SEEKING A BALANCE: THE IMPACT OF FOSTERING AUTHORIAL EMPATHY
ON TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study reports on the impact of the Authorial Empathy Scale (AES), a tool designed to measure responses to literature that balance attention both to authors’ aesthetic choices and to empathetic engagement with the narrative world, on teachers’ instructional practices and students’ written and spoken responses. The research is guided by the following research questions: (1) In what ways, if any, does a literary unit intervention designed to foster readings of authorial empathy shape the teaching practice of two secondary ELA teachers? (2) In what ways, if any, does a literary unit intervention designed to foster readings of authorial empathy shape secondary students’ responses to texts? Data consist of stimulated-recall interviews and discussion transcripts of teachers and students that were analyzed for the goals, tools, and sources of their decisions. The major findings are the use of the AES seemed to facilitate a common approach among teachers and students for generating more balanced responses to texts. However, sustaining the balanced responses faced challenges in the form of institutional rubrics, IRE discussion patterns, and the specific demands of writing tasks. Students who evidenced greater mastery of the conventions of academic writing tended to generate more authorially empathetic responses to texts. During the Authorial Empathy unit, students tended to engage in more extensive and collaborative talk turns during discussion. The results make clear the importance for teachers to select texts, tasks, and tools that support the use of the AES in guiding students to respond with authorial empathy.
To all the students –

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The theoretical approaches to English education I study as a literacy researcher challenge me to consider why I make the decisions I do in my current practice as a 12th grade English language arts teacher. Having filtered my previous research primarily through the lens of my own pedagogical practice and the students I taught, it was time to shift my focus to how I could enact conceptual change in other secondary ELA teachers to foster an approach to teaching literature in a way that guides students to attend both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with the narrative world.

My desire to guide teachers in this approach arose from a recurring experience likely recognized by many ELA teachers. In their essays and discussions, students consistently fell into one of two camps: they either performed as literary inquisitors clinically analyzing authors’ aesthetic choices or as emotional reactors narrating their feelings in response to texts. Excerpts from two student essays in response to a short story reveal the shortcomings of each type of response. In the first type of response, the student writes “Clair delineates an idea of repetitious rituals in the narrator’s life through repetition and asyndeton” (Brett, 2017). This excerpt solely attends to the author’s technical choices without engaging with the characters of the narrative world. In the second type of response, the student writes “At first, I felt happy for the son because he was finally getting a chance to reconnect with his father, but by the end I felt horrible for the young boy for what his father was putting him through” (Brett, 2017). In this excerpt, the student narrates emotional reactions to the characters in the narrative world, but without any analysis of the author’s technical choices that facilitated that engagement. In large measure, I was not satisfied with the former and knew something was missing from the latter. This disconnect led me to create a doctoral study to see if I could find out how to remedy the gap and
guide teachers in supporting students in generating more balanced responses to literature in their essays and discussions.

With these classroom experiences in mind, I set out to explore the impact of an intervention I designed to support two secondary English language arts teacher colleagues in guiding their students to read with *authorial empathy* – a balanced approach to literature that invites students to attend both to authors’ aesthetic choices as well as empathetic engagement with fictional characters. The study traces the experience of a veteran teacher tending to focus on the analysis of authors’ aesthetic choices in literary reading and a new teacher tending to focus on empathetic engagement with characters in fiction as they both attempt to elicit more balanced responses to literature from their students through a new literary unit.

To understand what led me to enact a study of teacher conceptual change among my colleagues I must return to the key moments in my educational journey that most shaped my understanding of literature and the teaching of literature. By far the most pivotal moment in my own understanding of the teaching of literature was when I read Peter Rabinowitz’s *Before Reading* in the spring of 2014 for my “Foundational Theories and Research in Reading” course with Michael Smith. This text gave me the language to describe the previously unarticulated, but driving principle of my teaching over the past ten years – the principle of authorial reading. Rabinowitz’s metaphorical concept of the text as an unassembled swing set that has tacit rules inviting the reader to construct it in certain ways had an affirming impact on my approach to teaching literature. Rabinowitz’s metaphor situates reading literature as work, but of the kind that is pleasurable; he casts the text not as sacrosanct, but in need of readers who act with the text in conventional ways.
The Path to Authorial Reading

Rabinowitz offers four conventional, but implicit readerly activities enacted when approaching literary texts: *Notice* whereby readers attend to the salient details of the text, *Signification* whereby readers inferentially assign larger meanings to those noticings, *Configuration* whereby readers begin to make sense of the emerging nature of the text, and *Coherence* whereby readers systemically combine the salient details in co-constructing meaning with the text (Rabinowitz, 1987). These conventions highlight what good readers know and do before they read.

Rabinowitz’s four conventions are nested in authorial reading and give rise to *reading with authorial empathy* – a balanced approach to literature that is attentive both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with the characters in the narrative world (Brett, 2016). In my role as a practitioner, I use this authorial empathy (AE) approach to help students develop their awareness of how they can respond to literary texts through a balance of attending to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetically engaging with all of the elements of the narrative world. To support them in this approach, students use the Authorial Empathy Scale (AES), a tool that guides them in situating their responses on a seven-point semantic differential scale with one pole representing strict attention to authors’ aesthetic choices (a “1” on the scale) and the other pole representing full and sole immersion in the narrative world of the characters (a “7” on the scale). Students who are trained to analyze only authors’ choices may become savvy at literary analysis, but they may miss out on the author’s invitation to connect with characters in the narrative world. In contrast, students who enter the narrative world without an awareness of authorial choice may be able to forge meaningful and empathetic connections with literary
characters, but they also may become entirely untethered from the author’s thinking and in so doing emerge unprepared to consider the impact of authors’ choices in literature.

The goal in using the AES is to raise awareness of how responses to literature can become more balanced; these responses are situated at the center of the scale at a “4.” In generating balanced authorially empathetic responses students can attend to authors’ choices in ways that prepare them for college-level reading, but not in ways that prevent them from engaging empathetically with the characters in the narrative world. If characters in literary texts are mere tools of the author, then students may miss out on the wondrous experience of connecting with characters in literature. And if secondary students read only to engage with characters and are oblivious to authors’ choices and invitations, then they are missing out on a fuller reading experience that exists beyond subjective or even random reactions.

On the surface, balancing attention both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with fictional characters would seem like no big deal, but then why has it been such a challenge to guide students in approaching literature in this way? Current scholars continue to interrogate the dichotomous approaches that have guided literary instruction for the past century. In Authorizing Readers (1998), Rabinowitz asserts that it is impossible for readers to answer the New Critical question: what does the text mean? As a corollary to his critique of the New Critical question, Rabinowitz asserts that it is insufficient for readers to answer the reader-response question: What does the text mean to me? Instead he puts forth the question: What would this text mean for the audience the author was writing for and how do I feel about that? We can look to key moments from the field to better understand the struggle for striking a balanced approach to the reading and teaching of literature.
New Criticism’s Emphasis on the Text

In saying that meaning can be derived by looking at the text itself, New Critics argued that anything beyond the text did not matter. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren’s text *Understanding Poetry* (1938) presented scholars and teachers with a methodology for interpreting literary texts as self-contained artifacts independent of their authors, histories, and readers. The belief that the literary text is a unified whole that contains a clear thematic meaning often results in instructional practices that favor closely scrutinizing the text to disclose the knowledge it is purported to convey. Similarly, Wellek and Warren’s text *Theory of Literature* (1942) prioritized the text itself as the focus of interpretation rather than authorial, historical, or readerly concerns.

Perhaps the two most famous statements of the New Critics were the indictments of the intentional fallacy and the affective fallacy. In defining the intentional fallacy, scholars argued against a biographical inquiry into a poem that seeks to pin down its psychological origins (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1946). The intentional fallacy equates the poem to its origins whereas the affective fallacy equates the text to its result in the reader. Adherents of the affective fallacy held that psychological or physiological reactions to literary texts were not suitable for the objective critic to take into account (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1949). In both fallacies, the response, according to the New Critics, fails to appropriately prioritize the text itself. For Wimsatt and Beardsley, the approach to literature must be focused on the technical aspects of the text itself, not on a consideration of what the author intended the text to mean or what the text means to an individual.
Dismantling New Criticism: Reader-Response Theories

Though it may seem obvious on the surface the New Critics’ emphasis on the meaning of the text was radical in its claim that the answer to the meaning could only be derived in the words of the text. Indeed, some of the most influential New Critics asserted that one must not go beyond the text itself.

Many of the formative texts and tenets of New Criticism have their origins in the 1930s when I.A. Richards’ seminal publication *Practical Criticism* (1929) was having an important critical influence on the development of reader-response theories. In his empirical study testing the literary interpretations of undergraduate students at Cambridge University, Richards focuses on the readers’ responses more than the literary texts. Although Richards is widely considered to be a reader-response theorist, much of his work in *Practical Criticism* shows the lingering belief that not all responses are viewed as equally valuable. Richards places value on the types of responses that attend to authors’ aesthetic choices while critiquing sentimental responses. The simultaneous development of formalist and reader-response approaches that valued such different things – strict adherence to the text or strong support of readers’ responses – reveals the origins of the struggle for balanced responses to literature that continues to face today’s teachers.

In claiming that the text itself was sufficient for interpretation, New Critics ignored other approaches as irrelevant. While New Criticism sought to eradicate bugs from the literary machine, all manner of new theories arose designed explicitly to focus on and pursue those bugs within the machinery of a text. The text-centric focus of formalists overlooks the critical role of the reader which Rosenblatt (1938) made central in her transactional theory of literature in *Literature as Exploration* wherein she asserts “that the personal contribution of the reader is an essential element in any vital reading of literature” (1995, p.102). Rosenblatt’s aesthetic
approach does call for attention to textual evidence, yet recent research on small-group
discussions in response to literature using this approach tended to tip the scale into reactions that
were not truly attentive to the aesthetics of the text (Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, &
Alexander, 2009). Others (Dressman & Webster, 2001) have also critiqued Rosenblatt’s
transactional theory for not fully attending to the social components that shape responses to
literary texts in conventional ways.

In terms of the Authorial Empathy Scale, if readers’ responses do not consider authors’
aesthetic choices, then their reactions may become entirely autonomous and untethered from the
text. Individualized responses to literature are not a bad thing; indeed, approaches that focus
solely on the literary text may miss the opportunity to explore the rich variety of readers’
responses. However, when readers’ responses become highly local and individualized they may
not be able to benefit from engaging with literature in conventional ways that recognize authors’
aesthetic choices and allow readers to engage in meaningful conversations.

In contrast to the text-centric approaches advocated by the New Critics, reader-response
theorists like Holland (1976) and Bleich (1978) suggest ways of reading literature that are highly
personalized. Holland (1976) differs from Rosenblatt with his view that readers use the literary
text to symbolize and recreate themselves by finding their own identity theme in a literary text.
Readers work out their own distinguishing patterns of desire through the text. Through case
studies of readers reading and making free associations in response to poems and stories,
Holland concluded that it is readers and audiences who shape literary experiences (Tompkins,

Like Holland, Bleich (1978) focuses on psychoanalytic accounts of reading and the
primacy of the individual self in reading and interpretation. Stanley Fish (1980) also focuses on
the experience of the reader, but he discusses an idealized reader whereas Bleich discusses an actual reader. Fish adds the concept of the interpretive community which holds that meaning is found in the reading community that has particular ways of reading a text. This meaning cannot arise “outside of a set of cultural assumptions regarding both what the characters mean and how they should be interpreted” (Fish, 1980, p. 158). Reader-response theorists foreground the experience of the reader in ways the New Critics did not put forth as the work of English education, but the struggle for balanced responses to literature still remains.

Whereas New Critics argued against the primacy of authorial intention and affective response, these later scholars asserted the validity of reading for authorial intention (Hirsch, 1967) and the importance of the readers’ responses in experiencing literary texts (Barthes, 1967; Bleich, 1978; Fish, 1980; Holland, 1968; Rosenblatt, 1978). The ongoing see-saw between formalist and reader-response approaches falsely dichotomizes the work English teachers strive to do in guiding students’ approaches to literature. Rabinowitz (1987) offers teachers and readers a solution to the seemingly endless polarizing pull of different approaches to reading literature: balance. Rabinowitz provides a solution to the see-sawing of formalist and reader-response approaches by offering a conventional approach to the reading of literature that appropriately highlights the social conventions of reading that invite readers to acknowledge authors’ aesthetic choices while reading to empathetically engage in the narrative world of fiction.

**Rabinowitz’s Conventions of Reading Literature**

Rabinowitz’s (1987) work in *Before Reading* does not make claims about authorial intent, but rather focuses on socially constructed conventions of reading shared by authors and readers. Rabinowitz explains that in reading authorially members of the authorial audience
accept the author’s invitation “to read in a particular socially constituted way that is shared by the author and his or her expected readers” (p.22). According to Rabinowitz, reading authorially also involves reading as a member of the narrative audience that treats the characters as real and worthy of respect. In this way, Rabinowitz offers a balanced approach to reading literature that values both an awareness of the conventional ways that authors make choices within literary texts and a meaningful engagement with the characters in the narrative world.

This model is not about trying to pin down the author’s intent; rather it is about an ongoing and reciprocal conversation between authors and readers across many texts. Rabinowitz is not focused on the individual text – he wants to make clear the theoretical apparatus readers use to approach literary texts. Rabinowitz calls for reading as members of the authorial and narrative audience when reading literary texts that treat characters as people as opposed to constructs, as is typical when reading myth or allegory. In similar ways, the authorial empathy approach seeks to guide readers in approaching literary texts that invite readers to view the characters as people and come to understand the nuanced ways that balanced responses to literature come to be constructed.

Rabinowitz’s tools recognize the importance of authors’ aesthetic choices, but they also invite empathetic engagement with characters as requested by one’s role as a member of the narrative audience. For Rabinowitz, reading authorially is not only about reading in ways expected by the author (playing the authorial audience), but approaching characters with ethical respect (playing the narrative audience). Above all else, Rabinowitz’s approach is balanced. It is achieving that balance through ways of approaching literature with authorial empathy that I explored in the current study.
Rabinowitz’s explicit framework of literary reading conventions was vital to me as a 12th grade ELA teacher because while I felt competent in guiding students in reading literary texts, I did not have a systematic language for helping them understand ways of approaching a variety of literary texts. I had internalized the unspoken rules that make the experience of reading literature so pleasurable; I was able to enjoy the literary swing set of Rabinowitz’s metaphor, but I worried that the students I taught were often unaware of these practices and that I was not fully effective in making them clear.

**Teaching Prior to Before Reading**

I was not unprepared in my approach to teaching, but in revisiting the principles that guided my instructional choices prior to Before Reading I can see attempts to invite students to authorial reading, but a glaring need for more explicit language and instructional tools for students to be able to understand authorial reading as a conventional practice beyond our shared classroom. I will outline the tools I did have at my disposal and then highlight what the concept of authorial reading provided me in my work with high school students.

The tenets of New Criticism are still very much present in the current ELA landscape (Culler, 2002) insofar as secondary ELA teachers tend to focus on the preeminence of the individual text (whereas Rabinowitz asks for a much wider reading) and the importance of theme (singular) to avoid the politics of interpretation (which Rabinowitz approaches headlong). A key organizing principle of my instructional units was the concept of putting texts in conversation and reading across a variety of texts. My undergraduate work in English literature prepared me to approach literary texts in this way by using literary theory while my teacher certification program in education had prepared me to organize and sequence learning activities in terms of inquiry units driven by essential questions (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The professional
development in the district where I taught focused on literacy strategies (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007) and reading across the curriculum (Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2005).

As such, a typical unit of study would require students to use reading strategies (e.g., inferencing, making connections, synthesizing, predicting, identifying important ideas) and to enact literary theory (e.g., archetypal, Marxist, feminist, African-American, queer, deconstruction) in their conversations with literary texts organized around essential questions. By their very nature, essential questions value empathetic engagement in narrative worlds as a way of ethical self-reflection. When enacted in the context of inquiry units with essential questions, the language of strategies and literary theory can be enacted in ways that allow students to attend to authors’ aesthetic choices while also supporting their empathetic engagement with literary characters. For example, in a unit guided by the essential question “How much influence do humans have over their own lives?” students offered critical responses to Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* in light of their reading of Rita Dove’s *The Darker Face of the Earth*.

In their small-group discussions and literary analyses of these texts they drew on a variety of other texts including definitional writing (excerpts from Aristotle’s *Poetics*), poems (like Muriel Rukeyser’s “Myth” and Anne Sexton’s “To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph”), music videos (R.E.M.’s “Losing My Religion”), television episodes (*Frasier* “Momma Mia”), excerpts from film (*Minority Report*), as well as a multitude of student-selected pieces including literary criticism, advertisements, student art, news articles, and popular hip-hop songs of the moment. The unit’s reading, discussing, and composing activities were sequenced in ways that invited students to reflect on their own beliefs, respond to the literary choices at work in a variety of literary texts, and offer their own assertions and reflective interpretations.
Although many of the existing assessments within the school district were based on more formalist principles, the majority of the instruction students had received was focused on individual and personal response journals and thus more aligned with reader-response theories. As a 12th grade ELA teacher tasked with preparing students to make meaning with literary texts in nuanced ways that would prepare them for college-level reading, I struggled to guide students in a more balanced approach to literature. Students whose educational experience in English classrooms consisted largely of personal response journals adopted an approach that viewed literary texts as a forum to share opinions or reactions regardless of whether they connected to authors’ invitations or characters’ experiences. In contrast, students whose experience had focused on identifying literary devices and selecting pre-sanctioned themes via top-down assessments seemed to have no ethical connection with the characters of literature. The language of literary theory and reading strategies allowed me to invite students to create more sophisticated conversations with texts. I remember being particular that we resist the term double-entry journals so in vogue at the time as I argued it resulted in diary-style responses that were largely untethered from the text.

