviewing the transcripts, I combined several of the dimensions leaving eight in total. This first analysis suggested that certain types of literature circles encouraged certain types of responses, but this analysis did not reveal what types of discourse occurred. Thus, I analyzed the data a second time using my theoretical construct that combined Barnes & Todd's (1995) exploratory and presentational talk, along with Rosenblatt's (1995) aesthetic response. I define the aesthetic talk as more exploratory with markers such as conversations in which initiating, eliciting, extending, and qualifying take place, while efferent talk is more presentational where talk sounds like a report instead of a "natural", "lived-through" conversation. (Refer to Table 1 on page 35 for definitions of efferent and aesthetic discourse.) My analysis was based on this categorization.

### ***5.3 Implications for Teaching Based on Analysis 1:***

Looking at the tables that show the percentage of utterances in the eight dimensions of response, one can see that each of the literature circles approaches allows students to enter each dimension (perhaps with the exception of Seeing the Story World, or Recognizing Literary Conventions with the Post-It Notes group). What the results also suggest is that each approach promotes certain dimensions. Therefore, if the teacher would like to get certain types of response, she can alter the approach to literature circles. For example, if a teacher wants students to be able to demonstrate understanding of the events, perhaps she would use the Response Journals format that demonstrated higher percentages in Relating to Characters and Considering Significance as they summarized the novel. If a teacher would like students to examine possible scenarios and ask questions of the text more closely, the Placemat approach may help. For a teacher who wants students to learn how to refer to specific quotes or passages, the Post-It Notes approach may be used as they demonstrated higher percentages in elaborating on the story world and considering significance. The teacher whose goal is for students to cover all eight dimensions somewhat equally may use Daniels' Role Sheets, which in this study, while more efferent in its discourse, demonstrated a more even range of utterances in each of the eight dimensions (with the exception of recognizing literary conventions). All of these approaches seek to help students discover what good, engaged readers do.



#### ***5.4 Implications for Teaching Based on Analysis 2:***

The first analysis did not satisfy my goal of seeing which approach encouraged the lived through, spontaneous discussion of a text, or exploratory talk that Cazden (2001) describes as “speaking without the answers fully in tact” (p.170-171), like that of my AP “business meeting”. Thus, the second analysis, which looked at aesthetic versus efferent talk, may lead teachers to shape their literature circles so that they promote aesthetic discourse.

Based on this, Daniels’ Role Sheets, in this study, were the least exploratory or aesthetic and the most presentational or efferent, as students are guided to report out something that is, in fact, teacher directed. Daniels’ himself cautions becoming reliant upon the role sheets themselves (Daniels’, 1994, p. 39). Whereas, the Post-It Notes group format encouraged students to elaborate on the sections of text they marked. Furthermore, when the approach allows for this elaboration and questioning, more aesthetic, exploratory talk may follow. “It therefore becomes essential to scrutinize all practices to make sure that they provide the opportunity for an initial crystallization of a personal sense of the work” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 66). And ultimately, by using student-centered literature circles, “[one] of the most valuable things the students will acquire from this is the ability to listen with understanding to what others have to say and to respond in relevant terms” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 67).

#### ***5.5 Limitations and Further Implications***

In this novel unit, students put themselves in various character roles, gave opinions about characters, questioned and examined racism and prejudice, created

visuals revealing conflict, and wrote essays on topics meaningful to them. For the research component of this novel study, students met in small literature circles to discuss the text. While they examined the text in rich ways, a common format of literature circles is that students debrief their small group discussions with the larger class; however, in the context of this study I chose not to do this because I wanted as little influence from myself or from the rest of the class on those small group discussions. Thus, there was only a tape recorder, recording student interactions whereas other studies had a teacher or research assistant facilitating discussion (see Eeds & Wells, 1989, and Maloch, 2002). As a result, some scaffolding opportunities were missed. This consequence was demonstrated with both the Response Journals group and with the first Post-It Notes group discussion, where students were silent, brief, or retelling the story. Although I did give feedback on students' first discussions (which helped the post-it note group especially) and demonstrated how to get started and how to question, I did not comment on the remaining discussions. Similarly, I normally would give written feedback on students' journals and encourage them in their writing. As Maloch (2002) states in her study of the teacher's role in literature discussion groups, these groups,

are promoted as a more equitable and engaging way for students to share and discuss their responses to literature. However, it is important to note the complex and demanding task that faces participants . . . when moving from a recitation-style structure to one with decentralized patterns of interaction . . . [and these formats] require the teacher's support as students develop new skills

related to both the how (interaction) and what (content) of literature discussion groups (p. 109).

Thus, with more scaffolding, some of the approaches may have had more success in reaching aesthetic discourse.

Also, students gain knowledge from their peers when they debrief in a larger group setting. Thus, the Placemat group may have discussed a broader range of topics if they heard what others were talking about. Therefore, teachers using the literature circle format of their choice should also be aware of and demonstrate the scaffolding needed. They may also want to keep large class debriefing opportunities as part of the process so students may learn about all points of view in the class and “provide opportunities for greater explicitness and for the teacher to join in a wider discussion” (Barnes & Todd, 1995).

An important limitation to mention is how group dynamics influenced the results. This was seen with the Everything group, which by nature was openly communicative as was the Post-It Notes group after their first discussion. Research has also shown that sometimes negative power shifts may occur during peer-led discussions (Lewis, 1997). In my Pilot study of 2001, discussed in Chapter two, the Post-It Notes group was not as exploratory in nature because of group dynamics. There was one domineering student that almost bullied the rest of the group. He was not aware of the effect he was having, but was only trying to do well. I tried to guide him in allowing others to lead discussion with limited success. If this student had been removed from the group it would have been interesting to see if the results would have been similar to this study, or similar to the pilot study’s Everything group which loved the Post-It Notes

method and had lengthy, dynamic conversations. In this study, two friends and members of the Daniels' Role Sheets group had to be talked to about being off-task and disrupting the learning of other students in their group. When asked if they needed to be separated, they said they would like to remain part of the group and proceeded with success. This is a reality of classroom dynamics. Thus, teachers need to form groups and observe them closely for signs of domineering personalities, or timid personalities and make adjustments accordingly, so all students can be part of a community of readers, writers, and communicators.

Another limitation is time. It would be worth looking at results over several novel units to see how the group responses develop and see the influence of the type of approach used. This is where my earlier pilot study is helpful. In that study, students were also given opportunities to respond, along with different ways of responding, feedback on their responses, models of appropriate responses, and opportunities to share their responses both in small and large groups. Students read the book together and responded together. Based on a general impression of the groups' discussion tapes, their responses were similar to this study. In the pilot study, the Daniels' Role Sheets group discussions were more aesthetic when they moved away from the role sheets; the Response Journals group was able to elaborate on their ideas they had written; the Post-It Notes group had marked pages, but had less developed conversations than this current study, possibly due to the group dynamics mentioned above; the Placemat group collaborated in their writing and creating meaning in the book and were excited that the group members had similar ideas to one another; and finally, the Everything group was good at having sustained conversations about the

novel and this group preferred the Post-It Notes method as it helped them look for interesting things and helped them remember what they really wanted to talk about, according to their feedback forms.

### ***5.6 The Challenges of Teacher Research***

The issue of needing more time also relates to the limitation of being a researcher in one's own classroom. I teach seven classes, five different subjects, and four different grade levels. It is difficult to completely focus on researching the activities of one class while maintaining excellence (if that is totally achievable) in the researched class, one's other classes – not to mention one's duties as department head. I struggled with this throughout the study, feeling it was not as perfect or as smooth as it could be, given an ideal situation, or even a research assistant for that matter. At times I felt the novel unit was not as in-depth as it could be given that the groups did not share their discussions, because I did not want influence on the study. I was also aware of the knotty ethical problems related to assessment and research: I was continually questioning if what I would do as a regular part of the class could now somehow be deemed by the ethics review board as pressuring the students to perform. Assessment is part of a teacher's role and is required by a student, so there is pressure, but not in a coercive sense as implied by the board.

I even delayed this study for a year because the grade 9 class I had planned on studying the year before had such difficult group dynamics, that a study would have been unmanageable. I reflected on this class in a *Women and Writing* class in the Masters of Language and Literacy program:

***The Subjects***

They've got it figured out  
scared to come off smart  
they maintain  
the cycle of idiocy  
the ghetto mentality  
sound cool through apathy  
fear  
Let it go!

Let them go:  
the unruly mix  
the barely contained energy  
the anxiety  
Win them over.

Let them go,  
let them reveal  
their voice  
their truth  
to win them  
over my fear  
my frustration  
Let go.

*My Commentary on "The Subjects" (as written in 2003):*

I am in the process of my thesis. I've gone through the ethical review process, have most of my advisory team together, and have/don't have my subjects. The plan was to use one of the classes that I currently teach, but the more I think of it, the more I want to put it off. I don't trust that the class will go through the study process as seriously as I would like. I've had to work hard at getting the class to the point where they take what's done in class seriously, at least for the most part. I want them to move past the need for behaviour management to having fun in the class and learning at the same time. While I'm anxious, I think that this might be the point: to teach and research a group that's a little tumultuous. They're certainly not unkind or ill intended -- just in grade 9. Perhaps I have to let go. (Women and Writing assignment, 2003)

### **5.7 Final Thoughts**

Coming back to this study and upon reflection of the unit and its lesson plans, I have "let go" of the fact that it might not have been as perfect as I wanted it to be at the time, but now see that students were given a variety of meaningful assignments during the course of the unit that allowed them to: respond analytically, creatively, and aesthetically to the novel; have learned reading, responding and writing skills; and come away with valuable knowledge around the issues of race.

I also tried to continue supporting the development of aesthetic response all the way to the culminating essay at the end of the unit. Students were taught how to write an essay earlier in the year and, for this novel unit essay, they were able to choose topics that interested them. The guidance I gave was giving them starting points when

trying to figure out a topic for a literary essay: theme, character, setting, plot, and author's craft. I also had them submit topic proposals, outlines and drafts, following Atwell's (2003) writing process, on which I gave feedback. Their essays were thoughtful and powerful.

Teachers need to provide students with the opportunity to share their ideas. This helps foster a learning community in which students learn from one another in richer, more meaningful ways. It encourages students to gain a sense of ownership for their learning and know what it means to question, analyze and connect with their reading: skills which will hopefully follow them throughout their lives. Teachers also need to be aware that the types of activities students do shape their responses. For students to truly have authentic and aesthetic responses, the teacher should limit the guide sheets and allow students to create and reflect on their own transaction with the text: "as soon as we start to say what a text means, we are reporting and analyzing the transaction" (Karolides, 2001).

Ultimately what I have learned throughout this whole thesis process is, "[the] teacher of literature . . . seeks to help specific human beings discover the satisfactions of literature. Teaching becomes a matter of improving the individual's capacity to evoke meaning from the text by leading him [or her] to reflect self-critically on this process . . .to foster fruitful interactions" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 25). Teaching is about the student.

"Ok that's it. Good Bye." (Daniels' role group, discussion 4, March 5, 2004)



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## Appendix 1

### ***In the Heat of the Night* – Lesson Plans during research project.**

In this novel study I had to be aware of two very different purposes: the first was to place students in 5 separate discussion groups for this case study examining how forms of writing affect discussion; the second was to formally teach a class novel as part of the B.C. curriculum.

What follows is an overview of this unit.

#### **The Novel:**

*In the Heat of the Night*, by John Ball (1965) deals with racism and prejudice faced by a Pasadena detective, Virgil Tibbs in the 1960s who happened to be in the southern town of Wells when a murder took place. At first one of the suspects in the crime, Tibbs is asked to stay in Wells to help with the murder investigation because of his expertise in the field. As the investigation takes place, readers experience the racial prejudice that is a part of this small community. At the end, the murder is solved, but most importantly, the people of Wells learn to change their attitudes towards African Americans because of Virgil's presence and interactions in the community.

#### **Rationale and Objectives:**

This unit has been designed with respect to the Prescribed Learning Outcomes based on the BC Ministry of Education IRPs (2002) for Language Arts.

It is expected that students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the main ideas, events, or themes of a variety of novels, stories, poetry, other print material, and electronic media.

- Organize details and information about material they have read, heard, or viewed using a variety of graphic or written forms.
- Demonstrate a willingness to explore a variety of genres and media.
- Use literature and writing to explore values of our society and our relationship to society.
- Express ourselves powerfully, convincingly and gracefully using language appropriate to the situation, audience and purpose.

This is a good novel for a grade 9 class because first it is an exciting murder mystery novel, and second it teaches students about the consequences of stereotyping, racism, and prejudice and how people need to break down these barriers.

The unit was designed to give students the opportunity to engage in discussion and writing activities on issues relating to racism and prejudice as depicted in *In the Heat of the Night*, in historical documentaries and poetry. Students participated in reader response activities through discussion, journal writing, creative assignments, and self-directed essay writing. Students also completed comprehension questions and a unit test.

**Unit Duration:**

The entire novel study was to be 4 to 6 weeks in length, but in actuality took place over 7 weeks. Some classes were interrupted due to guidance classes that are taught by the students' counselor. Also classes were not in session on a semester turn-around day and two professional days.

**Class 1:** As an introduction to the setting and issues in the novel, I wrote the terms Racism, Prejudice, and Stereotyping on the board and asked students to write in their journals about what each of these terms meant to them. After 15-20min. of writing time, I had students share their ideas about these terms with each other and then the class as a whole. Then I wrote dictionary definitions of these terms and had students compare their responses with these “official” definitions. We also brainstormed “real life” examples for each. After this discussion we read the Rosa Parks story as an example of someone who faced racial prejudice and took a stand against the norms of society. This was followed by the documentary film *Eye on the Prize* (1987) that presented information on America’s civil rights years, 1954-1965.

**Class 2:** The remainder of the film was shown. After finishing viewing this film, I had students write a journal reflection on it: how it made them feel and think about the situations and events of the time.

**Class 3:** At this time the study was formally introduced. Permission forms had been distributed to students 1.5 months earlier to starting this study to give time for collection of permission forms and to address any questions or concerns parents, or students may have. Students were also placed in their reading discussion groups for the study. Each group was given a different writing task to complete for their discussions and an explanatory handout.

We then read chapter 1 of *In the Heat of the Night* together. After, I had students brainstorm first impressions of Sam Wood, one of the main characters in the novel. Chapter 2 was assigned for homework.

**Class 4:** This class was started with the following journal entry: *Imagine you are Virgil Tibbs. How would you feel about your treatment from Sam Wood and Bill Gillespie?* Write in diary form. The remainder of this class was spent reading chapters 3 and 4 of the novel.

**Class 5:** The class started with 20min. of Silent reading. During this time the Placemat group met prior to their discussion. Students got in their discussion groups and had their first discussion on chapters 1-4 of the novel. Each group was given a tape and tape recorder and placed in different discussion areas (the classroom, teacher workrooms, the hallway).

I circulated amongst the groups establishing what was expected: to take turns talking about the ideas they came up with, to allow each other to respond to ideas presented, to ask questions of one another. It turns out that many students were unprepared. As I needed work to be complete for this study, I called the groups together and said we'd finish discussions next class.

This is something that came up frequently for certain students. While they had read the novel chapters for the upcoming discussion, they had not completed the writing task. Students tend to complete assignments more readily when being assessed on them, but as assessment was in conflict with the ethical review board, I



had to reinforce the importance of the students' readiness, and compliance with the study, but ultimately had to leave it up to the students to complete preparations on their own as I didn't want teacher pressure to become a factor in the study. It's a difficult balance between teacher and researcher.

**Class 6:** Discussions were completed. This class continued with the following journal entry: If you were Harvey Oberst, in what ways would you have reacted similarly or differently? Explain. This was followed with questions on chapters 3 and 4 that students had class time to complete. We debriefed these in class.

**Class 7:** Students had the first 20min of class to spend silent reading. This was followed by having students write a comparison of Sam Wood and Bill Gillespie based on chapters 1-4. They were to show how they are alike and/or different in 1-2 pages double-spaced. We have done work on this type of writing earlier in the year.

I also wanted to spend a good amount of time on these first four chapters to ensure that students understood the content and therefore, could apply this to their future discussions; at the same time a lot of class work on the chapters happened after the students' initial discussions of the chapters in their groups, so they wouldn't merely repeat what was examined in class.

A major focus of the class study, along with racism, stereotyping, and prejudice, was characterization. We reviewed how authors reveal character to their audience (through speech, action, thoughts, other characters thoughts, direct narration) and students used this to guide them and their written analyses.

As the second discussion on chapters 5-7 was to take place next class, I went over notes I took based on their first discussions. This was meant to encourage the students, to show them how much they generated and to guide them along the paths of good, critical discussion. See Appendix.

**Class 8:** 20 min Silent Reading. Students needed more time to finish reading the chapters for the next discussion, so it was postponed until the following week. The class examined the issue of scapegoating presented in Chapter 5. This was defined and then students were asked to write on the following topic: Tibbs is aware that he is the “fall guy” or scapegoat for the murder case being solved. How do you feel about the situation? Who do we blame for our problems today? We then looked at quotes from chapter 5 – 7 that dealt with this issue. See Appendix. We read chapter 6 together.

**Class 9:** Using large poster paper, students got into groups of 4 or 5 of their choice and wrote examples of how we use scapegoats, or who we use as scapegoats in our personal lives (home/school), and in society (government/economy). Students then had to determine why we use scapegoats. See appendix.

**Class 10:** The Placemat group met during this time as did the Everything group who was trying the placemat method for this discussion. After the 20 min., the discussions took place. Then we followed the discussions by looking at how John Ball creates suspense in his novel and discussion questions for chapter 7.

**Class 11:** After going over the terms humour, satire, irony and realism, students were assigned formal questions for written response on Chapter 8 from the back of their texts: #1,2,3c, 4, 7, 8a. These questions were chosen because they required students to go aback and analyze the text more closely as well as examine author's craft. So far this novel study has focused on reading comprehension, thematic issues, journal reflections, and then student discussions. Now students were given an opportunity to do something creative based on chapters 1-8. Student samples of this assignment follow in the appendix.

**Class 12:** Students had time to work on their creative assignment and to read chapter 9 together. Chapter 10 was for homework.

**Class 13:** Discussion #3: Ch 8- 10. Creative project time. Now that students were firmly established in the novel study, the second part of the novel study, chapter 9-14, focused mostly on reading and the discussion groups and a culminating synthesis activity in the form of the literary essay.

**Class 14:** We read chapter 11 together. As we were close to finishing the novel, students were introduced to the literary essay. Students have written expository essays earlier in the year using Nancie Atwell's methodology that focuses on writing on topics that students are interested in. I wanted this to cross over to the literary essay. Now they were shown the difference with the literary essay and we brainstormed

areas/issues they might choose to write on. Topics were strictly their choice, as I wanted the student to be interested in the topic on which they would write and therefore, give them the opportunity to respond more aesthetically in a typically efferent model. Chapter 12 was assigned for homework.

**Class 15:** The literary essay continued. Chapter 13 was read together. Chapter 14 was assigned for homework.

**Class 16:** Discussion # 4: Ch 11-14. The final discussion.

**Class 17:** Caged Bird Sings. This lesson, adapted from Yvonne Healey, was used in order to reinforce the struggles and issues faced in the novel. Students were given a blank sheet of paper and were asked to draw a singing bird, any size, shape, colour, imagining any background or setting. Students shared drawing with a partner and then the class. Next, students were asked to draw a cage around their bird and discuss how the cage changed the meaning of the picture (physical and/or emotional entrapment and loss of freedom). We discussed this in pairs and then as a class. This was followed by reading and discussing Maya Angelou's poem, "I know Why the Caged Bird Sings". Finally, students were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. How does the poem fit your picture?
2. What does the cage represent for the bird and /or for you?
3. How are "cages" created?
4. Why are "cages" created?

5. How are “cages” removed?
6. What “cages” are in *In the Heat of the Night*? Consider questions 3-5 in this response as well.

We then discussed how this related to theme in the novel. Students were asked if there is a statement about life, what is John Ball telling the reader about life in general? What does the novel say about stereotypes, scapegoats, racism, and prejudice?

We then reviewed what else we looked at in the novel, namely setting, plot and character. Students brainstormed essay topics for these categories as well. For example, students could research racism in the Southern U.S. and compare it to the situation in the novel in Wells; or students could do an in-depth character comparison for Tibbs, Woods, and Gillespie. We did this as a class, as it was their first literary essay and students were struggling with how to discuss a novel critically without resorting to the standard plot summary book report. Students were to write down their possible essay topics and supporting ideas for next class.

**Class 18 and 19:** *In the Heat of the Night* (Vecchione, 1987) – the film. Students were asked to view the film critically and responded to two things they agreed with in the film version and two things they disagreed with in the film version. Students were assigned final formal questions on the novel as a whole and were given feedback on their essay topics. Now students were to find 10 quotes from the novel that supported their essay topics.

**Class 20:** Students were to hand in the final questions and were given library/class time to work on their essay outlines.

**Class 21:** Library/class time for writing outlines. Students were given review sheets in preparation for the unit test next class.

**Class 22:** Unit test.

**Class 23:** Time to work on rough drafts that are due today.

**Class 24:** How to quote in literary essays. Peer editing/revision time for essays.

**Class 25:** Essays due. End of unit.

**Assessment came from the following activities:**

- Class assigned journals
- The Sam Wood vs. Bill Gillespie comparison
- Comprehension questions
- Ch 1-8 Creative Project
- Literary essay
- Unit test

*Conscious of the ethics involved students were not evaluated on their group discussions at any point.*

### Unit Resources:

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Vecchione, Judith (Dir.). (1987). *Eyes on the prize: America's civil rights years 1954-1965. Awakenings*. Vol. 1. Boston, MA: P.B.S.

## Appendix 2

### English 9

#### A READER RESPONSE NOVEL STUDY

##### Reader Response: The Daniels' Role Sheets

The Response Journals

The Post-It Notes

The Placemat

The Everything Group

You will become part of a Reader Response group as we are discussing this novel. Three things that you will all have in common are the novel, response journals, and group discussion.

What is different is how you approach discussion.