We called our literary responses double-entry notes and we created titles and subtitles for them, a subtle but important distinction that invited students to consider how their reactions to and analyses of the text connected to the choices of the authors in the text. In this way I could invite them into the types of conversations that I so enjoyed at university – conversations that were personal and meaningful, but part of a larger socially constructed discourse that drew on literary theory and excerpts from the text. Drawing on the language of strategies and ways of reading started to give me and the students a shared language for approaching texts. I wanted students to have the opportunity for a more balanced approach that allowed for close readings of
the text while also inviting connections to the story; that created a space for personal response while also thinking about those responses in terms of other conversants - including the author.

In terms of practice aligning with theory, I felt confident that the discussion and composition work students were doing when enacting literary approaches like queer theory to create analytical responses to a variety of texts was light years away from the formalist-focused experiences of my high school learning. I also thought their work was more theoretically grounded than mere knee-jerk highly personalized reactions to literature that may or may not have been in any way connected to the authors’ invitations. I remember students in a 12th grade ELA course I taught engaging in a culminating Socratic circle discussion (Copeland, 2005) of the unit’s essential question performing portions of Rita Dove’s play to bolster their assertions, referencing Greek mythology to offer archetypal analyses, and reading excerpts from the unit’s poem crafting assignment option. I vividly remember a student stunning the classroom community with a dramatic reading of his poem that eulogized the recently deceased Anna Nicole Smith as a modern day tragic hero – the Jocasta we never heard from in the original play. I remember thinking that the work we did was intelligent and provocative and meaningful.

That confidence eroded upon reading Before Reading because I recognized that the symphony I witnessed in the courses I taught was for my ears only – the students had not been fully invited into the reasons for our approach to literature. They were enacting a script I created, but without full awareness of how to enact those ways of reading in their future encounters with literary texts.

So in some important ways I was orchestrating my teaching in alignment with Rabinowitz’s approach by guiding students in a variety of ways of approaching literary texts, but I had failed in giving them an explicit language for understanding the conventional ways of
reading literature beyond our classroom. Although some students I taught may have become more attentive to ways of reading literature, I was not nearly as explicit or deliberate as I needed to be in preparing them for their future literary reading. Though it was implied that we cared about authors’ choices and that the work we did should transfer to future texts, I had never explicitly told them that the type of reading we were doing was reading as members of both the authorial and narrative audience. And without a clear conceptual framework that named our endeavors or identified these conventions students were far less likely to see the work they did in Mr. Brett’s room as part of a larger socially constructed conventional way of reading. I suspect this because our approach may have been entirely distinct from the ELA course the year prior or the following year, but I will come to the concerns I have about the zig-zag realities of instruction across ELA departments later.

**New Ways of Approaching Literature**

Rabinowitz’s rendering of the authorial audience does not exist as a quest to mine the author’s concealed consciousness, “but rather as the joining of a particular social/interpretive community; that is, the acceptance of the author’s invitation to read in a particular socially constituted way that is shared by the author and his or her expected readers” (1987, p. 22). Authors design their books for the hypothetical audience that Rabinowitz calls the authorial audience – the author-constructed imagining of the audience reading the book. Part of reading as a member of the authorial audience simultaneously requires reading as a member of the narrative audience that provisionally accepts the characters as human and worthy of our attention. I had been inviting students to think this way in their approach to Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* through their immersion in the belief systems of the Ancient Greeks, but now I had the language of
authorial reading and the narrative audience to explain why they would want to read as the
audience intended by Sophocles – an audience believing in the oracle system.

At the time I was reading Rabinowitz, I was also learning about threshold concepts
(Meyer & Land, 2003). Threshold concepts are seismic epiphany moments wherein learners
understand a vital concept within or across disciplines that enables them new access to deeper
levels of understanding. Threshold concepts are transformative (the shift in understanding may
significantly alter the learner’s perspective), irreversible (once acquired they are unlikely to be
forgotten or unlearned), integrative (reveal interconnected understandings that were previously
obscure), bounded (often delineate disciplines), and possibly troublesome (often implicit and
unspoken) (Meyer & Land, 2003). Without an understanding of the threshold concept, the
learner cannot progress in terms of disciplinary expectations.

Rabinowitz’s assertion that we can and should read as members of the authorial audience
is a threshold concept in ELA instruction because students who understand explicit ways of
reading authorially can practice and refine those conventions to develop nuanced understandings
of literature. In this way, those who have crossed the threshold and understand the explicit
conventions of reading literature benefit from a type of Matthew effect (Stanovich, 1986)
whereby their increased awareness of how to read authorially leads to further opportunities to
practice and learn from reading authorially.

Rabinowitz’s rules of notice. Rabinowitz makes clear that authorial reading is the
platform that allows critical theories to have something to work with and against. Each
thoughtful and comprehensive elaboration of one of his four rules outlined in Before Reading
revealed to me how I had been close, but not nearly explicit enough in my work with high school
students.
The rules of notice call readers to attend to the salient details of literature. Like many ELA teachers I would invite students to consider things such as the etymology of a character’s name or an author’s repeated use of an image, but to my students our focus on these elements was decontextualized and sporadic. I suspect students experienced these conversations as seemingly whimsical things that only their teacher was asking them to notice. I did not give them a framework and a language to ensure they could carry this conceptual framework with them. Whereas students likely thought I was particularly obsessive that they attend to such conventions, they were not fully aware that authors and audiences operate within socially accepted paradigms. This is my fault and a humbling one for a teacher who thought the unit he designed using *Oedipus Rex* was a smashing success. The irony, indeed.

I had been teaching for years and had never explicitly told my students that the opening and closing lines of a chapter in a novel or act in a play were of paramount importance. In failing to do so, I hindered students from understanding Rabinowitz’s articulation of the accepted hierarchy that exists in Western literature that privileges openings and closings. Or that authors use characters to announce something important. So while I had attempted to instill this awareness by having students analyze each author’s choice in titling novels like *Native Son*, *Cat’s Eye*, and *Beloved*, I had not given them the language to apply these practices to a greater range of reading. I fear they still experienced these as isolated events curated by their teacher rather than conventional ways of approaching literature. Rabinowitz strengthened my resolve to make these conventions more explicit.

**Rabinowitz’s rules of signification.** The rules of signification call readers to inferentially assign larger meanings to those noticings. While my students used the strategy of inferencing, they always worried they were ‘reading into it too much’ – they didn’t yet know that
noticing the repetition of images, the first meetings of characters, and a multitude of other corollary rules of signification could bolster their rationale for why and how to deem something thematically significant. To them, it felt arbitrary and teacher-directed, and indeed it was. I guided my students to use strategies so they could visualize characters, but I was not explicit about guiding them in recognizing that authors describe the physical characteristics of characters to represent their inner workings and moral fiber. The students I taught were on Rabinowitz’s swing set, but I was doing all of the pushing.

**Rabinowitz’s rules of configuration and coherence.** The rules of configuration call readers to begin to make sense of the emerging nature of the text as they read it for the first time and the rules of coherence call readers to systemically and reflectively combine the salient details in co-constructing meaning with the text upon its completion. Readings of configuration occur among first-time readers of a text as they strive to make sense with it and readings of coherence develop after completing the text.

**The Utility of Authorial Reading**

Although the ways Rabinowitz distinguishes between readings of configuration and coherence existed as another useful step in my understanding of approaching literature, it was his overall approach of reading authorially that had staying power in reflecting on my practice. I began to see Rabinowitz’s overall conceptual framework of authorial reading as a potential solution to our discipline’s historically unbalanced approach to literature. Particularly, Rabinowitz’s rule of signification served as a model for the types of balanced interpretations I wanted students to develop in their literary reading encounters.

Rabinowitz’s rule of significance can be used to understand the symbolic value of a character; for example, the ways in which Teiresias embodies truth or troublesome knowledge,
but the rule of significance also helps the reader notice and understand if the character can be trusted. In this way, Rabinowitz’s rules invite not just a clinical or symbolic reading that unpacks authors’ aesthetic choices, but an approach whereby readers engage with the characters in the ethical ways authors intend them to connect. It is Rabinowitz’s balance between attending to authors’ aesthetic choices while also empathetically engaging with the characters in the narrative world that would become the basis of the approach I call reading with authorial empathy and the implementation of the Authorial Empathy Scale.

**Literary Theory Meets English Education in *Authorizing Readers***

Rabinowitz’s partnership with English educator Michael Smith in *Authorizing Readers* (1998) was particularly useful to me in continuing to think about ways of guiding students to attain this balance. The book is written as a dialogue and in his opening chapter, Rabinowitz lays out the theoretical apparatus that gives rise to their collaboration: “To read fiction, we must not only join the authorial audience…but also pretend to be members of the narrative audience” (Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998, p.21-22).

In Rabinowitz’s articulation, the ideal type of reading is authorial as it also includes reading as a member of the narrative audience. Thus, authorial reading is the ideal balance of attending to author’s aesthetic choices and craft, while also being engaged empathetically with the characters of the text. The theory warns of the dangers of becoming unbalanced.

At one end of the continuum is an extreme focus on the semiotic elements of the text that can lead to “arrogance and a dehumanizing view of other people” (Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998, p.27) and prevent potential empathetic responses because of strictly technical concerns. Smith (1998) shares his experience of Dolphus Raymond from *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a cautionary tale against reducing characters to tools instead of seeing them as worthy of ethical engagement,
even if that engagement is vehement disagreement. But at the other end of the continuum is a reading in which the audience falls prey to the mimetic features of the text and is so lost in responding to them that they become untethered from recognizing the text as authored. In doing so, the audience fails to accept the invitation to dialogue being offered by the author and thus misses the opportunity to fully engage with another mind.

Theoretically, readers should strive to maintain a balance between memberships in both audiences to avoid quixotic readings that overemphasize the narrative audience (so involved in the narrative world they take no notice of authors’ crafted aesthetic choices), or an extreme focus on authors’ aesthetic choices (so attentive to authors’ craft that they engage in strictly clinical readings). In practice, one way of fostering this balance is through reading approaches and small-group discussions in which students work together in meaningful ways as participants in both audiences. In this way, Rabinowitz provided the theoretical framework for my research, but Smith’s chapter on “Playing by the Rules” gave me my pedagogical mission: “helping students to develop meaningful ways for reading particular kinds of texts” (1998, p.87, emphasis in original).

In more recent work, Rabinowitz extends his ideas on balanced reading and offers mind-reading as a pedagogical theorem that allows readers to infer mental states based on actions. In unpacking his principle that *Reading is inevitably an ethical activity*, he asserts: “reading anyone’s (person, character, author) mind is a step towards empathy” (Rabinowitz & Bancroft, 2014, p.24). This type of ethical inferencing is the piece that most gives rise to the balanced reading I call reading with *authorial empathy* – a balanced approach to literature that attends both to authors’ aesthetic choices as well as empathetic engagement with fictional characters.
In commentary on Rabinowitz’s target article, Smith advises that readers need to enter the story world and mind-read the characters as much as the authors (Smith, 2014). The arguments Rabinowitz and Smith make separately resonate with a growing field of research studying Theory of Mind in literary studies (Zunshine, 2014).

Further, Rabinowitz talks about the importance of achieving balanced reading to avoid the reductive type of thinking and discussion that might stem from the Common Core. The principle that *Reading is fundamentally a social activity* holds that “students are better off when they learn to think of reading as engaging in a conversation” (Rabinowitz & Bancroft, 2014, p.24). This view of reading as a conversation cemented my intention to build on Rabinowitz’s explicit approach to the conventions of reading literature and provide my students with a portable learning tool that could be used in future discussions of literary texts beyond our classroom.

**Reading with Authorial Empathy**

Small-group discussion is one way I and other teachers foster students’ ethical engagement with authors’ choices in literature. But in circulating among student groups, I feared that their discussions in response to literature were not always balanced in their attention to authors’ aesthetic choices and their empathetic engagement with the narrative world. Therefore, I engaged in a literacy study to investigate the extent to which students’ use of different discussion strategies fosters a balance between attending to the technical aesthetic elements of authored texts and responding empathetically to them; what I call reading with *authorial empathy* (Brett, 2016). I use the word empathy in the way Rabinowitz indicates as a means of fully, though temporarily, connecting with characters in the literary world; empathy does not always mean agreeing with the character, but rather a willingness to engage with the character as more than a symbol, as real and worthy of deep consideration.
Through the research study, identifying the strategies that support balanced discussion would allow me to more explicitly guide my students in their strategy use to achieve balanced discussion. The research questions that guided the study were: What strategies do students in small-group discussions employ that foster or impede a balanced reading? What roles do strategies play in balanced discussions?

The study helped me answer the question of how to provide students with conceptual frameworks for reading literature that could enhance their ability to read in the way advocated by Rabinowitz and Smith. Drawing on Rabinowitz and Smith’s theories of authorial reading and mind-reading helped me clearly articulate to my students how to engage in talk that reflects a balance of authorial awareness as well as empathetic response. When students read and discuss with authorial empathy they recognize an author’s aesthetic choices without diminishing the potential to engage in empathetic responses with characters in the narrative world (Brett, 2016).

The Authorial Empathy Scale

In order to provide students with an explicit way of thinking about the extent to which their responses to certain types of literary texts are a balance between attending to the authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetically engaging with characters in the narrative world, I developed the Authorial Empathy Scale (AES). It is important to note that literary texts are not monolithic; the AE approach pertains to the types of literary texts that invite readers to attend to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetically engage with characters who are meant to be treated as real.
Figure 1. Authorial Empathy Scale.

The AES invites a balanced reading whereby students note the ways they are attending to the aesthetic choices the author is making as well as the ways they are engaging with characters and entering the narrative world while they are configuring a literary text. Whereas Rabinowitz clearly situates reading as the narrative audience as part of reading authorially, I chose to polarize a focus on the author’s aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement in the narrative to make the scale more useful for the students I taught. For students, being able to visually see the two primary ways they tend to engage with literary texts is useful as they consider how to work toward more balanced responses at the middle of the scale. I also designed the AES in this way because these are the two types of readings that dominate the ELA classrooms where I teach. To read authorially as Rabinowitz calls for is to be at a “4” on the AES because you are reading both authorially and narratively and have attended to the author’s aesthetic choices while also engaging empathetically with the characters in ways the author has invited.

Utility of the AES of paramount importance. It is critical to recognize that the design of the AES prioritizes the practical utility of the tool for students and teachers over any attempts to overly theorize the tool in ways that would perhaps more fully represent what occurs during
reading, but at a cost to student accessibility. Certainly, literary theorists could consider the
tools the AES could be reworked and complicated to better represent the theoretical range of
responses to literary texts. Indeed, in order to make the approach more accessible to the students
I taught, I did not foreground the historical dimension of Rabinowitz’s approach to literary
response that accounts for the audience for whom the text was written. The AES is designed for
ease of use by students. Further, the AES, as a tool, can be scaffolded to meet the needs to the
readers who use it. For high school students who may not have a clearly articulated way of
approaching literary texts, the AES is designed to give them a preliminary orientation that can
help develop their awareness of the range of their responses to literature.

What is most vital is that students can distinguish between the poles of the AES; for
example, that students recognize that a clinical dissection of an author’s use of a literary device
in a literary text is very different than a personal empathetic response to a character as a real
person. The tool guides students in seeing these responses as different, but not so distinct that
they cannot be combined in conventional ways to craft responses that evidence greater balance.

In order to maximize the utility of the AES for students I teach, there are multiple ways
of locating a response at either end of the scale. For example, a response may be at the “7” end
of the scale because it is solely concerned with a character within the story as opposed to an
analysis of an author’s aesthetic choice. But a response could also exist at a “7” because the
student is having a reaction to the character or narrative world that is so associative as to be
random. Whether the response is focused on empathetic engagement with a character or an
unrelated personal response it is at a “7” because it does not foreground the author’s aesthetic
choices.
Whereas the type of “7” response that is directly engaging with the character has the potential to move toward balance, a response that is a random reaction may be more difficult to reshape. Similarly, there are many ways of constructing a “1” response whether through the clinical dissection of an author’s choice of a symbol or an objective analysis of sentence types; either way the response is not immersed in the narrative world. But in both instances there may be ways to shift a “1” response toward balance on the AES.

Balance as central. The aesthetic analysis end of the AES contains reading types in which students note the aesthetic choices of the author and explicitly analyze the conventions the author uses. The empathetic engagement end of the AES contains reading types in which students expressively react to the narrative world of the text, make connections, and potentially grapple with the ethical choices of the characters in the narrative. I chose to situate readings wherein students both take note of authors’ choices and empathetically engage with the narrative at the center of the AES to embody a balanced reading of authorial empathy. Arranging the scale in this way can help students quickly and visually see the ways they can combine two seemingly disparate approaches to literature into a more balanced approach so that students attend both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with the narrative world.

The short story “I See You Never” by Ray Bradbury is the type of story that allows students the potential to respond with authorial empathy. There are a multitude of authorial choices that invite readers to engage with the profoundly moving farewell between its two central characters, Mrs. O’Brien and Mr. Ramirez. An example of a “1” response would be, “Bradbury uses diction, imagery, and setting to depict the landscape and time period of the story. The vivid diction and varied sentence structure engage the reader in the story.” This formulaic response solely analyzes the author’s aesthetic choices without engaging in the narrative world.
An example of a “7” response would be, “I did not like how the police treated Mr. Ramirez. They were laughing because they wanted to deport him. Cops don’t care about immigrants.” This tangential response engages in personal reactions to the narrative world without heeding the author’s invitation to consider the relationship between the two central characters.

An example of a “4” response would be, “The way Bradbury showed the difference between how Mrs. O’Brien and her children react to Mr. Ramirez’s departure reveals that he’s inviting us to empathize with the emotion Mrs. O’Brien is feeling in losing her tenant. Bradbury’s choice to have the children call her back to dinner shows that they do not understand what she’s going through. I felt sad that no one understood Mrs. O’Brien’s sense of loss.” This response evidences a balance of entering the narrative world and attending to the author’s choices; it does not react to the narrative world oblivious of authorial choice, nor does it analyze authorial choice independent of engagement in the narrative world. By demonstrating a recognition of authorial choice and a willingness to enter into the narrative world, students can develop “4” responses.