##### The Daniels' Role Sheets

Literature circles are small, temporary discussion groups who have chosen to read the same story, poem, article, or book. While reading each group-determined portion of the text, each member prepares to take specific responsibilities in the upcoming discussion, and everyone comes to the group with the notes needed to help perform that job. The circles have regular meetings, with discussion roles rotating each session. (Daniels 13)

The roles are as follows: (You will receive handouts on each)

- Discussion Director
- Literary Luminary
- Illustrator
- Connector

##### The Response Journals Discussion Group

This group will be using the Reader Response Journal and handout as the focal point in your discussions. The logs become your “text for talk”. You will have pre-determined portions of the text to read and each member will write in his or her response log on the set chapters prior to class to be ready for discussion. To become “more active, sensitive, and thoughtful participants in your discussion groups”:

- Share ideas and opinions openly,
- Link [your] ideas to the ideas of others
- Support opinions with evidence, especially from the text,



- Take turns to speak,
- Offer ideas without dominating the discussion
- Invite others to contribute to the discussion
- Listen with interest to the ideas of others
- Give others credit for their ideas
- Be aware of time and topic
- Evaluate the work of the group. (Kooy 30)

When you're finished your discussion, go back to your log and write about what you learned from your discussion.

### **The Post-It Notes Group**

This group will be using post-it-notes to guide discussion. As you read and come across something that intrigues you, makes you question, disturbs you, etc., put a post it note on that page and write a response on the note. Your responses with post-it-notes should follow the reader response handout, meaning you're reading as thoughtful readers. You will do this for a pre-determined portion of the text and be ready to share in class. After you finish your discussion, write in your logs what you learned from your discussion.

### **The Placemat Group**

This group will be reading the pre-determined portions of the novel. Then at the start of class you will get into your group and write a response around a piece of paper simultaneously, keeping in mind response-journal guidelines, and then discuss based on what you wrote. After you finish your discussion, write in your logs what you learned from your discussion.

### **The Everything Group**

This group will be trying a different response method from the ones above, each time you meet to discuss the novel.

\* At the start of each class you will have 20 min. to read or prepare for your discussion.

## Appendix 3

### ***In the Heat of the Night: Chapters 1-4 Discussion Overview***

#### **Questions Posed based on taped discussions:**

- How did they discover the identity of the dead person?
- Why did Gillespie ask Tibbs to look at the dead body, but not accept his findings?
- Do they have evidence on who killed Mantolli?
- Where was the wallet?
- Did Harvey have an alibi for the murder?
- Why didn't Mr. Endicott wake Mantolli's daughter to help i.d. the body?
- Is Mantolli really dead?
- Why was Mantolli out late at night?
- What motive would Endicott have for murdering Mantolli?
- What will happen to the festival?
- Was money a motive?
- What would happen if Tibbs talked back to the police officers?
- Do you think Tibbs is aware of what's going on – that he could be the fall guy for the murder investigation?
- Why didn't they like Black people?
- Why is Mantolli's body spread out instead of a heap?

#### **General Topics discussed:**

- Character discussion: Sam, Gillespie, Tibbs

#### **Interesting Issues raised:**

- Current stereotyping in east and west side schools
- Why racism occurred and why does it occur

#### **Tips for future discussions:**

- Answer the questions posed.
- Everyone needs to participate; do not allow others to speak for you; allow yourself the power of an opinion.
- Have your journal, notes, novels in front of you so you may refer to it/them when discussing ideas.
- Try not to talk over one another, so everyone may be heard.
- Ask "why?"

## Appendix 4

### Daniels' Role Sheets Group

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Block: \_\_\_\_\_

## Daniel's Role Sheets: Discussion Director

**DISCUSSION DIRECTOR**

A1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Group \_\_\_\_\_

Book \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment p \_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_

**Discussion Director:** Your job is to develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about this part of the book. Don't worry about the small details: your task is to help people talk over the big ideas in the reading and share their reactions. Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and concerns as you read, which you can list below, during or after your reading. Or you may use some of the general questions below to develop topics for your group.

**Possible discussion questions or topics for today:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample questions:**

What was going through your mind while you read this?  
 How did you feel while reading this part of the book?  
 What was discussed in this section of the book?  
 Can someone summarize briefly?  
 Did today's reading remind you of any real-life experiences?  
 What questions did you have when you finished this section?  
 Did anything in this section of the book surprise you?  
 What are the one or two most important ideas?  
 Predict some things you think will be talked about next.

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment for tomorrow p \_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_

## Daniel's Role Sheets: Literary Luminator

A2

**LITERARY LUMINARY**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Group \_\_\_\_\_

Book \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment p \_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_

**Literary Luminary:** Your job is to locate a few special sections of the text that your group would like to hear read aloud. The idea is to help people remember some interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the text. You decide which passages or paragraphs are worth hearing, and then jot plans for how they should be shared. You can read passages aloud yourself, ask someone else to read them, or have people read them silently and then discuss.

Location	Reason for Picking	Plan for Reading
1. Page ____	_____	_____
Paragraph ____	_____	_____
2. Page ____	_____	_____
Paragraph ____	_____	_____
3. Page ____	_____	_____
Paragraph ____	_____	_____
4. Page ____	_____	_____
Paragraph ____	_____	_____

**Possible reasons for picking a passage to be shared:**

Important	Informative
Surprising	Controversial
Funny	Well written
Confusing	Thought-provoking

**Other:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment for tomorrow p \_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_

From *Literature Circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom* by Harvey Daniels.  
 Stenhouse Publishers, York, ME.

## Daniel's Role Sheets: Summarizer

**SUMMARIZER**

A5

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Group \_\_\_\_\_

Book \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment p \_\_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_\_

**Summarizer:** Your job is to prepare a brief summary of today's reading. The other members of your group will be counting on you to give a quick (one- or two-minute) statement that conveys the gist, the key points, the main highlights, the **essence** of today's reading assignment. If there are several main ideas or events to remember, you can use the numbered slots below.

**Summary:**


---



---



---



---

**Key points:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment for tomorrow p \_\_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_\_

## Daniel's Role Sheets: Connector

A4

**CONNECTOR**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Group \_\_\_\_\_

Book \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment p \_\_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_\_

**Connector:** Your job is to find connections between the book your group is reading and the world outside. This means connecting the reading to your own life, to happenings at school or in the community, to similar events at other times and places, to other people or problems that you are reminded of. You might also see connections between this book and other writings on the same topic, or by the same author. There are no right answers here—whatever the reading connects you with is worth sharing!

**Some connections I found between this reading and other people, places, events, authors . . .**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment for tomorrow p \_\_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_\_

From *Literature Circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom* by Harvey Daniels.  
Stenhouse Publishers, York, ME.

## Daniel's Role Sheets: Illustrator

**ILLUSTRATOR**

A3

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Group \_\_\_\_\_

Book \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment p \_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_

**Illustrator:** Your job is to draw some kind of picture related to the reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, or stick-figure scene. You can draw a picture of something that's discussed specifically in your book, or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading. Any kind of drawing or graphic is okay—you can even label things with words if that helps. **Make your drawing on the other side of this sheet or on a separate sheet.**

**Presentation plan:** When the Discussion Director invites your participation, you may show your picture without comment to the others in the group. One at a time, they get to speculate what your picture means, to connect the drawing to their own ideas about the reading. After everyone has had a say, you get the last word: tell them what your picture means, where it came from, or what it represents to you.

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment for tomorrow p \_\_\_\_-p \_\_\_\_

From *Literature Circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom* by Harvey Daniels.  
Stenhouse Publishers, York, ME.



## Appendix 5

Sample Journal Entry: (This has been retyped exactly how the student submitted it, including errors)

### **Novel Study: The Response Journal Discussion Group**

Chapter One to Chapter Four:

While I was reading the words of these chapters, I noticed how unjustice many people were to other races. For example, there were separate washrooms for the colored and for the whites. The colored washrooms was not as nice looking as the other washroom. I feel everyone should be treated equally at all times. However, there are many more events today which deals with fairness and unfairness. Such as, people who make more money than others, have to pay more taxes and people who do not make as much money, *still* have to pay taxes but not as much. This tells us, everyone *is* paying taxes but a different amount and I find this unfair. People may not make a large amount of money and cannot feed their families should not have to pay extra tax, just because other *are* able to, which makes it fair. In conclusion of, there my be reasons why colored people may not be treated fair at times. I do not have any friends who are colored, this is not because I do not like them, it is because there are not many colored people in the community I live in. I see colored peopled as normal human beings, they have tow legs, two arms, a head, etc. however, I haven't had an actual conversation with a colored person. They seem nice, but I learned to never judge a person by their appearance or without knowing them and as I read on, in this book, I may be right or I may be wrong about how colored people are treated the way they are. Everyone has a reason for the way they treat others, if someone does not give you the respect you want them to, you would most likely do the same. However, maybe people were plain cruel and treated colored people poorly for no reason. And that is what I think about how unjustice many people are to other races.

I feel Virgil Tibbs have something up his sleeve because his act is so kind and pure. I think he is a big fake! I sense Virgil is trying to get Sam Wood and Bill Gillespie's trust and once he has their full trust, Virgil would do something unexpected. A big event or a small event. Such as, Virgil may steal a belonging of another and no one would suspect it was him or he may murder another and once again, no one would suspect it was him. I do not trust that Virgil Tibbs, his attitude and personaility looks and sounds fake!

## Appendix 6

Sample Post-it Notes taken out of and transcribed from several students' books:

<p>Student A p. 11 "He had been chief of police and Wells resident for nine weeks"</p> <p>You don't have to stay for a very long time or get trained for a long time to become the chief of police in the past. And only 22 yrs. old.</p>	<p>Student C (Everything Group) - sounds as if they're treating him like a dirty animal.</p> <p>"we're stuck with this nigger now until we can dump him or until Bill her cleans up the case"</p>
<p>Student A p. 15 "On your feet black boy"</p> <p>- He could have been more polite</p>	<p>Student C (Everything Group) Sam changed his attitude towards Virgal (sic)</p> <p>bought him food and having (sic) conversations with him</p>
<p>Student B They're using Virgil as a scapegoat. If he fails, he is the one responsible for everything if he succeeds, they'll get the glory.</p>	<p>Student B The conversation between Sam and Pete showed that they're really racist.</p>

## Appendix 7

Sample Placemat Group Response transcribed from placemat used in Discussion #1:  
(Students wrote these notes on and sitting around a 22" x 36" poster paper)

Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E
<p>-why was Mantolli's daughter at the Endicott's?</p> <p>-was Harvey Oberst with Delores Purdy that night?</p> <p>- Does Sam Wood a wife?</p> <p>- Why didn't Sam become chief?</p> <p>- Mr. Endicott seemed eager to go see the corpse rather than letting the daughter</p> <p>-Sam does what he's told but mentally rebels chief Gillespie</p> <p>-Virgil Tibbs is a cop down in Pasadena, California</p> <p>-Tibbs suspects the murderer is someone close to Maestro Mantoli.</p> <p>- Why did Mr. Endicott ask so many questions towards Virgil Tibbs?</p>	<p>-Gillespie and Mr. Tibbs investigating on the homicide of Mr. Mantolli</p> <p>-They thought Mr. Tibbs killed Mr. Mantoli but they found out he was a police officer</p> <p>-Do they have any evidence who killed Mr. Mantoli?</p> <p>-Where would the wallet be?</p> <p>-Gillespie was investigating how a man died who was hit over the head had hard enough to break his skill.</p> <p>-The police thought it was Harvey oberst because he had Mr. Mantoli's Wallet.</p>	<p>-How did Bill Gillespie get the chief of police job when he has little experience with being an officer and barely any idea what to do about a murder?</p> <p>-Why didn't the murderer take all the money in the wallet?</p> <p>-Bill Gillespie will probably keep Virgil Tibbs in town seeing as he has no clue what to do to catch the murderer?</p> <p>-If Mr. Mantolli was killed by a strike to the head, then how was it that the body was sprawled out when Sam found him?</p>	<p>Why did Gillespie ask Tibbs to look at the dead body and don't want to know wht he found out?</p> <p>How did they know the identity of the dead person?</p> <p>I think people in Wells are racist to Black people.</p> <p>The police did not work as a group.</p> <p>Police officers are not specially trained.</p> <p>Tibbs is a investigator in Pasadena Police Department.</p> <p>Harvey was stupid that he took Mr. Mantoli's wallet.</p>	<p>CASE</p> <p>- wallet gone</p> <p>- somebody hit Mr. Mantoli at the back of the head</p> <p>Mr. Tibbs is a police officer from Pasadena, California</p> <p>- he's intelligent – black and investigating homicides</p> <p>- helped the case of Mr. Mantoli's death</p> <p>Sam is not trained police officer</p> <p>Sam is attracted to girls</p> <p>-Does Sam Wood have a wife?</p> <p>Gillespie is very boso</p> <p>-he thinks he know everything</p> <p>-chief</p> <p>Is Mr. Tibbs was really the person who killed Mr. Mantoli?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Tibbs was on the way back from visiting his mother</li><li>-virgil Tibbs helps the investigation</li><li>-Sam wood starts to have interest in Virgil Tibbs</li><li>-Gillespie is not an <del>office</del> Chief material</li><li>- Did Tibbs see the murderer?</li><li>- What is Harvey Oberst's alibi?</li><li>- Tibbs is a skilled cop who specializes in homicides.</li></ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-he is large</li><li>Does he have a wife?</li><li>Harvey stole Mr. Mantoli's wallet.</li></ul>
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Appendix 8

**Discussion Group Evaluation Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: (Circle one) Daniel's Role Sheets      Post-It Notes      Placemat  
                         Journals      Everything

1. What did you like best about your discussion group? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What would you have changed? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How did your approach to the book (role sheets, post-it-note, etc.) affect your reading?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What didn't you like about the approach? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How did you feel about being taped?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. If you could choose an approach, which would you like to do? Would you like to do the same one again? Why? Why Not?

## Appendix 9

**Daniel's Role Sheets Group: Discussion 3: Chapters 8-10****Madeline, Marlene, Ingrid, Frank, James, Phoebe**

Phoebe: (continuing previous discussion due to absence) Last time I drew how Gillespie always tries to be like solving the case and how Virgil called the hotel where Kaufmann stayed. Gillespie called it after and tried to figure out info and stuff and then he keeps on trying to solve it before Virgil, but he's not experienced. Ok summarizer.

Marlene: (Summarizer): for chapter 8, 9 and 10. I didn't write it down, but I have it in my head. 8,9, and 10 right? Ok in chapter 8, um the people in the mayor's office, or something, wanted Gillespie to get rid of Virgil because they don't like it that they have a negro in their station and in their town and they're saying that um that it's not good for their town and stuff, and yeah. And then Sam, or Virgil asks Sam to go with him and see him on his shift and they start talking and stuff, and then at the end of the chapter um yeah, Sam gets mad at Virgil for like asking him (loud noise from class next door) if he did a detour from his ride and Sam gets all mad and then Gillespie gets this letter saying that he has to get the black cop out of the station otherwise they're going to do it for him and he said he's going to get kicked out of the police thing and he's going to lose his job as police chief and for the last chapter, um they find out that Virgil might have some clues, ok Gillespie thinks that Sam is um the killer and he locked him up and then Virgil has some evidence that Sam might be innocent. That's as far as I got.

James: Connector: I am the connector and I'm supposed to connect stuff to the world. Um, Sam went to jail for something he didn't do is the same as TV shows that we see where not the real criminal is sent to jail and yeah, that's all I got.

Phoebe: What? Like I think he meant like how Gillespie just didn't want full on evidence. You know how he shows how cops just frame the guys and end the case. What do you guys think about this?

Marlene: I think that it's true. Kind of.

Ingrid: I think that it happens but maybe before it happened a lot but it's not that much now. 'Cause people know what to do to get advice on how to get the cops to get motivated to make it public and the public will say if you don't solve it then what the heck, right? So I don't think they'll try to get just anyone.

Madeline: (Discussion Director) Why would Virgil think that Gottschalk is innocent?

Ingrid: Frank didn't speak yet.

Marlene: Yeah.

Madeline: Did he draw a picture?

Ingrid: Didn't he have evidence already that the killer wasn't found on the highway? So then it's possible that he's the wrong guy. And then later he, he was at the crime scene.

Madeline: Why didn't the council want a black guy helping? Was it the colour of his skin?

Ingrid: They don't want a black guy to lead their town.

Phoebe: You know how they say he outta be a white man, you know that guy?

Because they think he's really smart and I think they're scared that if people find out that a Negro solved the case and they're like oh then what's the point of having out police people?

Madeline: No.

Ingrid: You know that when they talked to Gottschalk, you know that guy that went to jail, and he went to lay down right //

Phoebe: Oberst //

Ingrid: Yah him. Even though he's white, he thinks he's so much smarter than Tibbs, when Tibbs is like way smarter than him, but just because that guy's white he thinks he's smarter. I thought that was pretty dumb.

Phoebe: That's why I think they can't allow Tibbs to solve the case.

Madeline: Why did Virgil ride with Sam Wood?

Ingrid: to try and get more clues.

Marlene: what do you think Frank?

Frank: inaudible

Marlene: That's good. What do you think James?

James: To find clues, find clues.

Marlene: They're all cocky. (Laughter)

Madeline: What is Sam Wood's reaction to Virgil Tibbs calling him by his first name?

Ingrid: He's like all shocked, like oh, my god.

Marlene- I think he should call Sam Wood because //

Phoebe: No.

Marlene: He calls him inspector Wood because he feels he's all //

Phoebe: I think it's like in the beginning when Virgil first entered the story, he called Sam Wood, Sam. I think he was like really shocked. But when he's in the car I don't think he's as shocked because //

Ingrid: because I think that now Sam sees that he's really smart and like that it's proven that he's not so bad.

Phoebe: Educated even more than him for sure, right?

Ingrid: Yup.

Phoebe: So he has a lot of respect, so when he calls him that he doesn't really mind that much.

Madeline: Why did Ralph want to talk to Virgil Tibbs?

James: Because he doesn't like black people. Cause he's white, so he doesn't like black people.

Marlene: He's racist and he thinks like //

Phoebe: That's an excuse. We don't know how he feels.

Marlene: He feels like he has to be like everyone else because then like //

Phoebe: Do you think that the whites were pressured into not liking Negroes?

Group: Yeah.

Phoebe: Because so much people hate them. And you know some people are too afraid to stand up to actually go no stop it, like.

Ingrid: That's like if everyone said, "oh I hate blue," and you're like, "oh my god I like blue" and then they look at you if you're like, "ok you're weird buddy."

Marlene: I like blue.

Ingrid: I know I like blue too, I'm just saying. (Laughter)

Phoebe: Ok you can see my wonderful artwork. What do you guys see?



Ingrid: It's when Sam and the girl, the daughter. You know Mantolli's daughter, when they're like harsh getting it on. (Laughter)

Phoebe: What do you see? (To Frank)

Frank: The same thing.

Phoebe: What chapter?

Madeline: What chapter?

Phoebe: Last chapter, chapter 10.

James: They're like holding hands.

(Laughter)

Marlene: They're all happy.

Phoebe: How about you Madeline?

Madeline: Um, they're happy, yeah.

Phoebe: Like, don't you think it's kind of surprising how the girl, right, her father was like dead and stuff, and she actually was checking out Sam when her father was dead? She's like oh, he's a nice guy and she only like saw him once. That was when her father died.

Ingrid: But isn't she like going out with Kaufmann?

Marlene: They weren't going out.

Ingrid: He just liked her right?

Madeline: Who was he?

Phoebe: The father's assistant (?).

Ingrid: My picture is of the piece of wood. Can you see it? Harsh spent so much time on it (laughter). You know the piece of wood that Virgil shows Gillespie, the one the murder weapon?

Marlene: It's very good. I like it.

(Laughter)

Frank: (Literary Luminary) Page 86, 1st paragraph. (Frank reads out the incident in Mayor's office inaudibly)

Marlene: I think they're being really racist. He's just trying to help.

Ingrid: I think it's just plain, like stupid to be able to be on the councilman //

Marlene: Be open minded

Phoebe: Yeah, you know he wants to help. His point of view is so bad.

Marlene: What do you think Madeline?

Madeline: I think it's racist.

Laughter

Frank: Page 87, "I don't care...(reading inaudibly)

Group: Louder!

Frank: 2nd paragraph.

Marlene: Do you want me to read it because I can be LOUD? (Reading) "I don't care what we do...but I want to get rid of the nigger before the boys get impatient and rough him up...then we might get the FBI in here." So what do you all think of that? Ingrid?

Ingrid: I think it's so racist because what do they mean rough him up, are they going to beat him up?

Phoebe: Do they mean that they're going to send people or is it just people around town that will?

Ingrid: Because later, //You're so mean to Madeline (to Marlene) I mean it's not like the director is the owner of the group. Yah, 'cause then they rough him up //

Marlene: James what do you think?

James: inaudible

Phoebe: Like do you think as a threat that he's going to get people after him or just like people around town will have had enough of having a "nigger" around them? 'Cause that's supposed to be a non-colour place.

Ingrid: When they have people in the town reacting to like everything.

Marlene: I don't think it's a non-coloured town because they have other people living there. They have places where coloreds can go.

Phoebe: inaudible

Ingrid: Do you guys think Gillespie wants Tibbs to solve the case now, or do you think he's still really jealous?

Madeline: Still jealous.

Marlene: Keep in mind that if Vigil does solve the case that Gillespie still gets the credit.

Phoebe: I'm still thinking that, you know how in just chapter 10, or something, you know how, um, Gillespie is still trying to solve the case but he know he's not good

enough, and after he got the letter or whatever, he was like, "I'm just going to keep it for sure right?"

Ingrid: I think he just kind of rebelled against the other people now you know when someone gets mad you want to do the opposite of what they say just to show what I would do you know. I don't think he wants Tibbs to leave, he just wants people just get the councilmen.

Phoebe: But then I don't think he's that stupid to (inaudible)

Marlene: Are we done then?

Ingrid: I just think that the councilmen are so narrow-minded. Since they're like councilmen, shouldn't they think for better of the people?

Phoebe: You know like Frank something, I think that he's the best guy of all the councilmen, because even though he's a little racist he doesn't say like the other guys do, like how they hate negroes and stuff.

Ingrid: I think it's pretty funny how Tibbs is always so calm with like Gillespie where most people are yelling and then all of a sudden Tibbs is like, "oh who cares. Bye." He's so calm. What do you think Frank?

Phoebe: What do you think will happen in the next couple of chapters?

James: The town's going to get //

Frank: inaudible.

James: I think the killer is going to be put in jail. They might kill the guy. I think Ralph is the killer.

Phoebe: Why?

James: I just do.

Phoebe: Did you read it?

Jackie – No I just do.

Side B of tape:

Ingrid: Ok what did you say about Kaufmann?

Marlene: I think that Kaufmann is the killer, the one who killed Mantolli.

Ingrid: But then the author wouldn't make it so obvious either because they're obviously going to make the readers think, "oh yeah, Kaufmann" and then all of a sudden at the end it's like, "who?"

Marlene: Yeah, that's true.

Ingrid: Maybe it's Virgil (laughter). He's been like, you know he could be.

Marlene: He's working so hard on the case though.

Ingrid: A cover up though.

Frank- I think Mantolli's daughter killed her father. I know who did it.

Ingrid: Don't say.

Madeline: Why do you think it's the daughter, Frank?

Frank: Because he (sic) hates Sam.

Phoebe: She loves Sam Wood.

Frank: No.

Ingrid: Ok, maybe Mantolli wanted the daughter to marry Kaufmann, but she didn't want to marry Kaufmann that's why she's with Sam now.

Phoebe: But she already killed her father.

Ingrid: But if her father was still alive maybe he wanted her to be with Kaufmann, but she didn't want to be with him.

Marlene: That's true (laughter)

Phoebe: James, you're on.

James: My prediction is that Sam is going to be released from jail and I think Virgil Tibbs is the murderer.

Madeline: Who do you think is going to solve the case?

Marlene: I think Virgil because

Ingrid: He has to prove himself.

Marlene: Yah.

Phoebe: I think in the end the main characters will all change from being racist to not being racist. 'Cause I think the story is teaching people not to be racist and stuff, right? And how, you know how they be (sic) racist at the beginning change now? That's what the story is concluding. I think at the end Sam will be completely over like, "negroes can't touch me," and that kind of thing right?

My Comments based on first listen: Marlene was more attentive in this discussion. Madeline didn't say much. I wonder if she read the chapters. Jackie and Fan listened and participated when probed by other group members. After all the roles were done, they did their own predictions.

**Response Journals Group: Discussion 3: Chapter 8-10****Vanessa, Victor, Arthur, Peter, Glenda, Rachel**

Glenda: Ok this is what I wrote, um, Virgil told Gillespie that Mr. Gottschalk is not the murderer and they had a talk afterwards and afterwards Virgil asked how come Mr. Reverend Whiteburn to find the wood that been used that's been used for killing Mr. Mantolli and afterwards the council men wants (sic) to talk to Gillespie about the case of Mantolli being killed and the council men asked why is Virgil working in the police department because he's a black person and the council members doesn't like him very much and they want to Gillespie to get rid of Virgil. Ok and then, um, during the night time Virgil asked to ride with Sam for the patrol and then Virgil told Sam Wood how Mantolli wasn't killed where they found it and according to the conversation I noticed that Sam actually thinks that Virgil is very talented and smart but he just don't want to show it out. And when they are at the restaurant, Sam went in and got something for Virgil to eat. Who wants to go next?

Victor: Not me.

Rachel: I only did up to Chapter 8.

Glenda: After reading chapter 8, I found out that Sam actually thought that Virgil was very talented and smart. He observes stuff like very carefully. So he actually appreciates Virgil and (inaudible)

Arthur: Do you want to skip to chapter 9? Who read chapter nine? Ok, in chapter 9 Sam seemed to be arrested. There was a possibility that he was the murderer because he was the only one around where the body was found and all the clues fit in. He was probably right-handed and also strong 'cause when the piece of wood, but then also it could prove him not guilty, um. When helping with the case, if even he was trying to mislead them, Virgil took everything he helped with, as true and why would he want to help the cops? Do you think Sam would is guilty or not guilty?

Rachel: No.

Glenda: No.

Victor: No.

Rachel: Well obviously, why would he be guilty of killing anyone? He's like on patrol and he was like you know out on the street.

Victor: Well maybe because (inaudible)

Rachel: But then again, you have Virgil trying to back up Sam so that convinced that Virgil would be wrong and he'll have to change his course.

Arthur: K, who's next? What about chapter 10?

Some discussion about who has read (muffled due to being in a noisy hallway)

Vanessa: I didn't write very much. I think Virgil is, Sam Wood is guilty. I think Gillespie has no idea what he's doing and when Virgil comes along and he takes over the crime and makes Gillespie look, wait, and it makes Gillespie mad, unimportant and bad and especially when it was back in the day when racism did not get along and Virgil took over Gillespie's job, so I think that Gillespie is going to find a way to take all the credit even though he may be wrong.

Rachel: Seriously what I think is I don't see what there is to writing chapter 10 'cause it gets all romantic and //

Vanessa: Yeah it does //

Rachel: And we kind of don't like to talk about that.

Arthur: Chapter 10 was about Delores Purdy accusing Sam wood of sexual assault and Dueana was visiting Sam Wood in jail.

Vanessa: Why would Delores accuse Sam Wood of seduction?

Rachel: Maybe because her mind is turned off, you know 'cause Sam was accused of murder and she goes ok whatever, she's pregnant, whatever, so she blames it on someone.

Glenda: First he's on night patrol, so like it like his responsibility that he goes to her house and goes around //

Rachel: I don't know I just have a question about um, you know Kaufmann, how they before, he was kind of confessing and then afterwards he just got let go, then all of a sudden he's introduced again? But he has to hold a gun for his safety, but I don't see the reason why he didn't do that, like, before and now he's like doing it.

Arthur: Maybe they have too many suspects out there 'cause back then they don't have thieves so there's less trouble.

Rachel: Yeah still, even like that girl doesn't seem to have much like worries now and he's like all over the place.

Victor: I think we're reading ahead... now //

Vanessa: No this is what we *think*.

Victor: Oh.

Rachel: This is not reading ahead, ahead would be the next chapter would be about //

Victor: Well maybe because like he was like the guy, he has lots of money and they might go after him and he might run and they might shoot him.

Vanessa: Anyone else want to talk about chapter 10, or something?

Rachel: Well I don't know, 'cause at the end of chapter 10 it says that um, um Sam was just trying to figure out or like think what would, what's that girls name again, Mantolli, Dueana, what she would think once she found out Delores accused him of seducing her.

Vanessa: What do you think her reaction would be?

Rachel: I don't know cause she weird thinking, and then you know, most of the time is weird jealousy and then just sad and all this stuff, right. But who knows right, 'cause right now he has feelings for her and like she just like did something that doesn't really show she has feelings for him.

Unidentifiable speaker: She might not care.

Comments based on first listen: This tape was difficult to decipher! I also find the way the students talk is extremely unclear. The train of thought is tough to follow.



### **Post-It Notes Group: Discussion #3 – chapters 8-10**

**Frances, Edgar, Morrison, Christine, Joanne**

Edgar: The minister seemed to like Virgil more than the others.

Frances: Because?

Edgar: He's also black, maybe.

Joanne: Where is that?

Frances: Page?

Morrison: I don't remember chapter 8.

Frances: What are you talking about?

Edgar: Page 82.

Joanne: Was it then he was going to ask him about?

Frances: Louder.

Joanne: I think he's the one responsible for the Negro, like youth programs and stuff like that.

Edgar: He gathered wood for them.

Pause

Frances: One page before that, you know how Sam said something kind of disrespectful?

Pause

Frances: You know, on page 81, he says something disrespectful, like in his head he's like, "oh I shouldn't have said that?" If you're so ashamed about it why did you say it in the beginning?

Joanne: Because he didn't actually know that.

Frances: What he's doing.

Christine: He said, "Virgil was the smartest black I ever saw." Is he implying that Black people are stupid?

Frances: Like what made him so much better?

Joanne: And then he added, "he oughta be a white man."

Christine: Is he trying to say that black people are stupid and white people are smart?

Frances: Why are white people so much better?

Christine: Yeah.

Morrison: That's what he was thinking.

Frances: That's what I don't understand either, you know how um, they know Oberst, or whatever, he's like saying he's poor white trash. If you're so proud of your race, why do you dis your own race too? It doesn't make sense.

Morrison: Ok, I'll go next. On page 86, there was that guy named Schubert. He was talking to Gillespie, he kept saying, "you have to get negroes out of here," even though Tibbs has been doing nothing but helping out and he's like, "I want this guy out of here."

Frances: Who was saying it again?

Edgar, Joanne, Morrison: Schubert.

End of tape

Side B

Frances: They should realize that he's actually helping out and if he wasn't there they would be nowhere; they wouldn't know anything.

Christine: Virgil?

Frances: Yeah.

Christine: They'd probably stuck still trying to solve the case.

Frances: They'd probably be like, "yeah, that's where the body was."

Morrison: They probably would have had that first suspect as //

Joanne: The first one //

Frances: Yeah, they probably would have killed him and an innocent person would have been dead.

Christine: Because they would have blamed it on anyone without.

Frances: Yeah, 'cause they're stupid. They don't even have any experience, they should understand that he actually has education in the field that he's doing and they don't.

Edgar: Watkins said he doesn't want a "nigger running around this town asking questions of white people like he thought he was somebody."

Morrison: That's basically what I said.

Frances: Anything else in chapter 8?

Joanne: You know when Sam, when Virgil went to the ride with Virgil at night and they have this conversation?

Frances: Uh huh.

Morrison: On page 93, Tibbs was like telling Sam how to drive and Sam was, like, going, "oh how'd you figure that out," and that's pretty cool. So he was kind of like teaching Sam how to be a better cop.

Christine: Sam, and Sam's better than Gillespie. Imagine how Gillespie would take it.

Frances: Anything else in chapter 8?

Morrison: I got one more.

Frances: Go ahead.

Morrison: At the end I thought that was pretty stupid, you know how they're doing that long driving thing and then um, stopped for the food? It was pretty nice how he stood up for Tibbs, and so what if the food is for the black guy? I don't care give me the food!

Christine: It shows he actually has a heart.

Morrison: And the guy's like, "if it's for him, we're all out."

Frances: It shows that he's not as racist as before. Like um, Tibbs is changing his perception of black people in general now.

Christine: Not Tibbs, Sam

Frances: Sam, yeah.

Morrison: I thought that was nice.

Frances: That was nice. And he's actually willing to stand up for him now. Before he probably wouldn't have done that.

Christine: cause he probably thought that... their would be whites against blacks. They'd probably kick his toot-a-loo.

Joanne: Page 95 right? Sam was, like, saying that what if she were to be up and about again, that would give Virgil a good look at the Purdy girl. When they passed by that girl's house //

Christine: Delores.

Joanne: Then he was saying he didn't want Virgil to see the dirty white girl with no clothes on.

Morrison: Because he's black he doesn't want him to see a naked white girl?

Frances: Well like he can check her out all the time, so //

Morrison: So if he was driving with another white guy they would go check her out?

Frances: He's so dirty.

Morrison: He's still a guy, he's still like to check out girls. Do you think he's black, so he's gay?

Frances: She's like half his age, eww.

Morrison: I know it's gross but like he's black he can't check out girls?

Frances: Yeah, but even though they would have passed, I don't think Tibbs would have //

Christine: Looked.

Frances: 'cause he has a lot of respect.

Christine: He has, what's the word?

Frances: He's not like some horny guy like he is //

Christine: Like Mike over here (laughter).

Morrison: Where did that come from?

Frances: All guys are like that. (Laughter) Anyways, chapter 9.

Morrison: Hold on I want to go back to the stuff. you know some girls are really just slutty, like Cherry over here...(laughter) Sorry Ms. Clark, I just had to get her back (laughter).

Christine: Oh thanks, ok, anyways.

Morrison: You're welcome

Frances: Chapter 9!

Edgar: Gillespie actually wanted to try. He started to read the investigation book.

Christine: Did you say he wanted to cry?

Edgar: try. And then he appreciated what Virgil has done.