Although the AES shows a range of authorially empathetic responses (“3,” “4,” “5”), it is not designed to rank responses as right or wrong. Rather, the AES prioritizes awareness of the ways in which responses are or are not balanced. As this awareness develops, students may more mindfully generate “4” responses as opposed to a series of “1” responses and a series of “7” responses. Students who solely generate “1” responses may never engage with the narrative world and live through the experiences of the characters in it. Students who solely generate “7” responses may occupy a space of uncritical narrative involvement wherein they never resist or critique the characters or draw on the author’s choices to shape their responses.
The entire premise of the AES is that through generating “4” responses, students can respond to literary texts in ways that avoid the pitfalls of the poles. In this way, students can combine the best facets of each type of response and avoid vacillating from extreme clinical dissections of author’s choices or extreme associative reactions to the narrative world.

There are times when a “1” response may be appropriate; for example, when called upon by an AP Literature exam to critically note the impact of an author’s choice of diction. There are also times when a “7” response may be appropriate; for example, when students are writing a personal response journal asking them to draw on their own experiences and feelings about their favorite character in a text. However, an alternating series of “1” and “7” responses are still prone to the weakness inherent in extreme responses and as such they cannot be averaged out; balance is almost always a richer response. Knowing the range of potential responses on the Authorial Empathy Scale and being able to articulate them gives readers options that they might otherwise have not even known that they had. In this way, readers can be aware that they are reading at a “1” or a “7” instead of being unaware of the alternative.

The point of the AE approach is that in striving for balance readers get all of the benefits of each type of response without the drawbacks. By combining awareness of authorial choice with engagement in the narrative world readers do not engage in a merely clinical dissection of authorial choice in isolation from the narrative world that authors invite readers to inhabit. By tracing their reactions to characters and events in the narrative world back to the author’s choices that elicited those reactions, readers appropriately honor that literature exists as a made thing crafted from deliberate choices.
Translating Research into Practice

My literacy research immediately translated into my pedagogical choices. The Authorial Empathy Scale acts as a portable learning tool that guides students in taking note of authors’ aesthetic choices and considering the significance of those choices while also engaging empathetically with the characters in the narrative world in ways invited by the author. In this way, the Authorial Empathy Scale responds to Smith’s call that “all our instruction should seek a balance between honoring a student’s experience and educating it” (Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998, p.111). The Authorial Empathy Scale invites students to “document and share their experience of reading” (p.111). In using the AES as a heuristic for reading literature, I am striving to guide the students I teach to balance technical understanding of the authored nature of texts and empathetic responses to authors’ invitations to engage in ethical thinking in ways that develop students’ moral stance in society. Although the AES invites students to read in a certain balanced way, the scale’s primary role is to help students become more aware of the ways they are reading. It is not necessarily incorrect to read at the aesthetic analysis or empathetic engagement end of the scale; it is more important to be aware of the ways we read, and in naming that awareness, be able to shift it as needed to strive for balance. In this way, students can choose to reject the invitation to read in a balanced way, but at least they are aware of the choice they are making. Students may have good reason for engaging in a close reading of an author’s aesthetic choices or responding in personal ways to a character. Though the scale allows for those types of readings, it also encourages students to recognize that when they read in balanced ways that occur at the center of the scale they can do both.

Authorial empathy designated for literary texts. The AES is designed for literary texts and is best illuminated through literary examples. Whereas a “1” response might analyze
Shakespeare’s sentence structure during the dagger soliloquy, students who share how they respond to peer pressure and manipulation would be responding with a “7” response. A response that analyzes Shakespeare’s aesthetic choice to have Macbeth draw a dagger rather than a battle sword as he tiptoes towards Duncan’s chamber while also empathetically considering why Macbeth feels he must do this based on his interactions with Lady Macbeth would be more balanced and thus a “4.” Student responses that view Macbeth entirely as a symbol of excessive ambition are responding in a “1” way whereas student responses that share their own thoughts about the role greed and guilt play in their lives would be toward the “7” end of the scale.

It is important to note that the AES works best for certain types of literary texts. While the scale can be useful for many types of poems, especially narrative poems, it would not work as well with fairy tales or myths that require a more symbolic allegorical reading and do not invite deep empathetic engagement with characters. Authorial empathy fosters empathetic engagement with characters in ways the authors invite and sanction through their aesthetic choices. In this sense, the scale also invites students to start to think about which end of the scale is most appropriate for each literary text. There are times when authors are inviting readers to notice their aesthetic choices and marvel at their craft and other times when they invite readers to fully immerse themselves in the narrative. And there are times when a more balanced approach is invited by the author or by the context in which the literature is read. It would not be unusual for a response to literature outside of school to hover at the “7” end of the scale whereas preparing students for college-level reading requires that they are aware of the “1” end of the scale. For the purposes of the current study, I selected literary texts that could allow for either type of reading so as to allow for the possibility of balanced authorially empathetic responses.
AES in the classroom. Authorial empathy and the constructs of authorial reading that undergird it are important because they allow for students to become more aware of and competent at conveying what they already know. In this sense, authorial empathy is a direct descendant of Rabinowitz’s emphasis on the importance of explicit conceptual frameworks for approaching literature. Clearly naming a type of response to literature can make the approach more recognizably transportable to oneself and others. This belief had tacitly undergirded my past strategy-based teaching, but this new articulation of the conventions of authorial reading via authorial empathy transformed my teaching.

With a belief that it would help students and their peers, I was explicitly teaching students to name the type of reading they were engaging in whether it tended to be more technically focused on authors’ aesthetic choices or more empathetically immersed in the narrative world. Students in the classes I taught were having conversations about the extent to which they were reading with authorial empathy! They could reflect on their reading and questioning of the text and note whether their responses focused more on authors’ aesthetic choices or on engaging with the characters and alter their approach accordingly.

Students could craft questions in response to literary texts that existed at different parts of the scale in order to elicit different types of conversational responses to literature. Students quickly created decision rules for differentiating between “1” and “2” and “6” and “7” responses as well as the subtle distinctions between the types of responses directly flanking the center of the scale. One of the reasons students readily took up the language of the scale is because of its ease of use. It is a simple semantic differential scale anchored in literary theory, but its primary value resides in its pedagogical utility. I wanted high school students to have a tool that distills some of the conceptual complexities of the authorial and narrative audience and readings of
configuration and coherence into a simple heuristic for making the rules of the game explicit to them.

Responding with authorial empathy is about fostering approaches to reading that allow students to develop progressively more savvy ways of engaging with text. For example, students may note that most of their responses exist at the “7” end of the scale because of their success in empathetically entering the narrative world and engaging with characters. But they can think about ways to employ specific strategies and conventions to become more attentive to authors’ aesthetic choices to configure the text in more balanced ways. In the authorial empathy study, I conclude that teachers can pair strategies like noting author’s craft and inserting oneself into the text to support students in their efforts to read with authorial empathy (Berne & Clark, 2006; Brett, 2016).

In this way, students may use the scale to think about how to construct a reading of coherence by combining the aesthetic choices of the author along with their own empathetic interactions with the characters in the narrative. Having had success in teaching students to use the authorial empathy scale as a tool to generate questions, to engage in poetry discussions during Socratic circles, and to track their readings of configuration, it was time for me to expand beyond my classroom and engage in conversations with my department colleagues.

**Opportunities to Study Teacher Conceptual Change via Collaboration with Colleagues**

If it took me a decade of teaching and studying to find a clearly articulated approach to teaching literature, I wanted to share my findings with other ELA teachers who face challenges in teaching students how to attend to both authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with the narrative world. I needed to look no further than our high school ELA department meetings for evidence of the challenges of guiding students in their approach to literature. A
frequent theme of our department meetings was a shared frustration with the ways students were unable to approach literature in ways that allowed them to enter into broader conversations their teachers wanted them to be able to access in college and beyond. In many ways this is a result of the conflicting traditions teachers experience between teacher and text-centered traditions and student-centered process-oriented goals (Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995).

My literacy research increasingly made me realize the work needed on how teachers understand and approach the task they face in the ELA classroom. And I needed to move beyond reflecting on my own practice to think about how I could potentially play a role in shaping pre-service and in-service English teachers’ understandings of their own approaches to teaching students. In my studies I had also noticed the length of time it takes theory to translate into practice; these delays concern me. Emboldened by the deep thinking and reflection and reading I had engaged in over the past four years I eagerly invited colleagues in the ELA department to the discussion. I had a sense of urgency and a desire to see how this thinking would play out with the colleagues with whom I collaborate and the students we all want to guide in their experience of reading and responding to literature.

My classroom studies proved useful in my approach to teaching students, but my range of interest was expanding beyond my own classroom. As a ten-year teacher within my department, I was interested in how a new unit of study drawing on recent literacy research could be taken up by colleagues whose practice typically existed at each end of the Authorial Empathy Scale. The current study was designed to explore if and how two teachers – one an experienced teacher with an approach focusing on authors’ aesthetic choices and one new to the profession with a focus on empathetic engagement with characters – each teaching different grades (9th and 11th) and course-levels (College Preparatory and Honors) would evidence conceptual change in their
approach to teaching literature and guiding their students in balanced readings in response to literature.

My prior research has focused on student response to literature because I care deeply about guiding the students I teach in their literary reading experiences. In this current study, I explored if and how teacher conceptual change could be fostered through the enactment of the authorial empathy approach in ways that shape student learning.

**Practical Benefits of the Authorial Empathy Approach**

The current study hinges on an expectation that teachers will find reading with authorial empathy of potential use as an approach to literature. The primary benefits of reading with authorial empathy have to do with ethical engagement with literature, but there are practical benefits as well. In response to the recent expectation that all teachers of the same course should be coordinated in their planning and enactment of instructional units, it is increasingly becoming important to ELA colleagues to understand each other’s approaches concerning instructional choices. Oftentimes the beliefs about reading literature and the instructional practice of ELA teachers are in alignment (Anders & Evans, 1994). However, school settings and the influence of state mandates can cause inconsistencies to be apparent between teachers’ beliefs about teaching students to read literature and the actual approach they enact (Zancanella, 1992). To bridge this gap the authorial empathy approach offers a way of navigating the terrain that allows teachers to enact approaches to literature in ways that align with their beliefs about reading literature, but also in ways that serve the requirements of the institutional setting.

There is a need to examine and analyze the ways in which both new and experienced teachers take up theoretical approaches in teaching students to read literature with authorial empathy. The current study provides contextualized instances of English teaching that can be
compared with one another in terms of what distinguishes and typifies each teacher’s enactment of the authorial empathy unit and their instructional approach in the post-intervention unit. This has the potential to illuminate how teachers can shift their practice in subtle ways to align in ways that create a more cohesive experience for the students they teach.

In my own teacher-training program, the pre-service ELA teachers learned concepts of unit design and lesson planning, but the ELA teaching methods course was combined with social studies – there was no literary theory guiding the instruction, only broad pedagogical principles. Research shows that secondary ELA cohorts do not always have a unified conception of teaching (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003). In a similar way, the university was not necessarily my conceptual home base (Smagorinsky, 2002); rather I was adrift in my district striving to craft my own guiding conceptual philosophy in concert with my department.

If, as Smagorinsky suggests, a concept is not mastered in the university, how can in-service teachers develop conceptually cohesive approaches to teaching literature? Smagorinsky argues: “Rather than viewing theory as being under the authority of the university and practice as being the domain of the school, educators could treat the conceptual fields as mutually dependent and regard concepts as being in an ongoing state of reconsideration and redefinition” (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003, p.42). It was with this belief in mind that I approached this study. It is a Freierian (1993) belief that the ways in which my fellow colleagues and I engage in discourse about our conceptual approaches to teaching literature may be accompanied by a change in practice.

The Stakes for Students

What is at stake in ELA departments when students spend years writing narrative journal responses to characters in literature without ever once engaging in discussions about authors’
aesthetic choices and then shift to a course that focuses primarily on authors’ aesthetic choices? What happens when students spend years focused primarily on combing texts for authorial choices and unpacking literary devices and then shift to a course that focuses primarily on engaging empathetically with the ethical choices of the characters? This potential zig-zag can be jarring and counterproductive as students come to view English as a discipline with practices dictated by the whims of their teacher’s approach. But by college, students will be expected to understand how to approach literature in accordance with the expectations of the field of literary literacy. If teachers can pause to articulate and align their beliefs about teaching literature and engage students in reading and discussion with authorial empathy, then students may benefit from a more balanced experience.

Further compounding the zig-zag experience, students often identify the approach of a teacher and select a course based on that teacher’s approach. This self-selection prevents students from engaging in a more balanced approach to literature. Some students may spend the entirety of their secondary ELA coursework responding in reflective journals without ever becoming explicitly aware of authors’ choices. Wilhelm, Smith, and Fransen (2014) explain how avid readers take pleasure in exploring authors’ choices and connecting deeply with characters. This awareness of authors’ choices is a distinct pleasure of reading as well as a requirement of college-level reading. Still other students may come to view the dissection of literary texts as another academic task completely disconnected from imaginative, empathetic, and ethical engagement with characters. The stakes are high for teachers and students alike.

**Teachers Taking Action**

Rabinowitz’s *Before Reading* gave me a language to articulate all that I felt to be true about literature. Further, Smith’s pedagogical recommendations in *Authorizing Readers* refined
my apparatus for approaching the teaching of literature. These scholars confirmed what I knew all along: the work of teaching literature is complex and challenging, but there are rules to the game. And teaching these conventional approaches to students instead of hoarding the mystery was the ethical democratic path forward. This desire to share a tangible tool with students resulted in the development of the Authorial Empathy Scale. And the current study gave me the opportunity to explore how this theoretical approach to teaching literature and its resulting pedagogical imperatives can shape the practice of colleagues.

I wanted to continue to develop my own *principled practice* (Applebee, 1986) and engage in conversations with my colleagues that fostered their own principled practice. Therefore, I enacted this study to explore the potential of the authorial empathy approach and Authorial Empathy Scale to support teachers in guiding students to attend both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters in literature. More specifically, the current study was guided by two research questions.

**Research Questions**

1. In what ways, if any, does a literary unit intervention designed to foster readings of authorial empathy shape the teaching practice of two secondary ELA teachers?
2. In what ways, if any, does a literary unit intervention designed to foster readings of authorial empathy shape secondary students’ responses to literature?

These questions allowed me to explore the extent to which an intervention designed to teach readings of authorial empathy was taken up by teachers and students in two classrooms. To explore the extent to which teachers took up the approach, I observed their instruction, enacted stimulated-recall interviews of their instructional artifacts and their evaluations of student writing over the course of the study, and audiorecorded and transcribed the culminating discussions.
across three units. The essays of students performing at each quartile in each teacher’s class across three units of study were analyzed through coding stimulated-recall interviews and culminating classroom discussions to explore if and how students develop an articulated understanding of the reading with authorial empathy approach in ways that shape their response to literature.

Chapter 2 will present why the current English language arts landscape is ripe for studies that explore ways of shaping teacher conceptual change, highlight the ways English teachers’ beliefs shape practices, explain how activity theory helps researchers access and understand teacher conceptual change and student learning outcomes, and argue the need for a study on the ways the authorial empathy approach to literature can shape teacher practice and student learning outcomes.
CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Call and Response: The Current Moment in English Studies in Secondary Schools

One need look no further than a recent issue of *Style* with a lead article titled “Euclid at the Core: Recentering Literary Education” (Rabinowitz & Bancroft, 2014) to see that the goal of guiding students to engage in a balanced approach to reading literature continues to be the topic of conversation in English education. Peter Rabinowitz and his former student Corinne Bancroft issue a rallying call for an English language arts pedagogy anchored in Theory of Mind (Zunshine, 2006) as a way for students to read literature as conscious members of the authorial audience. The resulting responses consist of eleven interconnected essays from leading literary theorists and prominent literacy educators as they discuss a conceptual framework for engaging in the inferential work of mind-reading characters and authors when reading literary texts.

In his rejoinder to the lead article in *Style*, Sheridan Blau outlines the challenge that continues to face today’s English language arts teachers when he posits that the actual experience of the literary text itself “may be, in fact, the most troubled and problematic transaction of the entire domain that defines the learning and teaching of literature” (Blau, 2014, p.44). By “experience,” I take Blau to mean the ways of reading literature that teaching should foster. It is into this conversation and this transaction that the current study enters. This research project enabled me to explore the potential educational benefits of incorporating instruction designed to promote reading with authorial empathy into two secondary English language arts classes.

For more than a century, the purpose and pedagogy of secondary English has been debated and teachers continue to struggle to have a secure and clearly agreed upon curricular framework for enacting a secondary English curriculum (Brauer & Clark, 2008; Harris, 1991).
The pressure to respond to mandates such as the Common Core (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012) can render a high school English curriculum incoherent as it struggles to prioritize a wide variety of texts, topics, and approaches (Applebee, Burroughs, & Stevens, 2000). So what goals for student responses to literature inform English teachers’ pedagogical approaches?

Teaching informed by the primary goal of developing close-reading skills would look different from teaching with the primary goal of understanding deconstruction which would look different from teaching with the primary goal of ethical engagement with characters in literature. In my own teaching experience, I am afraid that I have not always clearly articulated my goals to myself or my students in ways that made explicit my pedagogical approach to teaching English. Thus, it is important to study the impulse behind the pedagogical approaches to teaching literature in ELA classrooms.

Secondary English language arts teachers face the challenge of having to create coherent curricula out of the complex range of approaches housed under “English studies” (Elbow, 1990). So what is at stake as teachers decide how to go about teaching English language arts students? From Style we know that teachers array themselves from more textual to more readerly orientations. But as I argued in Chapter 1, this is in many ways a false dichotomy. Rabinowitz offers a powerful argument that the field would be well-served by a balanced approach to the teaching of literature that guides students to attend to authors’ aesthetic choices and to engage empathetically with literary characters.

But how do teachers’ existing beliefs about teaching literature impact their practice and their students’ learning outcomes in the form of written and spoken responses to literature? And what does the research say about if and how it is possible to change those preexisting orientations? Of course, teacher-training programs work to guide pre-service teachers in their
approach to teaching literature, but what about in-service teachers? What does research show regarding if and how they shift their approach? These questions guided my exploration of the theoretical frameworks that would come to be at work in the current study.

What Newell, Gingrich, and Beumer-Johnson (2001) say about the challenges of teaching English language arts in general plays out specifically in the teaching of literature. If teachers do not have a cohesive conceptual understanding of how to best teach literature, they run the risk of having their teaching approach characterized by what Cope and Kalantzis (1993) would call “an eclectic pastiche of curriculum content” (p. 18). Unfortunately, however, there are numerous obstacles facing teachers in their journey of concept development (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003). Such obstacles include top-down curriculum initiatives (Smagorinsky, Lakly, and Johnson, 2002) and state writing tests (Johnson, Thompson, Smagorinsky, & Fry, 2003). The pressures of standardization (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995) add further tension to the predicament of English teachers. Ultimately, teachers need to be supported in the challenge of developing principled practice (NCTE, 2006) or they may succumb to dominant teaching approaches (Grossman, 1992) or exit the profession (McCann, Johannessen, & Ricca, 2005).

Research shows that teachers’ theoretical orientations lead to different practices (Hines & Appleman, 2000), but that does not mean all teachers think about and approach teaching in the same way. In fact, the particular and unique reading identities of each teacher shape their pedagogical approach as well as the ways in which students learn to discuss and engage with literature (Bernstein, 2014).

Although English teachers are called on to do many things ranging from developing students’ vocabularies to teaching students the rhetoric of argument, the focus of this study is the work secondary ELA teachers do in teaching students how to respond to literature. Because the
array of curricular options available to English teachers is so vast, in contrast to other disciplines, English teachers rely heavily on their own beliefs about the nature of the discipline and their approach to teaching literature.

It is clear that even within the discipline of English there are multiple approaches ranging from formalist to reader-response whose adherents conceptualize reading in different ways (Burroughs & Smagorinsky, 2009). The two most dominant approaches to English and literary studies most evident in secondary English language arts classrooms are formalism, descended from New Criticism, and reader-response (Hynds & Appleman, 1997). Bernstein (2014) articulates how readers who do not have authority in the ways they approach texts exist firmly within the formalist literary tradition that prioritizes “interpretive attention on the text itself, with little regard for the reader’s experience of the text” (p.112). Many English teachers embody the tenets of the formalist literary approach via New Criticism (Appleman, 2000). Formalists emphasize close reading and the primacy of the text in their approach to analyzing literature. In contrast, reader-response theorists emphasize that prior knowledge and readers’ identities impact the experience of actively reading a text.

Early career English teachers may draw on instructional practices like reader-response journals (McIntosh, 2006) that leave them at a loss for how to evaluate whether their students are developing an awareness of authorial choice in literature. Such instructional choices arise from reader-response models (Rosenblatt, 1978) of literary instruction that foreground an agentive reader. Response methods cast students as meaning-makers in their literary encounters, but these methods may be less successful at giving teachers ways of supporting students in the reading difficulties students often have with complex literary texts.
So how can teacher researchers clarify the types of evidence that would signal students’ improving quality of transactions with texts? The Authorial Empathy Scale is one way of guiding and assessing students’ writing and discussion in response to literary texts. The AES has the potential to help both formalist and reader-response-nested teachers consider the question featured so prominently in current ELA discourse: Are students moving towards balance in their encounters with literature?

Secondary ELA teachers may expect students to critically engage with literary texts and adopt an interpretive stance (Galda & Liang, 2003), but students may not understand that they are being called to engage in an interpretive task when they read. Instead, they may view reading as a strictly cognitive activity in which the reader receives rather than constructs the meanings with literary texts. Reading with authorial empathy and using the AES gives students an explicitly articulated approach to reading literature that invites an interpretive stance grounded in the tenets of authorial reading (Rabinowitz, 1987; Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998). But in order to consider appropriate ways of shaping current teacher practice, a teacher researcher must first understand how teachers’ beliefs structure their instructional practices.

**How ELA Teachers’ Beliefs Impact Instructional Practices**

The concern with how teachers teach literacy is directed primarily at English language arts teachers. Indeed, English teachers are the focus of the current study. However, research reminds us that all teachers cannot assume their students are effective readers in the English discipline simply because they possess a set of general and basic reading skills (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Some researchers have called for disciplinary literacy instruction to integrate literacy instruction beyond English language arts classrooms and throughout secondary school curricula across discipline areas (Moje, 2008). As other disciplines take up the call to define the
literacy instruction needed in their content areas, recent research has explored how pre-service English teachers understand the discipline-specific practice of reading literature (Park, 2013).

Research on pre-service English teachers’ perspectives on disciplinary literacy within the discipline of English reveals differing views on what constitutes reading. These views range from paying attention to the language and form of the text to exploring the social and cultural forces at work within the text to applying different interpretive lenses to the text (Park, 2013). If this is the array of approaches espoused by pre-service teachers in current teacher training programs, then it stands to reason that the wide variety of teachers currently populating the in-service ELA teacher landscape demonstrate an even wider assortment of orientations toward reading and teaching literature. It is into that region that this study navigates.

Research that takes up the deeply held beliefs underlying teachers’ reading theories (Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996) and ways of teaching English (Anders & Evans, 1994; Grossman & Shulman, 1994) continues to explore the connection between teacher belief and practice. Research shows that the different literary theoretical orientations teachers bring to a classroom and texts lead to different practices (Hines & Appleman, 2000).

What is clear is that teachers’ orientations towards literature affect their literary instruction (Grossman, 1991). In addition, many teachers draw on multiple lenses to frame their beliefs instead of one primary epistemological perspective (Many, Howard, & Hoge, 2002). Further complicating the issue of how to ensure English teachers have congruous expectations about teaching literature is research that shows that although subject-matter knowledge is important it does not automatically equate with knowing how to teach English (Clift, 1991). Therefore, even if all the English teachers within a department had consensus in their approach to teaching literature it would not guarantee that the way they enact those principles would be in
concert. The reason congruous teaching approaches are important is outlined in Chapter 1 from the perspective of a student experiencing the zig-zag approach.

Many of the studies on the impact of teachers’ orientations toward literature on literary practice hold the teachers’ practice as the primary focus of the study, not student learning outcomes. My study is distinct from this pattern because it seeks to understand both teacher practice and student learning. In my study I explored the underpinnings of teachers’ orientations and practices and how reading with authorial empathy could guide students to attend both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters. The current study is about teacher orientations and student outcomes, but it is responsive to research that foregrounds teachers’ experiences.

In a study that investigates the experiences of junior high school English teachers, Zancanella (1991) describes how narrow institutional expectations and teachers’ lack of a theoretical framework for literary studies restrict teachers’ ways of teaching literature. The teachers in Zancanella’s case study (1991) sublimated their personal approaches to reading literature in order to teach literary terminology and comprehension strategies for standardized test preparation. The study is more than two decades old, but it succinctly captures the tension between teachers’ tacit understandings of what constitutes good literature instruction and the types of externally imposed institutional mandates that today’s teachers continue to experience. Practitioners cannot control externally imposed mandates, but they can work to develop and articulate clear theoretical frameworks for their approaches to teaching literature. The current study attempts to contribute to this work by exploring two teachers’ experiences with the authorial empathy framework over the course of a unit of literary instruction designed to foster
ways for students to respond to literature both in terms of authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative world.

**Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

Challenging though the task of shaping teacher conceptual orientation to the teaching of literature may be, there are useful frameworks to draw on in researching the interplay between teachers’ beliefs and practices. Educational psychologist Lee Shulman’s (1986) term *pedagogical content knowledge* refers to the sources and types of knowledge teachers draw from as they transform information into pedagogically useful concepts, metaphors, and explanations for students.

Pedagogical content knowledge is “the ways of formulating the subject that makes it comprehensible to others” (Shulman, 1986, p.9). The concept of pedagogical content knowledge allows researchers to study the nature of teacher knowledge as it affects teachers’ classroom approaches. In researching the teaching of English, understanding a teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge offers a way of understanding how that knowledge impacts literary instruction (Hines & Appleman, 2000).

Wilson, Shulman, and Richert (1987) and Grossman (1990) highlight the pedagogical content knowledge of the focal teachers in their studies, but they do not explicitly show the role that literary theory plays in the teachers’ approaches to teaching literature. The array of literary theoretical approaches available to current English educators makes it even more important to study how they identify their theoretical approach as it will shape the nature of knowing in the students they teach.

In contrast to a view of teacher knowledge as static, Shulman (1987) presents a model of “pedagogical reasoning and action” to show the ways knowledge results from and adds to the
intellectual activities of teaching. For this reason, the current study examines teacher practice in ways overlooked by studies that focus primarily on teachers’ orientations (Agee, 1998). Grossman (1990) solves the lack of study on teacher practice by showing the impact of preconceptions on practice, but does not pursue how to alter those conceptions that may need shifting.

**Reflection and Action**

Teachers continue to learn from their experiences with students in classrooms through the complex interplay between reflection and action. Donald Schön’s (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner* offers insight into the processes by which this reflection facilitates action and provides a name for the unarticulated practices of professionals in action.

Through the process Schön calls *reflection-in-action*, practitioners are able to draw on their repertoire of images, metaphors, and theories to quickly solve problems in the midst of their practice. But there are questions and issues that arise in the midst of practice that cannot be resolved in the moment. These situations require what Schön calls *reflection-on-action* whereby practitioners can draw on conversations with peers and supervisors to return to those moments and consider how they could best be approached.

Schön posits that this ability to draw on a repertoire of images and metaphors that allow for different ways of framing a situation is vital for becoming more effective practitioners. This assertion that reflective practice must be enacted contributes to the current study because the study presents teachers with the opportunity to use authorial empathy as a frame for approaching their teaching of certain types of literary texts. Further, the authorial empathy intervention is designed to facilitate reflective practice because it allows professionals to become more aware of their implicit beliefs and learn from their experiences.
The tenets of pedagogical reasoning and reflective action are useful constructs for understanding how teacher knowledge develops. It is into this space that this research project looks by clarifying the often tacit beliefs that undergird the instructional choices of the two teachers in this study as they teach a literary unit designed to foster reading literature with authorial empathy.

**Research on Teacher Conceptual Change and Practice**

Research on developing teachers’ orientations falls into two broad categories: research on pre-service teacher education, including the transition from teacher training to teacher practice, and research on in-service teachers. The first category warrants a brief overview whereas the in-service category that is the focus of the current study requires a more detailed summation. The research on changing the orientations of in-service teachers reveals two strands: the general failure of professional development to shape teacher practice in meaningful ways and the potential of colleague-collaboration to support the development of conceptual orientations toward the teaching of literature.

**Pre-service Teacher Education**

One strand of teacher conceptual orientation research focuses on the extent to which pre-service secondary English teachers’ training in teaching methods prepares them to apply theoretical concepts to instructional decision-making in the classroom. Through a deep analysis of nearly 100 syllabi solicited from over 300 public universities, Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) show the dominance of the survey approach to teaching methods and explore the costs and affordances of alternatives including workshop, experience-based, theoretical, and reflective approaches.
Agee (1998) explores the perspectives of pre-service teachers as they negotiate different ideas of teaching and learning with their methods professor. This study of pre-service teachers’ conceptual orientations to teaching literature concludes that conceptual change, when it does occur, is not linear and may not occur at particular times or for everyone (Agee, 1998). This research on pre-service teachers still has utility for the current study which examined how the authorial empathy literary unit worked for two in-service teachers in two different stages of their teaching careers to explore how they enact the unit in light of their current conceptual orientations to the teaching of literature. Additionally, the study explored how conceptual shifting, if it occurs, shows up in the learning outcomes of students.

In their study of the ways nine student teachers appropriated and enacted teaching tools from their university methods classes into their current instructional settings, Newell, Gingrich, and Johnson (2001) describe three general ways the student teachers appropriated the tools for teaching English. For some, teaching was the reflective use of instructional scaffolding whereby the student teachers drew on their theoretical understanding to reflect on their instructional challenges. For others, teaching was a procedural display whereby student teachers enacted practical tools like activities without a deep awareness of the theoretical tool’s value or the needs of the students. For other student teachers, teaching was about mastering routines without considering instructional scaffolding or the principles undergirding their instructional choices.

Though the findings of this research study (Newell, Gingrich, & Johnson, 2001) suggest the important ways that student teachers’ activity settings impact their practice, it is the study’s methods section that is most useful as a model for the current study. The researchers used observations to confirm the student teachers’ statements regarding their instructional artifacts. The researchers drew on three general types of codes in seeking to understand the student
teachers’ knowledge and beliefs before and after their teaching experience: *purposes, tools, and settings*. Interview statements that provided reasons for teaching English were coded as purposes. Interview statements that described knowledge of the practical dimensions of teaching English were coded as tools. Statements that referenced the sources for appropriating these practical and theoretical tools were coded as settings.

In more recent research, Bickmore, Smagorinsky, and O’Donnell-Allen (2005) analyze the teacher education experience of a teacher navigating from his university program to his student teaching context and ultimately to his first job in his learning-to-teach journey. In doing so, the teacher experiences a clash between the teaching theories promoted by his university training and those at work in his teaching site. The study highlights the need for teacher education programs to offer students a more cohesive conceptual approach to teaching English. If this call is not answered, then even strong teacher candidates will enter the teacher workforce without adequate conceptual tools to drive their teaching practice.

**In-service Teacher Education**

*Failures of professional development for in-service teachers.* New teachers may have experience teaching but are likely to be solidifying their goals as teachers (Agee, 2004; Grossman, 1990; Smagorinsky et al., 2003). A common way of shaping these goals is teacher professional development. Current models of teacher professional development tend to be decontextualized, sporadic, and lacking tangible application into classroom instructional practice (Guskey, 2000). Feiman-Nemser (2012) indicts the shallowness of conventional professional development for failing to help teachers acquire or develop new knowledge to weave into their instructional practice. Many of the instructional practices used in professional development stand in stark contrast to the collaborative, critical-thinking, problem-solving approaches that

Recent research suggests the ways mandatory professional development may undermine the creativity and professionalism of high-quality teachers (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). The cost of such rigid top-down types of professional development can be professional isolation on the part of teachers and teacher attrition on the part of schools (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). The bleak landscape of mandatory and prescriptive professional development highlights the need for bottom-up, colleague-designed, teacher collaborations to foster the development of teachers’ conceptual orientations. Given this research, the current study does not analyze the impact of professional development. Rather, the current study draws from research on the potential for collaboration with colleagues to develop conceptual orientations to reading and teaching literature.

**Value of colleague-collaboration for in-service teachers.** Through inquiry-oriented collaboration teachers can learn the nuanced ways their fellow English teachers enact instructional practices (Whitney et al., 2008). Although Whitney et al. draw on the experience of middle school English teachers, their findings have implications for the value of adopting an inquiry stance as the basis of the current study with secondary in-service teachers.

Drawing on the workshop approach outlined in earlier research (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995), current researchers cast classroom research as an important tool for reflective practice (Zigo & Derrico, 2009). The rise of teacher research has the potential to contribute in positive ways to teacher conceptual development in terms of teacher education (Kitchen & Stevens, 2008) and to provide opportunities for in-service teachers to become practitioner researchers (Fecho, 2003). The current study exists as a practitioner researcher inquiry into the efficacy of
the authorial empathy approach in teaching secondary students to read literature in ways that balance attending to authors’ aesthetic choices and engaging empathetically with characters.

An inquiry stance prompts teachers to reflect on their approaches and practices as they “investigate their own assumptions, their own teaching and curriculum development, and the policies and practices of their own schools and communities” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 281). I draw on this stance in this research study to highlight effective teachers as not only the most important variable in terms of student learning, but also essential interlocutors regarding what we know about effective teaching. Approaches to research that ignore the voices of teachers in exploring the processes of teacher conceptual change miss an essential feature of the educational endeavor.

The Role of Activity Theory

If students’ ways of reading literature are socially learned, then what are students learning about how to read literature in English classrooms? The current study is an attempt to explore if and how teachers’ beliefs and instructional approaches for reading literature can be shaped to alter the ways students engage with literature. The study is rooted in research on how teachers’ beliefs shape student learning and how student learning evidences teachers’ approaches to literature.

In order to best guide others in the socially conventional ways of reading literary texts, teachers need to have explicit knowledge about their own theoretical stances, or primary orientations toward literature. Polanyi’s (1962) treatment of tacit knowledge can be used to understand how English teachers who wish to guide students in their interpretive stances to literature need to access and articulate their own implicit theoretical orientations and make explicit the hidden aspects of these interpretive processes (Wells, 1990).
Activity theory holds that teachers learn to teach within social contexts such as classrooms that both limit and allow for the development of conceptual and pedagogical tools. Research that uses activity theory as a tool for studying the development of prospective English teachers (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999; Newell, Gingrich, & Johnson, 2001) makes clear that serious attention must be given to changing activity settings and exploring the consequences for teachers.

Activity theory explores how teachers choose pedagogical tools in conducting their teaching. The Authorial Empathy Scale is a tool in the Vygotskian (1978) sense because it functions as a psychological tool for internal activity (Wertsch, 1985). The Authorial Empathy Scale as a psychological tool can mediate transformed ways of thinking about approaching literature. As Wertsch explains, perhaps Vygotsky’s most significant contribution to understanding learning processes is recognizing the impact of the conceptual tool on learning. The Authorial Empathy Scale is a psychological tool that mediates reading with authorial empathy. Vygotsky argues that tools are taken up socially by people in a certain sociocultural context; in this case, the current study explored how teachers appropriated the authorial empathy approach to literature in two secondary English classroom contexts. Additionally, the study explored the impact of the AE intervention unit on student responses to texts.