Frances: Yeah, 'cause when he was reading it, he knew it was so much better than his and he could never do something just as good and then Tibbs came to seem him and

he said “oh, satisfactory” when he knew in his heart that it was, like, so much better than he could ever do. He just doesn’t want to show that he’s so much better.

Christine: This book is like kind of saying that white people are stupid like they couldn’t //

Morrison: I thought they were saying white people are the best, black people are stupid.

Christine: No like how they’re making Gillespie look so dumb, yeah, they can never //

Frances: They’re just showing how it was before.

Christine: Not everyone was like that.

Frances: Yeah, but the majority of the people were very racist and they wouldn’t want to show that they were less than a black person. They always wanted to show that they were better even though, like for example Tibbs, he’s better and Gillespie probably knows that, but he just doesn’t want to show it.

Morrison: on page 105 when Gillespie was like phoning that I think it was the bank, he kept asking personal questions about Sam’s account. It’s like, “mind your own business, that’s personal stuff.” I don’t know what he was doing, but then he figured he’d put him in jail in the end...I don’t know why he was asking questions about his account.

Joanne: Because Sam received, like, \$600.

Frances: That’s so stupid. He should investigate more.

Morrison: He’s one of his co-workers. He should just go ask in person instead of //

Christine: Then again \$600 was a lot back then.

Joanne: Back then \$600 is a lot.

Christine: Like you winning the jackpot.

Frances: Maybe he was saving up the money or something.

Edgar: He saved it.

Frances: It’s possible he could save money in his house right?

Morrison: That’s true.

Frances: And then all like one day he just wants to pay it off all at once now. There’s two ways of doing it, you could just keep on paying or you could wait till you have the whole sum and then pay it out, so //

Morrison: Why don't you say anything?

Christine: She has.

Morrison: No she's just commented on things.

Christine: She doesn't have her book.

Morrison: Oh sorry.

Morrison: I still don't understand. Why did he put Sam in prison?

Frances: In his head he visualized the person. In his head he was visualizing who would be someone that could strike a piece of wood on Mantolli's head and the person he pictured was Sam.

Morrison: So then he just put him in jail?

Frances: That was one of the reasons, and another thing was that, when he called the bank, he reassured his thought to him //

Frances: 'Cause then that was his thought, then the other thing is when he called the bank he just deposited a lot of money. Paid something off.

Morrison: But in chapter 10 Gillespie said, "I was looking for a solid piece of evidence to say why he put him in jail." He doesn't even have evidence! He's in jail and now he's thinking of a solid piece of evidence.

Frances: He just wants to put someone in jail quickly so it's like he figured it out.

Christine: So he did something.

Frances: So then they can get rid of Tibbs, so 'cause then you know how the council is pressuring him?

Joanne: Yeah they told him to //

Frances: Hurry up and just to go to jail for no good reason.

Edgar: And when, um, the bank person said the money is usually normal because they're still saving up more than once, he didn't believe him, he just arrested him.

Frances: That's really stupid.

Morrison: A lot of money came from where?

Edgar: He thought that Sam stole the money from Mantolli.

Frances: That's why he put him in jail.

Morrison: Didn't they find another suspect with the wallet?

Frances: Yeah, but he was thinking maybe there was \$800 in the wallet and he took \$600 and left \$200. Like, he still left money. That's what he was thinking in his head like people have done that before when they steal something.

Morrison: That's kind of stupid though.

Frances: I know, but that's why he's in jail because Gillespie thought //

Morrison: Did they say what was the reason he actually had money?

Frances: I don't think Sam even had a say in it. He was just put in jail.

Christine: He didn't have a chance to talk.

Frances: Yeah, which is totally unfair. You can't just put someone in jail for the heck of it.

Joanne: And not give some reason.

Frances: Isn't Sam just one position lower than Gillespie? Or two positions lower?

Police officers wouldn't usually do something like that, so I don't know, so they shouldn't accuse him, or especially him because he works for the police department and //

Christine: and he's like the best person they have.

Frances: So it's like really stupid. Anything else from chapter 9? Ok, chapter 10 then.

Christine: Wait.

Frances: Ok chapter 9.

Christine: Didn't Tibbs say that Mr. Woods is guilty?

Morrison: Then he said, no he's definitely not.

Frances: Chapter 10.

Morrison: That's what happens when you're not organized.

Christine: This isn't my book.

Morrison: Well, when you don't bring your book and your notes and then you're going to say stupid stuff.

Christine: Yes, I know.

Frances: Stop flirting, jeez.

Christine: Gross.

Morrison: I'm just telling her.

Frances: I'm so sure, anyways. Chapter 10?

Edgar: Ms. Mantolli said that it was shocking that Sam was arrested for murdering her father.

Frances: Mantolli's daughter.

Edgar: Because Sam treated her very good on the day that they found out.

Frances: Then again it could be an act. Well you know actually, I think Sam is innocent.

Morrison: Obviously.

Christine: He's just trying to make the book longer.

Morrison: On page 117, Delores and another person came into Gillespie's office.

Frances: Her father.

Morrison: Yeah, and then Tibbs came in and they were so mean," get this nigger out of here" and then right to his face. He was standing right there. That must make him feel so bad.

Frances: Yeah, but I think he's used to it.

Morrison: Then I think he's pretty smart because he walked out and pointed to the intercom, so that was pretty smooth of him. I mean she's in a police dept., she shouldn't tell people to get out of the office.

Frances: They don't have that power to. That was really gross when they said Sam was playing around with her. Like, not raped her. Seduced her.

Morrison: Is she like saying that when he went to like comfort her cause her father died?

Edgar: No that's not her.

Frances: Wrong girl.

Joanne: The little slut.

Morrison: I can't remember when he talked to her.

Edgar: He never did.

Frances: That's the thing. That's why I think it's an act. Ok Delores Purdy is a slut, basically and then, I think she's trying to cover for someone that really killed, to make Sam stay in jail more. Delores knows that Sam is in jail now, so if she says Sam touched me that would keep him in longer. It has more offences against him.

Morrison: So does she know the actual killer?

Frances: Yeah, she knows who it is and I think she's covering for someone.



Joanne: Oh, she's covering, for that guy.

Frances: We're guessing here, but that's what I think. 'Cause obviously, though Sam thought she was, he didn't think she was hot but I don't know, but he checks her out, but I don't think he would actually do stuff with her. She's like half his age. That's pretty nasty.

Christine: How old is he?

Frances: He's at least 30.

Morrison: She's 16.

Christine: I thought he was 27.

Frances: Late 20s early 30s. But yeah, 'cause then Delores, when girls report rapes, attacks, whatever, usually they believe the girl over the guy, so //

Morrison: That's what happened with Kobe Bryant.

Frances: yeah.

Morrison: I don't know. He probably did though.

Frances: But it's a really good strategy whoever told Delores to do it. To say that he did stuff with her.

When Dueanna Mantolli went to the jail cell and made out with him or whatever //

Christine: Sam.

Frances: I didn't understand that. Did she have some kind of attraction to him? What was with that? Doesn't she have a boyfriend? That Eric Kaufmann, isn't he her boyfriend? That's like kind of cheating on him.

Christine: Does it matter, though right?

Frances: First she was like, "do whatever I say," or something, and then she was like, "hold me, kiss me," and it's like what are you doing? I don't get what does it have to do with it?

Morrison: They probably would have found the killer, like so much earlier 'cause they all have their own problems with people they're working with. Tibbs you're black and all that and girls saying freak and all that stuff.

Frances: That's just trying to make the book interesting.

Christine: It's working isn't it?

Frances: Yeah, it is. We're done.

**Placemat Group: Discussion 3: Chapter 8 – 10**

**Catherine, Nick, Justine, Trevor, Karen**

Karen: My first question: Is the situation really that serious that Kaufmann is trying to protect himself?

Catherine: Pretty much.

Karen: I mean, like how can you expect him to protect you if you don't know how to use a gun properly?

Nick: Yeah.

Catherine: True that.

(Laughter because of Catherine's response)

Karen: Do you think the murderer will strike again or is this a one-time thing?

Catherine: I think it's a one-time thing.

Trevor: If he comes again he's going to get caught.

Catherine: Yeah, exactly, if he does it again. Like there will be more clues leading to her or to him.

Catherine: Was this case all just an accident, or did someone deliberately kill Mantolli?

Karen: Well look at the facts, if they were really trying to kill him they would do it a lot better.

Catherine: But then do you remember the weapon where he struck (sic) behind him?

Karen: Yeah, they could have picked it up in any random place. If they really planned it they would have thrown it in the river or buried it or something.

Catherine: Is the murderer crazy or something?

Karen: They're desperate.

Catherine: Desperate for what?

Trevor: Money, probably.

Karen: Mr. Endicott is loaded.

Catherine: Then that would lead to Dueana which is really a suspect because if he would die then she would get all the money.

Nick: Exactly.

Catherine: But why would his own daughter kill him?

Karen: Well money is a very big motivation.

Trevor: Not always.

Catherine: Did someone make her do it? Someone like lead her in to that direction?

Karen: I don't think she did though.

Catherine: Maybe she did it in her sleep.

Karen: No, I mean that if she did murder him then she wouldn't be so upset. She wouldn't have gotten involved.

Catherine: Yeah, but that could all be an act.

Karen: Why would she do that?

Catherine: To protect herself.

Karen: From what?

Catherine: From being suspected. Any more comments (on this question)? What was Delores' motive for framing Sam?

Trevor: I don't get that one.

Catherine: Why would she frame him for?

Karen: Maybe she likes him.

Catherine: But if she did, wouldn't she go see Sam?

Karen: She's like 16 and he's like 29.

Trevor: And she's 16.

Karen: I don't think he's the kind of guy that goes for that kind of girl.

Catherine: Hey, it's the olden days; anything could happen

Karen: It's only 20 years ago, maybe 30.

Catherine: The olden days.

Trevor: 50 years ago.

Catherine: Look at computers, how long they've been around in comparison and cell phones were this big (probably gesturing). Anyways. Why would Gillespie want to see Dueana?

Trevor: Mantolli's daughter. Oh no, she went to see Sam.

Karen: When was that?

Trevor: That was chapter 10.

Catherine: Did the murderer place the body there? I think I asked that question already

Trevor: Yeah.

Karen: It looks like it 'cause, because it was all spread out.

Catherine: Was this murderer all planned out before?

Trevor: That's hard.

Karen: I don't think so 'cause, like, you don't want to get caught 'cause there's capital punishment and you die right?

Catherine: So maybe he planned it.

Karen: Make it look like an accident or suicide, but it's not because it's found on the street and all spread out. The murderer didn't really care, so it's not planned. It's a one-time thing.

Catherine: I think it was planned.

Karen: Well sort of planned. It was like, "I don't like that guy I'm going to kill him."

Catherine: 'Cause I think that if it was planned and the murderer knew that Sam would pass by.

Karen: Oh do you mean 1st degree murder or second-degree murder? Like 1st degree murder is when you planned and 2nd degree murder is you just do it.

Trevor: No plan.

Karen: I think its 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Catherine: I think it's 1<sup>st</sup>.

Karen: I don't think he planned it.

Trevor: He planned it all complicated. (Reading what he wrote) Tibbs traced the routes of where Sam drove the night of the murder. Tibbs went to the reverend Amos Whiteburn to ask about the case of Mr. Mantolli's murder. Tibbs asked Sam if he could join him for the night patrol duty and the mayor Schubert and the council members wants Sam to leave town. Sam and Tibbs are getting along with each other, and how did chief Gillespie know that Sam is the murderer?