The exploration of how teachers and students appropriate the authorial empathy approach drew on theories of conceptual change. Consequential transitions (Beach, 1999) “involve transformation, the construction of new knowledge, identities, ways of knowing, and new positioning of oneself in the world” (p.113). These transitions “are consequential when they are consciously reflected on, often struggled with, and the eventual outcome changes one’s sense of self and social positioning” (p.114). In this way, consequential transitions are akin to threshold
concepts (Meyer & Land, 2003) because of their potential to radically shape one’s understanding of how to approach work within a discipline of study.

Beach (1999) posits that developmental change can occur on both an individual and social context. Therefore, teachers’ evolving pedagogical knowledge can be explored both in terms of their individual development and the contexts of the classrooms wherein the change is mediated. This explains the dual focus of the current research study that explored both teacher and student responses to the unit on authorial empathy. In this way, I was able to consider the authorial empathy unit as a mediating transition in the teaching of literature. The analysis of the data collected during the study explored the extent to which the authorial empathy approach functions as a consequential transition that allows for the revision and extension of each teacher’s teaching toolkit (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999).

Research that draws on activity theory has established a relation between approach to teaching and the quality of student learning outcomes (Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999). Recognizing the links between teacher approach and student learning is essential for developing instructional interventions to guide the former and improve the latter. If secondary students are expected to understand reading as an act of literary interpretation in order to gain access to and be successful in college-level English classes, then they need scaffolding to help develop and support their understanding of the conventional ways of reading literary texts. However, more work needs to be done on developing pedagogical interventions that help students learn to develop their literacy proficiency (Ehren, Lenz, & Deshler, 2004). There is research that shows the educational benefits of incorporating combined strategy instruction into the English language arts curriculum (Alfassi, 2004). It thus becomes important to note that a component of the
authorial empathy intervention unit is the pairing of reading strategies to support authorially empathetic readings of literary texts (Brett, 2016).

**Understanding Changes in Student Learning Outcomes**

Despite the uptick of calls in recent decades to enact more student-centered instruction and focus on the processes of interaction between the text and the reader (Applebee & Purves, 1992), research that pays specific attention to secondary students’ ways of engaging with literature is scarce. Even more scarce is research that explores the relations between English teacher beliefs and student outcomes. As a result, an investigation of how literature instruction can facilitate a process-orientation that guides students in the interpretive processes of literary understanding is needed. Previous sections in the literature review have focused on the impact of teacher beliefs on teacher practices and how to change teacher beliefs and practices. I also outlined how activity theory frames the relationship between teacher practices and student learning. I now turn to the ways that shifts in student literary learning outcomes occur in classroom contexts. The research set forth considers the ways teacher practice impacts student learning, the varying literary reading processes among students, and the interaction among teacher beliefs, pedagogy, and student literary learning outcomes.

**Teachers’ Understanding of Student Understanding**

If English teachers are to enact practices to guide student learning, then they need to be aware of how students come to understand ways of reading literature. Yet research in how English teachers conceptualize student understanding has been rare. To remedy this gap, Hamel’s (2003) case study research of three teachers with distinctly different approaches to teaching literature explores how English teachers come to learn about their students’ ways of reading literature and yields important findings about how teachers conceptualize student
understanding. The research shows that secondary ELA teachers with different orientations to
teaching literature, like the two colleagues in the current study, could benefit from frameworks
and activities that give them clearer access to student thinking (Hamel, 2003). For example, one
of the teachers in the study, Andrew, expressed uncertainty in response to the interview’s focus
on how he goes about determining what his students know about literature and what they still
need to learn. The teacher in the study lacks a clearly articulated concept of how he would go
about investigating student literary thinking. The authorial empathy approach and the AES offer
teachers a way of making clear how students are engaging with literary texts in terms of
awareness of authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters.

The Hamel (2003) study concludes with a call for teaching teachers ways of gaining
access to students’ ways of thinking with literary texts. The current study seeks to answer that
call in using the AES to make clear how students are approaching a literary text whether as a
series of authorially deployed literary devices or a vibrant narrative world with real characters, or
as advocated by an authorially empathetic reading, a balance of both ways of reading literature.
Further, the methods of data collection (classroom observations and stimulated-recall interviews
of teachers’ evaluations of student artifacts) and analysis (coding categories emphasizing
teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge) provide a model for how the current study explored
each teacher’s approach to literature.

In the same way that teachers want to develop ways of accessing and understanding the
thinking of their students, the Hamel study calls on teachers to make explicit their own
conceptions of literary reading. The authorial empathy approach and scale used in the current
study offer a potential way of bridging the gap between teacher and student approaches to
reading literature by making ways of reading literary texts explicit. The current study explored
the possibility that having the shared language of reading with authorial empathy could give teachers a clearer way of understanding students’ ways of approaching literature.

**Impact of Teacher Practice on Student Learning**

To understand how student learning is shaped by teacher practice, I turn to studies of student and teacher interaction in the classroom context. In studying a transcribed fragment of tenth grade classroom discourse on a short story, researchers illuminated the typical mode of inquiry whereby a teacher asks questions to which they already know the answer and then, based on certain student responses, hones in on a certain piece of information without ever making clear why certain replies are taken up and others discarded (Andringa, 1991).

Andringa’s three-part study is a very important piece of research because it establishes the need for teachers to provide their students with a more explicit interpretive approach for responding to literary texts such as short stories. The study reveals the ways conventional literary knowledge is conveyed in the classroom setting: student responses are mere trial and error guesses at mind-reading their teacher. As fellow teachers, we may be able to intuit that the teacher in the study intends to have the students access and interpret genre concepts as part of conventional literary knowledge, but as researchers attuned to the potential gap between the intention and enactment of a lesson we can see that the students in the study are not privy to the necessary organizational structure for approaching short stories.

The authorial empathy approach is an attempt to provide students with the same approach their teacher is using to engage with literary texts, namely an authorially empathetic way of reading. The close analysis of a discourse excerpt in Andringa’s study was a model of the transcribed discussions collected in the current study in order to typify students’ responses.
In a second videotaped and transcribed excerpt from an 11th grade classroom, the research further reveals the disconnect between the attempt to promote literary knowledge through an interactive discourse pattern and the resulting student discourse that consists of highly unstructured and scattered knowledge particles (Andringa, 1991). The Authorial Empathy Scale attempts to unify the approach of the teacher and students. In this way, it provides students with a conceptual tool for offering more cohesive and balanced responses to literature. Both transcribed excerpts from the study reveal the constraints of the typical instructional approach to teaching literature and the resulting challenges in mediating students’ engagement with literary texts. Although this research draws its results from two fragments of discourse, the current study examined a broader swath of student data across six weeks of learning.

The final portion of the Andringa study highlights the challenges students have in shifting out of certain discourse pattern rules engrained by their instructional experiences. As evidence of this discourse rut, the 18-year-old student in the study reconstituted the teacherly pattern of approaching the text throughout the think-aloud protocol. The student’s responses were emblematic of the scattered knowledge that had been observed in the classroom discourse fragments from the first two studies. When taken in conjunction, the three studies showcase the ways students are taught literary concepts in the same way as categorical knowledge in the sciences as if they can be judged as true or false. The resulting conclusion about literary knowledge is powerful in terms of the impetus for the current study: “What seems to be lacking is insight into the conventional nature of this kind of knowledge, into the possibility of deviations, innovations, the non-relevance of certain categories, borderline cases, the play with readers’ expectations and the like” (Andringa, 1991, p.171). In short, students of literature need a distinctive, but conventional, way of approaching literary texts that honors the complexity of
the task. The approach may need to be distinct from the approaches of other disciplines, but
cconventional within the field of literary learning. In the current study, I offer authorial empathy
as that conventional approach.

English teachers do not always have a clearly articulated understanding of their
approaches to teaching literature (Andringa, 1991; Hamel, 2003), but whether or not the
teacher’s understanding is clear, the approach itself can have a significant impact on student
learning. In exploring the assumptions about literature that shape responses to it, Marshall,
Smagorinsky, and Smith’s (1995) compilation of four studies on the meaning of dominant
patterns of literature discussions helps explain the findings presented in Andringa’s research.
Their research (Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995) asserts the necessity of both providing a
clear conceptual framework to guide interpretations of literature and engaging students in
applying that framework. The authorial empathy approach is a direct response to the former and
the Authorial Empathy Scale is a means of attending to the latter.

If a balanced approach to literature requires attention both to authors’ aesthetic choices
and empathetic engagement with characters, it should be marked by discourse that demonstrates
an awareness of authors’ craft and also evidences immersion in the narrative world. But studies
of classroom discourse (Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995) suggest that this type of
balanced discourse is seldom the case.

Even teachers who want to change their approach are working against institutionalized
patterns of discourse in approaching literature (Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995). Their
study critiques this teacher-dominated pattern and concludes that resisting the influence of the
speech genre (Bakhtin, 1986) of classroom discussions of literature requires more than just new
instructional activities. Instead, it requires creating scenarios that demand teachers and students
take on new roles. In response to this requirement, the current study invited teachers and students to approach reading literature with authorial empathy in ways that vest real authority to students in their transactions with literary text. The AES invites students to embark on a more self-aware journey of literary texts instead of gathering at a teacher-ordained destination. The current study explored an approach mediated by the scale, not a predetermined result dictated by the teacher.

The AE approach answers the need for a conventional way of approaching literary texts that supports students in their increasing awareness of how to engage in balanced approaches that recognize the complex nature of literature. A study on the interpretive processes and instructional experience of ninth grade English students (Rogers, 1991) concludes that students need opportunities for a more equal role in the interpretive processes occurring in the instructional context if they are to develop into more sophisticated readers of literature. This conclusion also contributes to the current research study exploring the role the AES could potentially play in developing students as more critical readers of literature.

More recent studies reveal the varying ways students approach literary texts in instructional contexts. A study on the literary text comprehension performance of ninth grade students in a low academic track course offers recommendations for how to develop effective educational interventions that enhance weaker readers’ abilities to approach and understand literary texts. Combining reader-oriented and text-based instructional approaches to reading literature may be useful for teaching and can help weaker readers in their literary comprehension (Henschel, Meier, & Roick, 2016). The study concludes with a call for research on educational interventions that combine text-based and reader-oriented tasks in teacher instruction in order to foster the learning outcomes of students. In responding to this call, the Authorial Empathy Scale
allows for conventional (authors’ aesthetic choices) and reader-oriented (engaging with characters in the narrative) methods for approaching texts.

In recent work studying how instructional interventions can alter student ways of reading, participants engaged in a think-aloud reading before and after an affective evaluation intervention (Levine & Horton, 2015). From prior research we know that novice readers tend to focus on the perspective of a character without awareness of an author’s range of choices (Vipond & Hunt, 1984). To explore how that way of reading differs from that of expert readers, Levine and Horton (2015) compare the ways of reading of expert readers and novices to see the extent to which each group’s attention to specific textual details contributed to their thematic inferencing abilities.

Their findings build on previous work (Levine, 2014) on the role affective evaluation heuristics play in interpreting literary texts, but more specifically demonstrate how the students’ post-intervention interpretations were similar to those of the expert readers. The affective evaluation intervention guides students to attend to salient details from the text and engage in interpretive work in ways similar to those the current study is designed to elicit through the Authorial Empathy Scale. One of the reasons such clear theoretical articulations for approaching literature (Levine & Horton, 2015) are so important is because they help students understand expected ways of approaching literary texts that develop increasing proficiency.

**Literary Learning Outcomes of Readers of Varying Degrees of Expertise**

In fact, Dorfman (1996) shows how readers of varying proficiency levels read literature in different ways. In her research on literary cognition differences between experts and novices, Dorfman (1996) studied differences between the literary responses of ten graduate students of literature and ten undergraduate computer science majors. This sampling decision enabled
Dorfman to show the ways that the expert group seemed to exhibit shared beliefs about how to read and interpret literary texts. Other research in this vein supports the finding that expert readers are more elaborate and varied in their processing of literary texts when compared to novice readers (Peskin, 1998).

This line of inquiry has extended into studies that explore the differences within groups of novice readers of the same age. One such study examined think-aloud transcripts of two groups of tenth grade students, one strong and one weak, in response to short literary texts (Janssen, Braaksma, & Rijlaarsdam, 2006). The strong readers used a wider array of activities to engage with the text on a personal level whereas weaker readers engaged largely in summary-style retellings of the text; this is similar to other studies of literary reading processes (Smith, 1991). The research suggests that weaker readers should be invited to move beyond a mere retelling of the literary text toward subjectively engaging with the characters. The current study takes up that call by inviting students to use the AES to engage empathetically with literary characters even as they consider authors’ aesthetic choices. This emphasis on balance in the current study is in response to research that shows the type of unbalance that can occur in the literary processing of less proficient readers.

In their study of proficient and less proficient college freshman readers, Garrison and Hynds (1991) conclude that less proficient readers tended to respond to literary texts in such autobiographical ways that they abandoned the world of the text. In contrast to this disengagement from the narrative world, proficient readers would draw on their personal feelings or confusions to explore varying interpretations of the text. The type of moving back and forth between the world of the text and the author’s creation of it espoused by proficient readers in the
study (Garrison & Hynds, 1991) is in alignment with the type of reading encouraged by the
authorial empathy approach.

While the bulk of the research examines reading literary texts in terms of expertise, other
research foregrounds reader engagement by studying the processes by which avid adult readers
construct interpretations of stories’ themes (Kurtz & Schober, 2001). The most important
finding of their study that pertains to the current study is the suggestion that “thematic inferences
are not generated at the moment of initial comprehension, and that they are generated
strategically and after-the-fact, almost certainly requiring extra effort” (p.157). This conclusion
supports the use of the Authorial Empathy Scale in the current study as a potential way of
supporting readers in strategically generating interpretive responses to fiction beyond the
immediate first reading of a text. In this way, the authorial empathy approach has the potential
to become a way of reading that can guide students in engaging in retroactive interpretations of
literary texts.

**Teachers’ Literary Orientations: Manifested in Pedagogy and Adopted by Students**

One corpus of research shows how teachers’ instructional practices impact students’
literary learning and another corpus examines the varying ways students of different levels of
engagement and expertise approach literary reading. What is needed is research that connects
the two and draws on teachers’ conceptual orientations to trace how teachers’ orientations
manifest in instructional practice and in turn impact student learning.

The work of Addington (2001) reveals the marked differences in student classroom
discourse that arise based on the distinct orientations and practices of two university professors
teaching the same text. The results of the research suggest the ways in which the distinct
theoretical and pedagogical beliefs of two university professors manifest themselves in the
spoken responses to literature of the students in each course. This type of research that focuses on how teachers’ orientations to literature shape their instructional practices and are taken up by students is most in alignment with the design and focus of the current study.

A more recent exemplar of this type of research is the work of Bernstein (2014) who used a purposeful sample to select a secondary ELA teacher with instructional practices that are in full alignment with his reader-centric approach to literature. Further, the study explores how the approach that undergirds his practice manifests itself in the students he taught. His emphasis on a personal response to literature appeared in the instructional choices like juxtaposing texts to elicit conversation, student-led discussions, and response journals, and resulted in students who felt authority over the literary texts in the class. The study, like the current one, emphasizes that English teachers’ beliefs and practices about reading literature have very real consequences for the ways their students read literature.

The Need to Study How Teachers and Students Adopt the Authorial Empathy Approach

Researchers have very little direct information about how teachers’ pedagogies evolve throughout a career. Educational research is not typically the primary way in which teachers change their conceptual approach (Hall & Loucks, 1982). Further, the isolation of classroom teachers often leads teachers to develop highly specified personal pedagogies that result in what Rosenholtz (1989) calls the low and high consensus schools. In low consensus schools, teachers avoid meaningful interaction with colleagues giving rise to increasingly idiosyncratic pedagogies. In high consensus schools, teachers collaborate with colleagues, and in articulating their pedagogical principles with trusted colleagues develop merged belief systems.
Developing Teachers’ Approaches in Classroom Contexts

In this way, the primary manner that teachers generate new ideas is from working in their classrooms and sharing ideas with colleagues (Zahorik, 1987). Yet even when teachers do accept information from external sources like colleagues, they sift it through their own conceptual frameworks to be enacted in their own pedagogies which is why teacher conceptual development is best studied in the sociocultural context of the classroom. The current study is a step in working to collaborate with colleagues within an English department to develop overlapping approaches to teaching literature that balance attention both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters.

Researchers have established the importance of studying both teachers’ knowledge about the effectiveness of different instructional options and the strategies they use to examine those options. Agee’s (1998) research shows how beginning teachers can use their educational experience as a way to create and scrutinize instructional options. Newell, Gingrich, and Johnson (2001) contrast the impact of new English teachers’ evaluating instructional decisions in terms of educational theories versus reviewing them through lenses of personal experience. Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999) use activity theory to show how activity settings mediate the conceptual and pedagogical tools teachers employ. No matter the context, appropriating new ways of teaching and learning is a challenge if teachers do not have a clearly articulated understanding of the principles that undergird their methods (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). For this reason, part of the teacher intervention in the current study includes a series of collaborative meetings to guide teachers in the study in seeing how the conceptual framework of the authorial empathy approach results in certain instructional practices.
for inviting students to read literature in ways that balance attention both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative.

An emphasis on teacher preparation misses the importance of in-service teachers’ instruction within current classrooms. Because teachers’ classroom practices are likely to be the mechanism most shaping students (Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995) the current study examined the practice of two teachers prior to, during, and after teaching a unit on reading with authorial empathy. Comprehensive studies on cognitive strategies interventions have shown how curriculum interventions can deepen and strengthen teachers’ and students’ knowledge (Olson & Land, 2007). Also, research has found that explicit strategy instruction is a distinguishing feature of more effective ELA teachers (Grossman et al., 2010; Pearson & Fielding, 1991). The current study’s design has parallels to other secondary classroom studies enacted with the goal of explicitly outlining ways of developing increased awareness of how to interpret texts.