Karen and Catherine: Sam isn't the murderer.

Catherine: I'm pretty sure of that.

Karen: It says so in the 1st chapter.

Catherine: Exactly, it explained his actions, or maybe what he thinks happened.

Karen: I know.

Catherine: What if he has a split personality? He could have, you never know.

Karen: It would have been more specific. It would show more in the novel wouldn't it?

'Cause usually more ... when they have a second side.

Catherine: Maybe he had more.

Karen: Multiple personalities, even better.

Catherine: I know a person who had like 15.

Nick: I'm going to say some of the stuff I know about the story. Well Tibbs visited //

Trevor: Reverend

Nick: Reverend Amos Whiteburn. Tibbs asked the reverend to use the youth group to search for the club that may have killed Mantolli. Gillespie put Sam in prison. Why did Gillespie keep Sam in prison?

Catherine: So Sam wouldn't run away. Oh was that a question though?

Trevor: Yeah.

Nick: Yeah.

Catherine: Oh, ok.

Nick: K, I'm all done, Catherine. Do you know how long they kept him in?

Catherine: It never said. It just happened.

Nick: Ok, well I'm done. Justin?

Justin: Why did Tibbs ask Dueana if her father would have like him or not?

Catherine: He wanted more information.

Justin: It had nothing to do with the case though.

Trevor: Maybe it's related to Mantolli.

Justin: Why did Mr. Gillespie keep Sam under arrest even though Tibbs says he was innocent?

Karen: Tibbs has no evidence that he's innocent.

Catherine: I think that he wants to prove to Virgil that, "I caught the murderer and now you got to go home." Remember that warning though. Yeah, that could save him from //

Nick: Is Sam innocent though?

Catherine: Yeah, he is, but it's only that Virgil who thinks so and Dueana. He doesn't have a plan yet though.

Karen: Right. He doesn't seem like the kind of person who could kill someone. 95% of the cases the person won't be suspected.

Catherine: See, you know in the past chapters, they expose him as having 3 years experience which in the beginning we thought he was a newbie, so that was odd.

Nick: Well I guess we're done now eh? Thank you very much.

Comments: I'm happy to see that they're exploring the case and who could be guilty and if the murder was premeditated or not. They discuss author's craft and past knowledge of story telling when discussing Sam as the suspect or a person with multiple personalities as an improbability.

**Everything Group (Using Post-It Notes method): Discussion 3: Chapter 8-10**

**John, Tanya, Nancy, Lucy, Alan, Lorraine**

Tanya: You know where, page 81, do you guys have your books here?

Nancy: Yup, right here.

Tanya: You want to share with them? (Referring to students who don't have books) On page 81, I think Pete is confident that Virgil is working on the case and then he also says, he's the smartest African he ever saw and I kind of disagree because he's smart.

John: Yeah, he says he should have been born white, which back then would have been a big compliment, especially down in the south.

Tanya: On the next page I think the reverend was very kind and understanding to him, to Virgil I mean.

Nancy: He actually had a strategy to find the //

Tanya: And you know how he says, "oh yeah, I won't say a single thing," I wonder if he says anything in the rest of the book, like he says he won't say anything about like, I don't know, he says something about how he won't say anything. Oh yeah it says, "the minister loved to speak...are you at liberty to go any further he asked. This isn't an official conversation, Tibbs told him and it's not to be repeated to anyone."

John: The minister lies to the children.

Tanya: I know like that's kind of strange right?

John: Not really, well he's sort of doing it for a good reason. It's like do you really think the kids would, "ok kids I want you to go find a piece of wood (// Tanya: with blood on it) that someone got killed with, ok?

Tanya: They really wouldn't want to find it.

John: Some would but they'd probably just keep it.

Nancy: Why would they keep it?

John: Someone got killed with it.

Tanya: The next thing I put was Reverend Whiteburn tends to ask a lot of questions in between Virgil's comments and he, but then Virgil doesn't mind that he's asking, like //

Nancy: Quit interrupting //

Lucy: He wants to be behind (unclear). He doesn't act irritated. So that's kind of interesting.

Lucy: Are you guys recording?

John: For the fact the Reverend wasn't the one who did it.

Nancy: Well obviously.

Lucy: He's just there to help find the stick thing.

John: Yeah, he's a secondary character. Basically, That's all he does in the book.

Tanya: You know on page 85, how the three men are talking to Bill about Virgil //

Nancy and John: yeah //

Tanya: and then the one guy, like Trudy, goes this isn't California and I think it's kind of rude. Like I know it isn't California, but still like //

Lucy: He knows that; you don't need to point the obvious to him.

Tanya: It's just kind of stupid and then, um, if you're considering the facts Gillespie was kind of defending Virgil.

John: Well yeah, because the thing is about Gillespie, he's using Virgil. The longer Virgil, if Virgil solves the case, 'cause Gillespie doesn't know what the hell he's doing //

Tanya: Exactly.

John: so //

Nancy: If he solves the case it's good for him and the department.

Lucy: Yeah it's good for Virgil.

John: If Virgil solves the case, cause he doesn't have any jurisdiction in the Wells area, then he really can't do anything. He can't even legally cannot arrest the guy. He needs a police officer that has jurisdiction to arrest the guy.

Tanya: Ok, um.

Teacher: One piece of advice is try not to talk over each other. I was so funny 'cause I was like, stopping, starting 'cause there were three people talking at once, so as I was typing it out I was like, "What did that person say", but otherwise your topic of discussion is very good, you have lots to say. So we'll see how the post-it notes go.

Do you have your book here?

Lucy: I think it's in my locker. Can I go get it?



Teacher: Yeah, you need it 'cause you have marked pages.

Tanya: I have almost every page marked.

John: I left mine at home. I know what I'm going to say.

Tanya: :It's ok 'cause I'm saying stuff and they just make comments about it. 'Cause I have a lot of stuff down as you can see.

Teacher: That's tons of stuff.

Tanya: And you know how Watkins says, "no nigger thought he was somebody." And I think that's kind of rude.

Nancy: Well everything in this book is rude, 'cause everyone is somebody, nobody can be a nobody.

John: Not necessarily, 'cause back then in the South, that's the way people talked, that's the way it worked.

Nancy: They're worth nothing.

Tanya: Yeah but still, it's still rude.

Nancy: That's what we think.

John: Back then, to them it's just normal. That's how people talk in the South.

Tanya: Well then it says, quote unquote, "We're stuck with this nigger," I don't think they're stuck with him; they need him.

Alan: It sounds like they're seeing him as not human.

Tanya: Yeah I know, but they're not stuck with him. They need him, so if they don't have him, they're not going to solve the case.

Nancy: Do you actually expect Sam to find the murderer? Or like Gillespie can?

Tanya: Sam got arrested.

Nancy: I know.

John: Sam gets arrested, but yeah, like //

Tanya: He had sex with Delores!

John: No he didn't.

Tanya: That's what it said in the book.

Nancy: He wasn't even interested in her.

Tanya: How come the computer's printing? (Referring to the computer in the room)

John: Because someone is printing something and it's hooked up to that printer.

John: It's so obvious. It said before that he did not like her that way.

Nancy: He didn't have any interest in her, but then he could have.

Nancy: So then Delores is lying,

Tanya: Shh, I haven't even read that far yet!

John: It's so obvious!

Tanya: You're wrecking it for me!!

Pause

Tanya: You know on page 87, Schubert says, "Oh we're with you Bill, you know that."  
My ass. You're with him?

John: Oh no.

Tanya: They're saying, the three other guys, they're with Bill, but they're saying that he's doing something wrong.

John: No but, they're with him because they want the murder solved.

Tanya: I know but then before //

John: They don't like Virgil, they don't want him there.

Nancy: They only want the murder solved.

Lorraine: Would you really want a murderer running around your small little hicksville town? Think about it.

John: It is a fricking hicktown.

Lorraine: I wouldn't want that. Like, do something.

Tanya: You know on page 84-85, they have the meeting with the four men. They kind of get mad at Bill for keeping the //

John: Yeah 'cause they want to get rid of him because they don't like him.

Tanya: Exactly. But then, they're with him. How can they say they're with him when they don't want him?

John: Because. They're with him because they want the crime solved.

Tanya: But they're not with him because they don't want Virgil there. And he wants Virgil there.

John: No.

Nancy: They just say it.

Lucy: Yeah.

John: Ah!! Gillespie doesn't want Virgil there either. Gillespie would rather Virgil not be there.

Tanya: I know he wants Virgil there to do the thing for him.

John: No, he didn't want Virgil there in the first place. Virgil was there, so he's using him. He didn't really have a choice.

Tanya: He did have a choice.

John: He did at the beginning, but then, no: the mayor said just use him – yeah //

Tanya: and then go.

Lucy: Yeah, so they're using Virgil to solve the case and then Gillespie's going to take all the //

John: Basically //

Lucy: credit.

Tanya: On page 87, it says, " we live here. We run this place." But I think that's wrong because the African Americans live there, and others live there so they have the right to run that place too. To me they can't say that.

John: They can.

Tanya: Well no, 'cause he says that, "We live here, so we run this place." That means just the white people. But then there are still African Americans and they live there also. So they have the right to do that too.

John: The ones that live there don't really have much power at all so they don't really run the place.

Tanya: But they live there too, so they have the right to run this place, but they don't know that.

John: No they don't. See in the South they would not have the right. Back then they would not have the right.

Nancy: They don't have any rights.

John: Like in the 50's in the south they did not have the right.

Tanya: You know on page 89, when Virgil asks, um, Sam if he could ride with him on the night shift, he hesitates his answer, but then he still agreed, but then he didn't want to, but he did. So //

Nancy: That kind of shows some support, but not really.

Lucy: He didn't like the fact that a black guy was running around with him, but he liked the fact that he had company.

John: Sam is starting to respect him.

Nancy: Then he could look at his little crush...

Tanya: You know how it's interesting how Sam and Virgil communicate on page 90. Like they talk.

John: He's starting to see past his prejudice.

Tanya: And then

Nancy: Loss of racism against Virgil.

Tanya: Virgil compliments Sam by saying he has the talent and skill to become a detective, and whatever. And he said Sam instead of Mr. Wood.

John: Yeah.

Tanya: And the Sam didn't even catch that.

John: Well he did and then he just let it slide then.

TANYA: Which is really cool.

Tanya: And the like it's cool how Sam makes assumptions on how Mantolli died or had fallen. Virgil is giving him some feedback, and Sam just adds on to that, you know //

Nancy: Trying to build on their conversation.

Tanya: and sort of bond.

John: But then Sam does mislead him.

Tanya: Yeah, he does. But then he finds it out.

John: I know how he finds it. It's sort of weird though.

Tanya: He hesitates his turn.

John: No that's not how he does it.

Tanya: What do you mean, like. When he doesn't want Virgil to see Delores?

John: Yeah, no I'm saying I know how Virgil found out he did the turn at the wrong place.

Tanya, Lucy, Nancy (in unison): How?

John: You have to read further in the book.

Tanya: Oh fine don't tell us. I mean really don't tell us, don't tell us.

Nancy: But he finds out afterwards. You really shouldn't talk about what happens afterwards.

John: I know.

Tanya: It says, "It may be hard for you to believe, but there are places in this country where a coloured man, to use your words for it, is simply a human being like everybody else." If they're not human, what are they? Like according to the Southern people.

John: They're less than them. There still human to them.

Tanya: No they say they aren't human. They think they're somebody. Somebody is a human, if you're not somebody that means you're not human. Then what are you?

John: Then they're not //

Nancy: They Know they're of the human race, they just don't want to give their respect to them.

John: They're something lower than humanity. They're lower than them.

Tanya: They know they're human, but they say they're not human.

John: No, they knew they're were human, they think they're lower than them.

Nancy: They thought they were much better than them.

John: Yeah.

Tanya: Sam says to Mr. Tibbs later on, on page 95, how Sam gets food for Virgil?

Inside the store, Ralph says, "oh yeah you nigger lover," quote unquote. I know you're going to say yes they always say that in the South.

John: What?

Tanya: You weren't even listening to me.

Tanya: It was really kind for him to get the food for Virgil.

John: Oh yeah, Ralph sort of freaks out about it. I've said worse to some races.

Tanya: And then it's interesting that Gillespie finally notices he has to educate himself on page 90.

Nancy: Yeah, 'cause he's looking at Tibbs thinking, "Tibbs is much smarter than I am."

John: He's realizes Tibbs has more authority and he didn't like that.

Tanya: Gillespie never went to school. He's like this Texas guy that was macho man.

Lorraine: I hate Gillespie. He's so ignorant, argh!

Tanya: And Kauffman raises suspicion when he drives away on page 99. He also carries a gun.

Nancy: For protection my butt!

Lorraine: He probably did do it because he was dating Dueanna

Tanya: And Mantolli doesn't want to //

John: And Sam likes her too though //

Nancy: In chapter 10, I thought it would either be Endicott or Kauffman, 'cause Endicott actually drove Mantolli down there.

John: Not really. Why would Endicott do it though?

Nancy: Endicott had nothing to gain.

Lorraine: Look at it this way. Eric had everything to gain by getting his money and the girl.

Tanya: Dueanna would inherit the money and then he would get it.

John: It didn't really say that they were dating. He wants to. Wants to and really are, are two different things.

Tanya: Yeah, but you know later on in the chapter Sam goes, "oh, I'm surprised you and Dueanna aren't married yet," He's biting his tongue to say that.

John: Yeah, cuz Sam likes her.

Tanya: Kaufmann has a good reason to carry a gun. You know that very personal note Gillespie got?

John: It was kind of interesting.

Tanya: Yeah.

John: It was hate mail.

Tanya: He knew who it was from.

John: Not really, he didn't know who it was from.

Tanya: Yeah, it said that there was a return address.

John: No, it said there was no return address.

Nancy: There was none.

Tanya: Oh, without one. Oops. But still, he knew what to expect, so.

John: He knew what to expect, 'cause //

Nancy: They all wanted to get rid of Tibbs.

John: Yeah, because, he could have.

Tanya: I don't believe that Sam killed Mantolli.

Nancy: It's stupid.

Tanya: He had no evidence to prove that he did it.

John: Gillespie did have some evidence, actually. He checked the bank

Tanya/Nancy/Lucy: that's not evidence. It's assumption, ok?

John: It is some evidence.

Nancy: He got money, but then still.

John: No, if he's been putting in a certain amount every month or something, then all of a sudden he just puts \$600 dollars in, that's a lot more money than it is now.

Tanya: But still how does that make a difference to him killing Mantolli?

John: Because he could have taken some of the money in the wallet and left some so it looks like there wasn't much taken.

Alan: I don't know 'cause there wasn't any taken.

Lorraine: Sam doesn't seem smart enough to do something like that.

Tanya: He's just so stupid.

John: I'm pretty sure it wasn't him, but it's just like he had some evidence to arrest him, is all that I'm saying.

Lorraine: Exactly, but he's just too stupid.

Tanya: Not necessarily.

John: Considering Gillespie doesn't really know what he's doing that was a pretty good assumption and that was some decent work.

Tanya: He's only in jail because //

Unclear Speaker: "I beat you too it and I caught the guy...."

Lucy: He's always having to show Virgil up.

Tanya: He does not trust //

John: He thinks he's superior to Virgil, so he wants to tell himself he's superior to Virgil, but all the work that Virgil is doing is proving him wrong, so he's trying to prove to himself that he is superior.

Lorraine: Were we supposed to watch the movie?

Tanya: Is there a movie on this? Really, I want to watch it.

Lorraine: It was on TV.

Speaker unclear: Was it old school?

John: I wonder if the tape recorder can hear that (TV sound from next class)

Tanya: You know Virgil seems to be completing every single task?

Lorraine: Virgil is so strong //

Tanya: Everything! Everything.

John: Virgil is like obsessive compulsive.

Lorraine: He's so cool though. Like people make fun of him and he just puts up with it he doesn't care. If someone called me a nigger, I'd be like, "that's mean."

John: I'd be like, um right.

Lorraine: I would just leave. I wouldn't help them.

Tanya: I think he wants to help them

Lorraine: He wants to prove them wrong.

Tanya: He doesn't need to prove them wrong; he already did it like without trying. Like he want them to accept him.

John: I don't think so. I don't think he really cares if they accept him.

Tanya: Gillespie thinks he's ahead of Virgil and I put "my ass!"

...

Tanya: You know in chapter 10, Gillespie finally feels guilty for putting what's his name into the //

Nancy: I think Delores was actually lying. The dad was so weird.

John: Well duh.

Nancy: He just wanted somebody to get arrested.

John: She is lying, but like back then, I don't know. She's lying, but she isn't.

Tanya: She doesn't get anything for it, but still.

John: But she does.

Tanya: Like what?

John: Well, say //

Nancy: She's going to get the guy killed.

John: Not necessarily.



Lorraine: In a way she does gain stuff, but then people just look at her as if she's a slut or something.

Tanya: She walks around nude.

Nancy: In her house with like the windows open.

Lorraine: But it is her house.

John: You legally can't do that. Common sense.

Tanya: You could, but why would you?

Lorraine: 'cause you're hot.

John: It's like one in the morning. There's only one person driving around in the city.

Tanya: I would just stay in my room if I was going to do that.

Lucy: Exactly.

Tanya: You know how Virgil is wanted everywhere, but he's never there when Gillespie wants him?

John: That's because Virgil is doing his job.

Lorraine: Maybe Gillespie did it and he's just trying to cover it himself.

John: Maybe Virgil did it (jokingly).

Tanya: But then he did defend Virgil.

Lorraine: Who's Ralph?

Tanya: The little teenage guy.

Tanya: You know how it says, Pete's words, "Virgil isn't here...Well where the hell is he," Gillespie denied it? I thought he was listening on the intercom. Yes sir he was.

Just as the interview ended, he said something about having been the biggest fool...(echoed by John). See that's a lie, but still.

John: not really.

Tanya: yeah.

John: No, Virgil said that.

Tanya: Virgil said tell Gillespie not to Virgil. Pete lied for him.

Lorraine: It's kind of confusing. I'm lost.

John: It's such a horrible lie. OH no (mocking). Does it really affect the story at all?

Tanya: You know the part on page 95, Dueanna says, "I want to see Sam?" She puts so much effort into seeing him.

Nancy: She starts to like him.

John: She likes him too.

Tanya: She says hold me in your arms and look into my eyes (laughs).

Lucy: What are you guys talking about?

Alan: Mantolli found it shocking that Sam Wood was arrested for murder //

Tanya: Because he was so nice to him.

Lorraine: This might be off topic, but you know how rap always deals with the racist things?

Tanya: That's the point.

John: He got shot.

Tanya: You don't see Britney Spears talking about this.

John: That's cuz she's an airhead.

Lorraine: Back to *In the heat of the night*.

Tanya: "For the first time there was a subdued fire in his eyes"(reading Alan's notes) that had started at. . . I don't understand what that meant.

Lorraine: Why don't you explain it?

Alan: I don't feel like it.

Tanya: On page 96, Alan put, "Sam changed his attitude towards Virgil and thought he was good and started having conversations with him." And then, Andy also said on page 86, "Sam does think that they are treating him like a dirty animal Quote unquote. "Let's...this nigger now until we can dump him or until Bill here cleans up the case."

Lorraine: Ooh (mocking).

Lucy: So who do you think is the murderer?

Tanya: Let's hear what Nancy wrote. Nancy wrote, "I like the scene because I don't that Tibbs know that Kaufmann killed Mantolli" Hey you're supposed to read this.

John: I think you've written what everyone said. And then some. We're done.

Lucy: Where's your notes?

John: I left them at home?

Lucy: Well at least I have my book here, buddy.

Tanya: On page 102, Linda put, the person that wrote the letter, wants Tibbs and if it doesn't happen then Gillespie, dun, dun, dun, dah...(Lorraine introduces herself to Nancy and Lucy)

Tanya: 104 Gillespie thinks Sam murdered Mantolli. I think that's so untrustworthy because he doesn't trust any of his staff members.

John: Well no, it makes sense. The theory he has does make sense.

Tanya: Ok, yah (irritated) I know, but still.

Lorraine: Ok I have the perfect idea: people should update this book.

Lucy: It would be like "nowadays."

Tanya: Page 111. Gillespie found the murder weapon which is a 2inch wide, 20 foot long stick. And 112, Sam wood is a convinced murder suspect. 118 (laughter, distraction, people leaving...) 129...Sam had sex with Dueanna! (Reading what Lucy wrote)

John: We're finished (people leaving).

Tanya: Ok, goodbye.

## Appendix 10

**Eight Dimensions of Response: Sample utterances**

Entering/Showing Interest in Story World <i>(see Wilhelm 1997 for complete definitions of these categories)</i>	<p>"What do you think of Mr. Tibbs?"</p> <p>"Virgil will have something up his sleeve waiting to be revealed and this may be part of the plan"</p>
Relating to Characters	<p>"You know how, um, they know Oberst, or whatever, he's like saying he's poor white trash. If you're so proud of your race, why do you dis (sic) your own race too? It doesn't make sense."</p> <p>"That's like if everyone said, oh I hate blue, and you're like, 'Oh my god, I like blue,' and they look at you if you're, like, 'Ok, you're weird buddy.'"</p>
Seeing Story World	<p>"My picture is of the piece of wood . . . You know the piece of wood that Virgil shows Gillespie, the one, the murder weapon."</p> <p>"I don't think it's a non-coloured town because they have other people living there. They have places where coloureds can go."</p>
Elaborating on Story World	<p>"But why would his own daughter kill him?"</p> <p>"What if he has a split personality? He could have. You never know."</p>
Connecting Literature to Life	<p>" '[Dueana is younger than Sam] . . . But yah, cause then Delores, when girls report rapes, attacks, whatever, usually they believe the girl over the guy, so //' 'That's what happened with Kobe Bryant' "</p> <p>"I think everyone wants to look good in front of society. No on wants to be like, you know, when Gillespie, when those people were like Gillespie you have to take Tibbs out of town? He was thinking about it first then he was like, no after, he was thinking about if first 'cause he didn't want people to look at him and have people to</p>

	say, 'oh, he has a black cop working,' you know?
Considering Significance	"You know on page 81, [Sam] says something disrespectful, like, in his head, he's like, "I shouldn't have said that." If you're so ashamed about it, why did you say it in the beginning?
Recognizing Literary Conventions	"The author is so good with the tool of suspense."
Recognizing Reading as a Transaction/ Evaluating Author & Self as Reader	"[Reverend Whiteburn] is a secondary character. Basically, that's all he does in the book."  "What were you feeling when you found out who the killer was?"