One such study designed to access the goings-on of the secondary literary reading transaction features a four-week classroom-based instructional intervention with nineteen 12th grade student participants and eighteen comparison 12th grade students (Levine, 2014). Levine writes that figurative sense-making is what distinguishes experienced readers from novice readers and that these experienced readers can transact with a text to a greater degree. The heuristic for her intervention group guided students in drawing on their everyday affect-based interpretive practices to ascribe valence (positive or negative values) to language in literary texts. The study evidences the Rabinowitzian call to read authorially and narratively when Levine contends that “valence, along with the related elements of tone and mood, is not an immutable property of a text, but instead is constructed, either automatically or strategically, by a person who is interacting with that text in a particular place and time” (2014, p.2). Using the valence
scales to explicitly guide the intervention group’s approach to literary texts facilitated the students’ shift from literal to interpretive sense-making. The valence heuristic is akin to the Authorial Empathy Scale tool employed in the current research study.

Because the ways of knowing that students learn are contingent upon their teachers’ approaches to literature, this research study operates on two fronts to examine how teachers and students take up the approach to reading literature with authorial empathy. The current study responds to recent calls in the fields of literacy and English education to focus on disciplinary literacy in English language arts (Rainey, 2017). Indeed, the concept of reading with authorial empathy is being put forth as a specific type of literary literacy that may have an impact on student learning outcomes. Research suggests that teachers are more likely to change their beliefs and attitudes when they gain evidence of changes in the learning outcomes of the students they teach (Guskey, 2002). With this in mind, the current study explored not only the teachers’ enactment of the authorial empathy unit, but the responses of the students during the unit and in the unit following the intervention. The resulting data analysis will be shared with the teachers in the study to prompt reflection on their practice and the pedagogical utility of reading with authorial empathy.

Some teachers succumb to ambient educational models whereas others draw on their teacher training to construct and enact different models. Because research shows the epistemological theories of teaching literature do not necessarily proceed in a stage-like fashion (White, 2000), but in an interconnected web-like malleable fashion (Many, Howard, & Hoge, 2002) the current study set out to explore possible ways of shaping in-service teachers’ conceptual orientations through an approach to teaching literature with authorial empathy.
Teaching Teachers the Authorial Empathy Approach

As Freire (1993) wrote, “No one can…unveil the world for another” (p.150, emphasis in original). The goal in the current study was not to impose a prescriptive way of reading and teaching literature onto colleagues, but rather to share a possible conceptual framework for teaching literature that has been useful in this practitioner researcher’s own concept development with the hope that it could support colleagues in their own continuing concept development.

All of the research on English teachers’ curriculum and instruction is of little value if it does not acknowledge the experience of the teachers in the studies. For this reason, in order to better understand how and why English teachers appropriate new approaches to reading literature with authorial empathy I studied how two teachers do what they do in enacting a unit designed to guide students in reading with authorial empathy. The study has implications for the efficacy of the authorially empathetic approach for teaching students to read literature so that they develop attention both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters. Its applicability will be immediate in terms of offering a potential model for collaboration within the secondary English department where I teach, but I expect the research will spur further practitioner research with implications for teacher education and inquiry-based collaborative professional development.

Research is needed to illuminate the complex interplay among teacher beliefs for teaching literature, teacher instructional practices, and student learning outcomes in reading literature. This study explored that interplay in the classrooms of two teachers enacting a unit guiding their students in reading literature with authorial empathy by studying teacher beliefs and goals in teaching literature, their instructional practices before, during, and after the authorial empathy intervention unit, and the responses of students evidenced in their written artifacts and
their discussions. The two primary student outcomes I considered in the study are the ways students respond in their writing and in their discussion. The authorial empathy approach is nested within the theoretical approach of authorial reading (Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998) which I return to in concluding the theory section as a final clear reminder about the core importance of the current study’s approach to teaching students to read literature in ways that balance attention both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters.

**Authorial Empathy Nested within Theories of Authorial Reading**

The ways we learn to read and talk about literature will likely shape our approach to literary texts and what we come to understand as literary understanding. With this in mind, the current study introduces the authorial empathy approach as a way of guiding teachers and students in their literary understanding.

Rabinowitz makes certain to emphasize that authorial reading does not require “a hierarchical, historically oriented classroom in which the teacher’s primary task is to fill passive students with information about the work’s context, silencing them on the ground that until they *fully* understand a text, they have nothing of substance to offer to any discussion or interpretation” (Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998, p.6). But he maintains that the gap between the authorial audience and the actual audience is a very real impediment to good reading and that English teachers should make efforts to support students in understanding how to read as members of the authorial audience. The authorial empathy approach builds on this theory by inviting students and teachers to link their personal responses to literary texts to the fundamental requests issued by authors via their aesthetic choices. Reading with authorial empathy is not about discerning author’s intent beyond the shadow of a doubt; it is about understanding the
ways authors’ aesthetic choices sanction and support readers’ empathetic engagement with characters and interpretations of literature.

The current study also was careful to heed Smith’s (1998) warning against the privileging of literary knowledge as the most valuable knowledge in the English classroom since the teacher will inevitably possess a disproportionate amount of it. The AES works to make the rules of the game fair and clear by showing students what they can do to demonstrate literary knowledge in their classroom responses to literature. With the support of strategy instruction, the scale also invites other types of knowledge students bring to the text that can be put in conversation with the text (Brett, 2016).

**The Authorial Empathy Scale**

Think-aloud studies have explored the distinctive ways good and weaker readers approach literary texts. Janssen, Braaksma, and Rijlaarsdam (2006) studied these varying reading approaches of tenth grade students and found that weaker readers were less likely to provide evaluative and emotional responses to the text. The AES invites such readers to bring a broader range of activities to the literary reading process by developing emotional responses to the characters in the narrative world as well as attentiveness to authors’ choices.

The Authorial Empathy Scale is designed to support an English classroom where both teachers and students make their interpretive processes as explicit as possible. The scale gives teachers and students a shared language for articulating their approach to reading literature even as it allows for a plurality of readings within that approach. But reading with authorial empathy makes clear to students and teachers that the work they are doing values both the aesthetic choices of authors and empathetic engagement in the narrative world. In this way, the AES can
facilitate substantive engagement with literary texts (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991) in ways that promote reciprocal interactions between teachers and students.

The Authorial Empathy Scale is a response to Hynds and Appleman’s (1997) warning that “An unreflective mixing of both text- and reader-centered strategies may result in a hodgepodge of teaching strategies based on mutually incompatible goals” (p.276). The AES attempts to provide a balanced approach that recognizes that to read authorially one must both be mindful of the author’s aesthetic choices and willing to ethically enter the story world. The scale invites readers to translate a reader-response reaction to the characters in the story world into a more targeted inquiry of the authors’ aesthetic choices that invited that response. This is in no way meant to diminish empathetic responses to characters; rather it is designed to further support and foreground those responses by putting them in conversation with authors’ aesthetic choices.

Admittedly, the authorial empathy unit rests on a partial belief that the best responses to literature take into account authors’ aesthetic choices. Reading in ways that value attentiveness to authors’ aesthetic choices is the context in which students read literature in secondary school and college. This reading that is attentive to authors’ aesthetic choices is distinct from literature beyond school where one may strictly seek an escape into the narrative world. The realities of college-level reading require that students attend to authors’ choices. As a practitioner I want to teach students that attentiveness, but without cost to empathetic engagement with characters. As a researcher I created a study that would allow me to explore how the construct works for fellow colleagues and the students they teach.

Even as I acknowledge the authorial empathy approach to reading is partially motivated by the expectations of college-level reading, it is also about the joys of reading literature that accompany competence (Smith & Wilhelm, 2004; Smith, Wilhelm, & Fransen, 2014). Reading
literature can be so much more rewarding when one’s empathetic engagement with literary characters can be traced to the authors’ aesthetic choices as something to be marveled at as we cross the threshold of awareness of authorial choice. The sincere desire to share this balanced approach to reading and teaching literature with colleagues and students is at the core of this study and, as such, exists as a resounding response to the request for recentering literary education issued at the opening of the theory section.

**Teachers’ Approaches Matter**

The current study goes beyond those that simply document the implementation of teachers’ theoretical orientations. This study explored how the instructional implementation of teachers’ orientations impacts students’ learning in order to deeply understand the nature of possible change in teachers and students who approach literature with authorial empathy.

As one might expect, for English teachers who have a clearly articulated position in their approach to teaching literature, that approach has an enormous impact on student practice. But the research also shows that even if the teacher’s approach is not articulated clearly it still has a major impact.

To conclude, if you do not read with authorial empathy you limit the capacity to learn from the choices of both the authors and the characters in literature. Those who question what difference it makes if students ignore the aesthetic choices of the author should consider the rich pleasures that reading with this attentiveness offers those who are aware of the authors’ invitations. To those who question why it matters for students to empathetically and ethically engage with the narrative world, they are overlooking the important self-growth that can occur from engaging fully with characters in literature. As put forth by Rabinowitz, approaches to literature need not be dichotomized; students can be guided in meaningful substantive empathetic
engagement with the narrative world and also be supported in becoming increasingly attentive to
the authors’ aesthetic choices that curated that literary experience.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Based on the previous chapter’s discussion of the best ways of understanding teachers’ conceptual orientations and instructional practices and how those orientations and practices influence student learning outcomes, I observed two teachers and groups of students over the course of seven weeks. During the opening two weeks of the study, I used teacher interviews, stimulated-recall interviews, and observational field notes to establish each teacher’s typical orientation and approach toward teaching literature as well as the students’ written and spoken responses to literature in each class. After this initial data collection period, the two teachers in the study engaged in a week-long (five, 50-minute meetings) teacher intervention during which I trained them in the authorial empathy approach they enacted over the course of a two-week unit of instruction. Then, I collected data designed to trace the teachers’ approaches and students’ responses over the course of the two-week intervention unit designed to guide students in reading with authorial empathy. In the final stage of the study, the teachers’ conceptual orientations and instructional practices, and the written and spoken responses of the students, were examined for two weeks to explore the impact, if any, of the intervention.

The goals and theoretical underpinnings of this study gave rise to certain methodological procedures for data collection and analysis. Data collection and analysis included pre and post intervention data in the form of teacher and student stimulated-recall interviews, artifact analysis, and observational field notes and interviews over the seven week span of the study. Succinctly stated, the study explored what teachers and students were doing and thinking before the intervention, what teachers and students did and thought during the intervention, and what the
teachers and students continued to do and think after the intervention. The design of the study is aligned with the research questions:

1. In what ways, if any, does a literary unit intervention designed to foster readings of authorial empathy shape the teaching practice of two secondary ELA teachers?

2. In what ways, if any, does a literary unit intervention designed to foster readings of authorial empathy shape secondary students’ responses to literature?

In sum, the study explored if and how an intervention designed to help teachers understand the value of authorial empathy shaped their practice and the responses to literature of students in the classes they teach. Because of the connection between teacher approach and student learning established in Chapter 2, the study examined both teacher practice and student learning outcomes. In this study, the student learning outcomes were the ways in which students responded to literature in their writing and in their discussions.

Because I am a teacher-researcher studying the learning of colleagues and students, I drew on practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) and case study (Stake, 1995) data collection methods as I explored the educational benefits of incorporating instruction designed to promote reading with authorial empathy into two English language arts classes in the high school where I teach. Because I studied teachers at two different stages in their teaching careers (veteran and new) who teach two different secondary grade levels (9th and 11th) at two different course-levels (College Preparatory and Honors), the results of the study have the potential to more broadly inform secondary English teachers’ orientations toward and instructional approaches to teaching literature in ways that guide students to attend to authors’ aesthetic choices as well as to empathetically engage in the narrative world.
Strike and Posner (1985) theorize four conditions required for conceptual change to occur that are applicable to the potential for teacher conceptual change in the current study:

1. There must be dissatisfaction with existing conceptions.
2. A new conception must be minimally understood…it must be intelligible and comprehensible.
3. A new conception must appear initially plausible; and coordinate with present concepts without conflict.
4. The new concept must be perceived as better and able to solve problems the earlier concept could not (p.216).

If these conditions are critical to conceptual change in teachers, the teachers selected for the current study needed to evidence frustration with the limitations of the current conceptual approach guiding students’ approaches to literature. As their colleague, I shared their frustration with the unbalanced ways some students were responding within their current approaches to teaching literature. The teachers had no awareness of the concept of the authorial empathy approach at the start of the study, but I taught it to them during the colleague intervention. As a colleague with awareness of the teachers’ current approaches, I was able to identify the authorial empathy approach as plausible for them to integrate into their practice. The study findings outlined in Chapter 4 will assess the extent to which authorial empathy provided teachers and students with ways of approaching literature that are more useful in different ways than their preexisting approaches.

The methods of the study were designed so that I could describe how teachers enact an approach to reading literature that guides their students to attend to authors’ aesthetic choices as well as empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative world. The impact of the
authorial empathy unit on teachers’ approaches to teaching literature and students’ approaches to literature has implications for how to guide both secondary ELA teachers and students in approaching literature in ways that develop attention both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters in literary texts.

**Context of the Study**

The study took place over the course of seven weeks in two ELA classrooms in Donnybrook High School, a comprehensive public high school in a suburb outside a major northeastern city. According to the school’s website, the school enrolls approximately 1200 students. Eighty-four percent of the students are White, 9% Black, 5% Asian, 1% Hispanic/Latino, and 1% Bi-Racial, American Indian, or Pacific Islander. Twenty-one percent of students are free or reduced lunch eligible. Courses in the ELA department are offered in ascending levels: College Preparatory, Honors, and Advanced Placement. The district places great emphasis on preparing students for successful college completion as evidenced by the 98% acceptance rate of graduating seniors to a post-secondary field of learning in the 2015-2016 school year. In contrast, only 36% of the parents in the district have graduated from a four-year college. In light of this gap between the college-education level of parents and the expectations for students, the English teachers in the district often express feeling the pressure to prepare all students for college-level reading, many of whom have no direct family experience with the academic rigors of university, specifically the discourse pertaining to literary literacy.

My role as researcher was to design all of the instructional materials in alignment with the research presented in the prior chapter. I provided five, 50-minute sessions of collaborative colleague-to-colleague instructional guidance with the two teachers in the study to help them understand the authorial empathy framework, the AES, the instructional strategies that support
the approach, and the daily lessons to be enacted over the ten-day instructional intervention. My role also afforded me the opportunity to visit the teachers’ classrooms over the course of the study to conduct observations, take field notes, and record and transcribe discussions. I conducted a series of stimulated-recall interviews with each teacher based on her responses to the writing pieces of four quartile students across the three units of the study. I also conducted stimulated-recall interviews with these eight focal students based on their writing pieces across the three units of the study.

As a teacher, I am a colleague in the high school’s English language arts department. I am a state-certified English language arts teacher with ten years of experience in secondary English language arts classrooms with extensive experience working in university writing centers and teaching college courses in literacy and education.

**Selecting the Teachers**

I selected English teachers within the department who met two preliminary criteria: (1) each teacher would need to have a clearly articulated understanding of their approach to teaching literature and (2) these articulated approaches would be as distinct as possible in terms of their placement on the AES. Part of our English department’s practice has at various times involved colleague-to-colleague observations, drafting a shared philosophy of the department’s goals in the teaching of English, and the sharing ‘lessons that work’ during department meetings. These opportunities, along with multiple collegial conversations, curriculum development meetings, and professional development workshop experiences resulted in me having a fairly clear understanding of my colleagues’ approaches toward ELA.

Because I wanted teachers who embodied distinct approaches in order to compare their responses to the authorial empathy intervention I identified Nancy and Dorothy as potential
candidates for the study. All participants in study are referenced by pseudonyms. Over the past decade of teaching in the high school, I had multiple collegial conversations and in-service experiences with Nancy about her approach to teaching literature. As she shifted to teaching an AP section within the curriculum in more recent years, we had increasing conversations about our pedagogical beliefs. I understood Nancy to be a teacher focused on ensuring that students would understand authors’ aesthetic choices in literature.

In contrast, Dorothy’s approach to teaching literature was much more focused on engaging students with characters in the story world. Over her past two years in a long-term substitute teaching position in our department, Dorothy had evidenced an approach to literary instruction that emphasized the thoughtful growth of students through their engagement with characters. I knew this because Dorothy taught 11th grade and I would teach many of the students she taught when they arrived in 12th grade. I would hear about the sorts of creative writing pieces and ethical discussions students engaged in during their time with Dorothy. I was excited when Dorothy received a full-time contract and was set to begin her third year of teaching as a contracted member of the department.

So I had two colleagues who embodied, to my mind, the two ends of the Authorial Empathy Scale: Nancy with her focus on authors’ aesthetic choices and Dorothy with her focus on empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative world. In addition to their distinct approaches, they also each existed at different places on the career continuum which would allow for a comparison of how a teacher new to the profession and one more seasoned teacher would respond to taking up the authorial empathy approach to literature in order to foster students’ understanding of authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters.
Both colleagues were aware of my doctoral studies and other members of the department have volunteered to participate in past research studies. Yet, I was hesitant to impose on them because I know how overwhelming the ELA workload is. However, guided by the belief that my colleagues are life-long learners and would enjoy the opportunity to be reflective with their practice I asked each teacher if she would be interested in participating. I first sent an email to share the project and then scheduled a time to talk in person. I made it very clear that they were under no obligation to participate in the study and deliberately asked each colleague to take the time to consider the impact on their time before answering. Both colleagues were immediately enthusiastic in their response and eager to be involved in the study, especially when they realized they would get to engage in a new unit with students and be interviewed about their practice.

A further benefit is the ELA department’s shared planning period that allowed the colleague meetings to occur during first period. Then, during a fourth period instructional development and lesson preparation time, I was able to conduct observations when both colleagues would be teaching. Nancy taught a 9th grade College Preparatory course at that time and Dorothy taught an 11th grade Honors course. This was another benefit of the study’s participants because it allowed for the observation of the potential impact of the authorial empathy unit not only on two different teachers with distinct approaches, but on two different student populations in terms of grade-level and course-level. Thus, the recommendations derived from the study have the potential to impact a wider array of secondary English teachers and student groups.

In this way, two teachers in the ELA Department where I teach, each with distinct approaches to teaching literature, volunteered to be part of the intervention and have their instructional practices and the learning outcomes of their students studied. I received full
support from the building principal and school district superintendent in light of the project’s potential to inform the ELA department’s approach to literature and shape the ways students respond to literature.

**Distinct Teaching Orientations**

Although the study used stimulated-recall interviews, observations, and field notes to more clearly determine each teacher’s approach toward literature, I had certain insider-knowledge that allowed me to provide brief sketches of each teacher’s distinct orientations before the study began. The 9th grade students in the College Preparatory course that Nancy teaches talk about literary devices like symbolism and tropes or write about esoteric disciplinary literary terms like asyndeton and assonance. Students in Nancy’s class know the definition of an epic poem, the difference between verbal and dramatic irony, and the meaning of the word satirical. The students can craft an essay analyzing author’s choices, but may not have the time or see the purpose in considering their empathetic engagement with the characters in the narrative world.

Nancy sees value in and creates time for personal discussions about the themes of literature that resonate with students. However, the majority of class time is not spent discussing feelings and personal reactions to literary texts; Nancy’s approach to literature is more clinical and geared towards objectivity and understanding the literary devices authors use in fiction.

In contrast, the 11th grade students in the Honors course that Dorothy teaches write primarily about their connections and responses to literary texts. Students in Dorothy’s class can easily engage in a narrative writing piece and share how they identify with characters in literature, but would tend to be less focused on the author’s choices that elicited those responses.
Dorothy does teach students literary terms and how to analyze literature. However, discussions are primarily about students’ connections to the literary texts and conversations about identity and social justice; the approach to literature is geared more towards self-evaluation and subjective responses. To be clear, neither of these teachers is enacting an incorrect approach; in fact, they both have reasons for their particular approaches having to do with their own experience of literature, the grade and curriculum they teach, and their identity within the ELA department.

Nancy instructs high school students on the expectations of reading literature at the high school level to prepare them for college-level reading. It is important to her that these students do not remain forever oblivious to the tactical choices authors make in literature. Dorothy focuses on ensuring students who care about literature preserve that joyous immersion in the narrative world that fosters ethical reflection and self-discovery. Indeed, both teachers are role models within the department who work very hard for and care deeply about the students they teach. Another part of what makes Nancy and Dorothy strong educators is their ongoing willingness to reflect on their practice and try new approaches. It is not surprising, then, that both Nancy and Dorothy agreed to try something new and learn about the authorial empathy approach to literature.

The current study explored how each teacher responded to shifting her approach to a more balanced place on the Authorial Empathy Scale. How could Nancy continue to challenge the students she teaches to understand all the literary devices employed by authors while also offering students more space to connect with the characters in literature? How could Dorothy, without robbing students of the opportunity to enter the narrative world and empathize with
fictional characters, invite students to become more aware of the specific choices authors make that impact readers’ responses?

**Authorial Empathy Intervention**

Proceeding from an understanding that teachers are unlikely to apply professional development theories unless they focus on their subject area knowledge and provide enactable lessons (Kennedy, 1998), I decided, in designing the authorial empathy unit, to create all of the lessons and accompanying learning activities for the teachers in the study so they would have the best opportunity to implement the authorial empathy approach with fidelity. Rather than discussing the authorial empathy approach as an abstraction or making broad recommendations for altering teacher instructional behavior, I created and wrote out the ten lessons for the unit. If I had only intervened to discuss and teach the approach to teachers, I would not know that they had been able to enact it in alignment with the theory. The five, 50-minute colleague meetings were designed to provide the teachers with the conceptual apparatus and instructional materials to teach an entire ten-day authorial empathy intervention. In this way, the study prioritized the alignment of approach and enactment so that the teachers could understand the authorial empathy approach in action with their students.

**Inquiry Approach to Authorial Empathy**

The intervention is designed to teach students to read with authorial empathy – a balanced type of reading that attends to authors’ aesthetic choices as well as empathetic engagement with the characters in the narrative world.

The authorial empathy (AE) intervention has four primary components: (1) introducing the importance of the AE approach and the utility of the Authorial Empathy Scale (AES) as a tool for reading literature, (2) small-group discussions wherein students situate different types of
reading responses on the AES to better understand the approach, (3) using the AES to guide and self-evaluate multiple brief writing pieces and discussions in response to short stories, and (4) using the AE approach to guide culminating discussions and writing pieces in response to a series of short stories in a literary inquiry unit.

According to Hillocks (1989), English teachers need articulated cumulative instructional programs that invite students to bring their learning to literary texts to construct and examine meaning for themselves. The AE unit that asks students to grapple with an essential question while developing their interpretive responses to literature using the AES is in this spirit. The design of the intervention unit is aligned with the thinking of Mr. B in George Hillocks, Jr’s study: “He believes that students can learn to deal with sophisticated meanings if he begins with what they know, sequences readings and discussions of works so that learning from one contributes to comprehension of the next, and prompts students to come to grips with increasingly sophisticated meanings” (Hillocks, 1989, p. 157).

Students in high school English classes know that they are expected to read books, but they do not always know the particular ways in which their English teachers are inviting them to read literature. So the authorial empathy unit begins with what students know in the sense that they are called upon to read. But the AES immediately offers multiple opportunities to learn and apply their understanding of the authorial empathy concept through application to the deliberate sequence of short stories as they refine and develop this balanced approach to literature.

I first collected an instructional artifact, an essay assignment, that each teacher selected as emblematic of her approach and used it as the impetus for a stimulated-recall interview about each teacher’s approach to teaching literature. Then, in order to further examine each teacher’s approach to teaching literature, I engaged each teacher in stimulated-recall interviews in
response to her feedback on four quartile students’ culminating essays from the pre-intervention unit. Each teacher identified four students, one from each performance quartile, who I also engaged in stimulated-recall interviews about their culminating writing piece from the pre-intervention unit. In this way, I engaged both teachers and students in stimulated-recall interviews about the same culminating writing piece. I also observed classroom instruction to collect field notes. To conclude the pre-intervention unit data collection, I recorded and transcribed the culminating class discussion from the pre-intervention unit. See Appendix A for the intervention schedule.

Next, over the course of five, 50-minute meetings, the two teachers in the study were taught the concept of authorial empathy through discussions of how to enact a ten-day intervention unit to teach the approach to students. This AE intervention unit is designed to teach students balanced readings in which students attend both to authors’ aesthetic choices and to experiencing empathetic engagement with the narrative world.

The ten-day AE intervention allowed me to study the teachers, to see if the intervention impacted their practice in the unit following the AE intervention unit and (2) the students, to see how they responded to texts during and after the AE intervention unit. Teacher and student stimulated-recall interviews, audio-recorded and transcribed classroom discussions, and observational field notes were used during this phase of the study.

In the two weeks following the intervention, the approach and teaching of each teacher and the learning of students were documented via stimulated-recall interviews, discussion transcripts, observational field notes, and artifact analysis. In this way, data were collected on students and teachers from before, during, and after the authorial empathy intervention. See Appendix B for a summary of the data collected in the study.
To explore what happens to teachers’ pedagogical practice through implementing a unit designed to elicit balanced responses to literature from students, I developed a set of materials to invite and support readings of authorial empathy in their students. The intervention unit is organized around an essential question that asks: To what extent are we in control of our own lives? Using a variety of brief literary texts, students learned how to use the authorial empathy approach to literature through both a consideration of authors’ aesthetic choices and a respect for the manifold perspectives of the characters. The perspectives of characters are not always in alignment with those of authors, and in working to develop this awareness, students were invited to articulate their answers to the essential question as they entered into conversation with the authors and characters in the unit. The unit begins with opportunities for students to develop a clear understanding of the authorial empathy approach. The unit’s essential question (EQ) and a board-sized Authorial Empathy Scale (AES) were displayed and referenced for the entirety of the intervention unit. See Figure 1 for Authorial Empathy Scale.

**Introducing the Authorial Empathy Scale**

Because research shows the need for teachers to be explicit in conveying their approach to literature the unit began with the Authorial Empathy Scale, a tool designed to make explicit the tacit ways readers typically engage with literature. In an opening learning activity, students worked in small-groups to sort typical responses to literature onto the AES. In increasing their awareness that not all responses to literature are balanced, students were primed to learn how to work toward crafting responses that are more balanced in their attention to authors’ choices and empathetic engagement with characters in the story world. As the teacher read aloud the opening of a short story, students worked together to sort a list of possible responses onto the AES. Having identified the types of responses that are more focused on authors’ aesthetic choices and
differentiated them from the types of responses that are more immersed in the narrative world, students were then presented with more balanced responses and asked to highlight the ways balanced responses include elements of both types of response. In crafting the opening lesson for students to explicitly learn the types of responses that are at the two ends of the AES, the intervention is designed to guide students in learning how to create more balanced spoken and written responses to literature. The authorial empathy unit lessons are available in Appendix C.

Over the course of several lessons, students read a variety of short stories to hone their ability to recognize different types of responses to literature. They worked in teams to create and share decision rules for discerning different types of responses. Students worked to shift types of responses towards a more balanced response on the AES. Asking students to think aloud about how to move from different ends of the scale in seeking balance is in keeping with research that holds that thinking aloud is not simply an inquiry method (Kucan & Beck, 1997), but a viable type of instruction in guiding students’ literary reading.

**Paired Reading Strategies**

Students learned how pairing specific strategies like *noting author’s craft* and *inserting self into the text* can be used to create balanced authorially empathetic responses (Berne & Clark, 2006; Brett, 2016). In small-group discussions, students had the opportunity to use the AES to self-evaluate their discussions. Opening quick writes and closing exit tickets were designed to give students opportunities to share their thinking on the authorial empathy approach and the unit’s essential question. Further, these writing and speaking activities offered the teachers opportunities to assess how students were enacting the approach.
**Lesson Progression**

The unit is designed so that students had a working understanding of authorial empathy and were then able to shift responses toward the center of the scale by the end of Day 5. The lessons progressed in a way that invited students to draft brief writing responses, work with situating responses on the AES, and engage in partnered, small-group, and whole-class discussions in response to short literary texts as a way of focusing on reading with authorial empathy. The second half of the ten-day unit is designed with the goal of guiding students into more sustained discussions and writing pieces in response to short stories in order to more fully grapple with the unit’s EQ: To what extent do we have control over our own lives?

The lesson on Day 6 invites students to read a short story in small groups and develop authorially empathetic responses in preparation for an in-class piece of writing. As the unit’s lessons continue, students listened to a repeat read-aloud of a short story to chart how their responses shift on the AES. The unit’s goal is for students to use these learning experiences to begin to more explicitly grapple with the EQ and offer thoughts, spoken and written, on how the authors and characters would answer the question. By the second half of the unit students were applying all of their evolving understanding of AE to two short stories by Ray Bradbury in preparation for an extended composition piece and a class discussion that invited them to respond with authorial empathy.

The AE unit is designed to conclude with a culminating class discussion where students answer the EQ using the authorially empathetic approach. This symposium-style discussion is enacted with the goal of students drawing on their developing skills of reading with authorial empathy as they consider the EQ.
The Stories

In developing a set of materials designed to increase reading with authorial empathy, I noted how short stories offer students a chance to engage with the themes and characters of great literature and an array of authors’ choices within a condensed format. For this reason, short stories are the primary texts used in the intervention unit. The literature – short stories – was the grounds on which teachers and students would have the opportunity to construct readings with authorial empathy.

The stories needed to be useful in considering the essential question (EQ) of the inquiry unit. I read a wide array of short literary stories and developed multiple potential EQs including: What role does memory play in our identity construction? How do we settle disagreements or resolve conflicts? How do people view each other? before deciding on: To what extent do we have control over our own lives? This EQ is broad enough to invite a variety of responses, but pointed enough to directly engage high school students who likely grapple with this question daily. In terms of reading with authorial empathy, it seemed like the sort of EQ that authors would likely explore in their work and that characters in the stories would likely have a stake in answering.

In addition, the stories needed to allow for both types of reading at work on the Authorial Empathy Scale – they needed to invite attention to an array of authors’ aesthetic choices in terms of point of view, diction, titles, characterization, imagery, etc., but also offer an invitation to empathetic engagement with vibrant memorable characters of the narrative world.

The flash fiction genre affords quick accessible immersions into fiction and the opportunity to practice analyzing authors’ aesthetic choices and the possibility of connecting with characters in the story world. In terms of opportunities for analysis, the brevity of the
stories allowed students to engage in multiple readings with opportunities to notice authors’ choices and dip into the narrative world. The stories in the response-sorting activities that open the lessons in the first half of the unit were very brief to give students multiple quick opportunities to consider varying responses to literature and how to strive for balance. Students used these mini-stories as a way of developing their understanding of the AES. But more standard-sized short stories were employed for all of the more generative work students did over the course of the unit. Great care was taken to use short stories that allowed students to both note authors’ choices and empathetically engage with characters in the narrative.

As such, students moved past flash fiction after acquiring a working understanding of the AES and read the three primary short stories of the first half of the unit (Liliana Heker’s “The Stolen Party,” John Cheever’s “Reunion,” and Shirley Jackson’s “Charles”) which all take place within the context of families and as such serve as an easy starting point for students as they considered the extent of their control within their own family unit. The first story of the second half of the unit (Raymond Carver’s “Popular Mechanics”) maintains this family focus, but is decidedly more complex in terms of the inferential work students were invited to do as it relates to the essential question. By Day 7, in Alice Walker’s “The Flowers” a character ventures away from family and encounters larger forces in the world. And by the conclusion of the ten-day unit, students read two stories by Ray Bradbury, “I See You Never” and “Sun and Shadow,” which feature families in different senses and contexts than the earlier stories. These final paired stories were designed to support students in developing their stamina in enacting the AE approach because they each offer an array of authorial choices for analysis and a series of characters who invite ethical engagement. The student tasks curated by the intervention unit are included in Appendix C.
Data Collection and Analysis

The study spanned three instructional units in each teacher’s classroom. Unit 1 data include a stimulated-recall interview on each teacher’s instructional approach, teacher stimulated-recall interviews on each teacher’s response to the focal students’ essays, student stimulated-recall interviews on each focal student’s essay, a transcript of the culminating discussion of the unit, observational field notes, and informal semi-structured interviews. Prior to enacting the authorial empathy intervention unit, the teachers engaged in five, 50-minute meetings for a one-week preparation to teach the authorial empathy intervention unit. During this time, they were guided to understand the authorial empathy approach through engaging in the learning activities they used with students during the ten-day intervention unit.

Unit 2 was a ten-day intervention unit designed to cultivate the authorial empathy approach to literature. This intervention was preceded by the intervention meetings with teachers to prepare them to enact the unit with fidelity. Unit 2 data include teacher stimulated-recall interviews on each teacher’s response to the focal students’ essays, student stimulated-recall interviews on each focal student’s essay, a transcript of the culminating discussion of the unit, observational field notes, and informal semi-structured interviews.

Unit 3 was a ten-day unit designed by each teacher. Unit 3 data include teacher stimulated-recall interviews on each teacher’s response to the focal students’ essays, student stimulated-recall interviews on each focal student’s essay, a transcript of the culminating discussion of the unit, observational field notes, and informal semi-structured interviews. The data collection spanned seven weeks: the ten-day pre-intervention unit, the five-day teacher training, the ten-day authorial empathy intervention unit, and the ten-day unit following the intervention unit.
The teachers in this study teach within a four-quarter school year structure where it is typical to have multiple units of instruction within each quarter. Because the teachers in the study had the flexibility to alter the trajectory of their units based on their curricular goals and the needs of their students, they were able to accommodate the authorial empathy unit into their schedules. While some instructional units can span as long as five weeks, it is typical for both teachers in the study to enact two-week, or ten-day, units.

The choice to enact a ten-day intervention unit was driven by multiple factors. The intervention needed to be brief enough to allow teachers to enact it within their current curricular frameworks. Rather than study a quarter-long course of study which would require teachers to abandon an entire quarter of planning, the ten-day intervention allows teachers to enact the unit as a way of exploring how it impacts students’ approaches to reading literary texts in ways that balance attention to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters. I also wanted to determine whether a brief strategic unit, the type that could be employed at any time throughout a school year, could impact teachers’ orientations and practices as well as the learning outcomes of students. As teachers, we know that a deliberately-designed series of lessons can have a measurable impact on the learning of students. This study sets the baseline at ten days to see what can occur in this time frame and reports on the impact of the authorial empathy unit on teacher practice and student writing and discussion.

Determining the impact of the authorial empathy intervention literary unit in this study required the analysis of multiple data sources to develop a clear understanding of the effects of the intervention (Smagorinsky, 2011). The study recognizes the Sisyphean nature of untangling the many forces at work in classroom contexts that render it very difficult to offer an expansive account of the effects of an isolated instructional intervention like the authorial empathy unit.
However, this study works to overcome this challenge by collecting and analyzing a robust amount and variety of teacher and student data across the seven weeks of the study.

Clarifying the nature of teachers’ concept development is a challenge in light of the theories outlined in the preceding chapter that explain the path to concept development as often occurring in fits and starts (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003). To sufficiently outline the impact of the authorial empathy intervention on teachers and students, data include instructional artifacts, teacher and student reflections upon those artifacts via stimulated-recall interviews, audiorecorded and transcribed classroom discussions, observational field notes, and informal semi-structured interviews. Because the intervention is teacher-designed and socially-situated between two discrete units of literary study, the measure of teacher and student interaction with the intervention unit was not measured by one externally-designed institutional assessment of student learning. Rather, I analyzed the teachers’ and students’ classroom activities and artifacts before, during, and after the intervention unit to explore the impact of the authorial empathy unit. In keeping with the central tenets of activity theory, stimulated-recall interviews provided further contextualization of the activity and artifact evidence. This immersive exploration of the intervention unit’s impact recognizes that the intervention is nested within the context of the classroom in ways put forth in past research (Andringa, 1991; Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999; Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995). This recognition of the contextualized relationship between classroom settings and literary learning informed the data collection and analysis from the pre-intervention unit, the authorial empathy intervention unit, and the post-intervention unit.
Pre-Intervention Unit: Teacher Data

Guided by research on the relations between teachers’ literary and pedagogical theories and their classroom instruction (Grossman, 1994; Hines & Appleman, 2000; Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999), I established the literary orientations that typify the instructional approaches of the two teachers in this study. Determinations for data collection were drawn from research that holds that ELA teachers’ approaches to teaching literature can be understood through their curricular and instructional choices (Applebee & Purves, 1992; Zancanella, 1991) and their interaction with students in classroom learning activities such as discussion (Nystrand, 2006; Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck, 1993).

Establishing each teacher’s typical approach to literature. In order to establish each teacher’s approach to teaching literature I did three things: (1) stimulated-recall interviews about an instructional artifact the teacher used in the pre-intervention unit that evidences her approach to teaching, (2) stimulated-recall interviews about her evaluations of the written work of four focal students; one student from each performance quartile, (3) observational field notes and transcript analysis of a class discussion the teacher identified as emblematic of her approach.

Stimulated-recall interviews about an instructional artifact. Because research shows (McMillan, 2001; Mertler, 2004) that assessments reveal teachers’ priorities I asked each teacher to bring in a major writing assessment from the pre-intervention instructional unit enacted with students that she felt represented her approach. I then conducted a stimulated-recall interview with each teacher to access the beliefs about teaching literature that undergird this instructional choice. The question protocol for stimulated-recall interviews about the instructional artifact was as follows:

Question 1: Can you tell me what you were trying to do in using this assessment (writing...
prompt)?

Question 2: What made you decide to do that?

Question 3: Did you think of doing anything else instead?

The stimulated-recall interviews focused on why and how each teacher used the assessment and what it reveals about her instructional approach. For example, if a teacher created an assessment that requires students to analyze an author’s use of literary devices, I would say, “I noticed you called on the students to analyze rather than connect or share. Can you tell me why you did that?” I followed with probes to encourage the teacher to articulate her reasons for designing and enacting the assessment to the exclusion of other assessment options.

Stimulated-recall interviews about student written work. Next, I conducted a stimulated-recall interview of each teacher’s evaluative response to the written assignment from four focal students that the teacher identified at each performance quartile. The question protocol for this stimulated-recall interview about the evaluation of student work was as follows:

Question 1: Can you tell me what you were trying to do with this evaluative move (comment/marking)?

Question 2: What made you decide to do that?

Question 3: Did you think of doing anything else instead?

The stimulated-recall interviews focused on what accounted for each teacher’s approach to evaluating student work. For example, if a teacher wrote a question on the student work asking a student to provide textual evidence for an assertion I would say, “I noticed you invited the student to provide evidence here. Can you tell me why you did that? Did you think of responding in a different way?” I followed with probes to encourage the teachers to articulate their principles of decision-making in evaluating student work.
Or if the teacher did not respond to a certain portion of the student writing I inquired about that silence by saying, “I noticed you responded when the student was writing about the author, but not about the character. Why do you think that is?” The goal of this protocol was to discern each teacher’s beliefs about assessing student learning in the ELA classroom. How does a student successfully demonstrate their literary learning? What counts as evidence of learning? Was the teacher more concerned with students’ abilities to analyze authors’ aesthetic choices or empathetically engage with characters in the narrative world?

To analyze these stimulated-recall interviews, I extracted and coded any content units (Smith & Strickland, 2001) that related to each teacher’s goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). These coding counts provided an indication of the teacher’s orientation to teaching literature. Lastly, I situated each interview on the Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016) to further typify each teacher’s orientation.

**Observational field notes and transcript analysis of a class discussion.** In addition, in the two weeks prior to the intervention unit, I asked the teachers to invite me to observe a lesson they thought described their practice regarding student discussion in response to literature. I observed, audiorecorded, and transcribed the discussion. Then, building on Marshall, Smagorinsky, and Smith’s (1995) understanding of episodes as turns of talk cohering around a topic, I parsed the discussion into episodes to analyze both the teacher’s approach and the responses of the students. The analysis focused on instructional decisions rather than managerial decisions because the study focuses on teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). The discussion transcripts and the resulting episodes were analyzed by adapting a coding system developed by Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999) to identify the goals, tools, and sources at work in the discussion.
In addition, I situated each episode with its series of topic-cohering communication units onto the Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016) as a way of describing the extent to which the episode of talk focuses on authors’ aesthetic choices, empathetic engagement with the narrative world, or a balance of both. For example, an episode that focuses almost entirely on authors’ choices of literary devices and making text-based analyses is situated toward the “1” end of the AES whereas an episode that focuses almost entirely on reactions to the narrative world and making character-based connections is situated toward the “7” end of the scale. In this way, I was able to further establish the extent to which each teacher’s practice focuses on authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative world.

To ensure reliability and validity, I shared both my goals, tools, and sources coding decisions and my Authorial Empathy Scale coding decisions with another literacy education professional. We discussed my ratings, focusing especially on any areas of disagreement in order to develop decision rules. I then applied these decision rules to the entire data corpus.

An analytic for establishing teacher approach. Drawing on activity theory to study teacher conceptual orientation requires the identification of the tools, both conceptual and practical, that teachers use to design and implement their instruction. Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999) provide the useful theoretical framework for understanding how teachers teach that guided the data analysis.

The researchers define conceptual tools as ideas and frameworks about teaching and learning that guide instruction. For example, a conceptual tool could be a belief that assessment should guide instruction or, in the case of the current study, that reading with authorial empathy is the most effective way to guide students in reading literature in ways that helps them analyze both authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetically engage with characters in literature.
Practical tools are the classroom practices, strategies, and resources that have a more local utility and may or may not be aligned in accordance with conceptual orientations. Examples of practical tools include lesson plans, quick writes, and small-group discussion. In the case of the current study, the Authorial Empathy Scale is a practical tool that is designed to be a useful heuristic in guiding students to be increasingly aware of the ways they are responding to literature. But teachers may use practical tools without a clearly articulated understanding of their conceptual weight. For example, if teachers are given the AES without an articulated understanding of what it means to read with authorial empathy, then the practical tool would most likely fail to be enacted in accordance with the conceptual tool.

Appropriation refers to the process by which teachers adopt certain conceptual and practical tools. Appropriation can be impacted through observations of other teachers, personal goals and expectations, and knowledge and beliefs about content (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). Throughout the teacher stimulated-recall interviews I drew on this goals, tools, and sources framework as a way to describe each teacher’s approach to teaching literature before, during, and after the authorial empathy intervention.

Other scholars (Newell, Tallman, & Letcher, 2009) have refined this coding scheme to include the settings and sources for acquiring conceptual and practical tools for instruction, the teacher’s purposes for teaching and learning ELA, and problems/concerns such as understanding students or instructional purposes. After data collection I refined the coding scheme based on the classroom observations and interview transcripts to focus more deliberately on goal statements. Most often, the goal statements illuminated the teacher’s approach to literature. When tools or sources illuminated a salient facet of the teacher’s orientation, then I included them in the findings.
These coding categories drew from studies that lay emphasis on the nature of pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986, 1987) and specific dimensions of that knowledge such as curricular knowledge and instructional practices. In my coding I did not attempt to generate theory. Rather, I was inductively looking at how teachers’ comments fit within these categories of knowledge.

**Goal of data collection and analysis during the pre-intervention unit.** In order to best discern whether the teachers and students were engaged in the authorial empathy unit in merely procedural ways or in more substantive ways that allow them to carry their understandings into new contexts (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991), I needed to engage teachers and focal students in stimulated-recall interviews prompted by the artifact data collected throughout the study. For the teachers in the study, their responses to their students’ writing served as the impetus for the interview. For the students, each paragraph of their essay was the focus of the stimulated-recall interview. Further, the belief that it is not sufficient to view teacher cognition as equivalent to teaching as craft and skill (Grossman & McDonald, 2008) motivated the need to observe each teacher’s instruction and engage the teachers in stimulated-recall interviews about their instructional choices.

The goal of the data collection and analysis during the pre-intervention was to develop a portrait of each teacher’s approach to teaching English. The resulting analysis developed two portraits that are responsive to the following primary questions and accompanying secondary questions:

1. What is each teacher’s goal in teaching English? Is the teacher’s approach more concerned with authors’ aesthetic choices in literature or empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative world?
2. What types of tools, conceptual and practical, does each teacher use? Is textual interpretation, quoted excerpts, and detailed summaries the preferred types of knowledge? Or is personal response, private experience, opinion, and cultural critique the preferred type of knowledge? Is evidence located in the text or in the self? Is it socially and culturally constructed or textually bound? Is meaning in the text or created by students?

3. From what source is each teacher’s curricular and pedagogical knowledge attributed? Does each teacher derive instructional approaches from personal experience, teacher education, or teacher experience?

These stimulated-recall protocol data on each teacher’s curricular and instructional artifacts and responses to student work were combined with the analysis of the transcribed class discussion and field notes to create a portrait of the teacher’s beliefs and typical instructional approach in teaching literature. It was necessary to have these data collected in order to properly observe any shifts in their approach to literature during the study. This first stage of data collection and analysis clarified each teacher’s characteristic practice and what undergirds those beliefs.

**Training Colleagues in the Authorial Empathy Approach: Teacher Data**

Because research shows that different theoretical orientations lead to different practices I met with both teachers to help them to see the potential of authorially empathetic reading in preparation for implementing the authorial empathy unit. Drawing on research about the value of collaborative teacher inquiry (Zigo & Derrico, 2009) I met with both teachers for five, 50-minute sessions during our department’s shared planning period in the week before they enacted the ten-day authorial empathy intervention.
During these sessions we discussed previously completed readings on key concepts pertaining to authorial empathy and I shared the plan for the intervention unit and elicited their feedback. Both teachers received the unit plan with lessons over the weekend after the pre-intervention and before the week of collaborative meetings so that they were able to engage in a preliminary reading of the stories and unit trajectory. In addition to these five formal meetings, I maintained field notes on any informal or electronic conversations we had about the intervention and teaching with authorial empathy. Because it is typical for teachers in the ELA department to meet for these types of conversations I had informal daily contact with each teacher during the week-long series of meetings.

The readings included brief excerpts from the authorial empathy study (Brett, 2016) so we were able to enter directly into discussions of the authorial empathy intervention. Both teachers were then guided through a series of activities designed to solidify their understanding of reading with authorial empathy and using the Authorial Empathy Scale. These learning experiences were directly excerpted from the student experiences that would occur during the AE unit intervention. In this way, the teachers were able to solidify their understanding of the concept of authorial empathy while simultaneously preparing to enact the unit. The authorial empathy training sessions prepared each teacher to enact the AE instructional approach in terms of evaluating student discussion and writing.

Because the research design emphasizes the enactment of a discrete unit on authorial empathy every effort was made for the text selections and learning activities to be appropriate for both 9th and 11th grade students. Both teachers enacted the same unit in order to see what impact, if any, it had on each of their instructional approaches in terms of their initial approach. It is also important that the unit is the same in order to explore its utility across age groups (9th and 11th)
and ability groupings (College Preparatory and Honors). The decision to study 9th grade students in a College Preparatory course and 11th grade students in an Honors course took up a question raised by recent research on interventions designed to guide students’ literary reading (Levine & Horton, 2015) that asks whether such interventions are more useful for students who are already skilled at interpreting literature on their own.

The first teacher meetings were individual and occurred during the two-week pre-intervention data collection stage of the study as I engaged each teacher in stimulated-recall interviews and established their typical approach to literature. Then, the five, 50-minute teacher meetings allowed for collaborative discussions of the concept of authorial empathy and the upcoming intervention unit. Because the AES is a conceptual tool it benefits from having multiple people in conversation regarding its utility in order to refine it. It is most likely that the sharing of the AE approach, if found to be effective, would occur across an entire department or in a collaborative setting of colleagues, not individually. For these reasons, the collaborative meetings were considered to be typical ways that teachers can meet during a shared lesson preparation period and discuss their approaches to teaching literature for an upcoming unit.

Because the teachers held their own views about literature teaching and instructional practices there may be differences in how the intervention was enacted. I attempted to control the variability in several ways: (1) by engaging both colleagues in conversations and activities designed to guide them to a full understanding of authorial empathy prior to the intervention, (2) by talking through the key concepts and challenges of each lesson from the unit before they enacted the intervention, (3) by providing a detailed teaching manual for the intervention complete with learning objectives, key concepts, instructional moves, possible utterances, time schedules, etc., (4) by designing all of the instructional materials needed for the intervention unit.
including the Authorial Empathy Scale and the interactive learning tasks, (5) by selecting short stories that invited and allowed for authorially empathetic responses, (6) and by monitoring the lesson implementation via observational field notes and teacher check-ins. Despite the inevitability of some level of teacher variability across two classroom contexts, every effort was made to ensure the fidelity of the AE intervention.

**During the Ten-day Authorial Empathy Intervention: Teacher Data**

Since both teachers were implementing the intervention during the same teaching period, I divided my classroom observations between the two teachers. I observed Nancy on Day 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 and Dorothy on Day 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 to observe fidelity of instruction. On the days when I was not observing the class I met with the teacher at the end of the school day for a brief semi-structured interview to collect data on her experience of teaching students to read with authorial empathy during that day’s lesson. Further, if I noticed that the teacher deviated from the lesson in a meaningful way, then I engaged the teacher in a stimulated recall interview about why they made a different choice. In this way, I collected data daily on each teacher in the study. Data were collected on every day of the teacher’s enactment of the unit through a balance of direct observations and field notes as well as semi-structured teacher interviews as needed. Because every day’s lesson is an important part of the unit trajectory I used the focus of that day’s observation to guide the focus of the semi-structured interviews.

All ten days of the authorial empathy intervention have a data source collected from direct observations, field notes, an audiorecorded transcript, or semi-structured interviews. On Day 1, for example, I observed Dorothy’s teaching and interviewed Nancy about her experience introducing the concept which is typically an important moment for teachers. On Day 8 students were engaging in work that was preparing them for their writing piece and the culminating
discussion so that day’s observations of Nancy and interview with Dorothy was focused on that aspect of the unit.

Each semi-structured interview was audiorecorded and transcribed. The interview protocol asked each teacher to reflect on the implementation of the lesson drawing on the following questions: What worked about today’s lesson? What did not work? How are the students coming to understand and enact AE? How do you know? In what ways, if any, did the instruction differ from the typical? Anything else you are noticing? I drew on the field notes and semi-structured interviews when necessary to corroborate or disconfirm the findings that resulted from the analysis of primary data sets such as stimulated-recall interviews and discussion transcripts.

In addition, I explored each teacher’s enactment of the authorial empathy unit through stimulated-recall interviews about her evaluations of the written work of four quartile students during the AE intervention unit. This protocol followed the same format as the pre-intervention protocol in order to compare the reasons for the choices each teacher made in evaluating the students’ work. A calendar of the intervention appears in Appendix A.

**The Post-Intervention Unit: Teacher Data**

In order to describe each teacher’s approach to teaching literature after the intervention unit I did two things: (1) stimulated-recall interviews about each teacher’s evaluation of the written work of four focal students; one from each performance quartile and (2) observational field notes and transcript analysis of a class discussion the teacher identified as emblematic of her approach in that unit. I paid particular attention to the instructional practices of each teacher as indicators of their preferred way of approaching literature after the enactment of the authorial
empathy unit. The post-intervention unit stimulated-recall interviews and discussion transcription analysis followed the same protocol and coding as the earlier units.

In addition, the grades teachers give students are a part of their teaching practice. For this reason, I report the scores the teachers gave each student writing piece across the three units of the study. Essay grades are, of course, impacted by each teacher’s goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999), but they are the academic data point most likely to be invoked by teachers and students.

**Pre-Intervention Unit: Student Data**

The second research question guiding this study focuses on students’ responses to texts. By a response I mean the written or spoken reaction to a text whether it be occasioned by a writing prompt or a discussion question. As a researcher I cannot be privy to what was occurring in the students’ minds, but I can analyze their written and spoken responses in their essays and class discussions. It is important to note that a response is not as constructed as what is referenced as a reading which I understand to mean a more coherent constructed interpretation of a text.

During the pre-intervention, students at each performance quartile from each class engaged in a stimulated-recall interview about the essay they wrote during the pre-intervention unit. This was the same writing piece used in the pre-intervention teacher stimulated-recall interview. The meetings with these students occurred during the one week between the pre-intervention unit and the authorial empathy intervention unit so as to access the students’ thinking prior to the intervention unit. Drawing on a protocol piloted in a previous study (Brett, 2017), I conducted a stimulated-recall interview with each student designed to access the beliefs
about response to literature that undergird the choices students made in their essays. The question protocol for stimulated recall-interview about the instructional artifact was as follows:

   Question 1: Can you tell me what you were doing in this paragraph?
   Question 2: What made you decide to do that?
   Question 3: Did you think about doing anything else here?

In this way, I invited students to articulate their decision-making in each paragraph of their essays. I then transcribed each interview and coded the student utterances in terms of goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999).

The stimulated-recall interview is intended to provide access to the theoretical reasons driving the student’s approach to reading literature. In this way the goals, tools, and sources analytic allowed me to describe the beliefs about reading literature the students were drawing on in crafting their writing. For example, if I asked a student why she decided to use textual analysis to analyze the author’s use of imagery in the literary text and she says, “Well, in English class we have to pay attention to what authors are doing” that tells me something about that student’s approach to literature. In this case, the student’s goal would be to analyze an author's aesthetic choice, the tool would be the inclusion of textual evidence, and the source would be expected classroom practice. If a student explains that she responded to a teacher’s writing prompt that invited her to write a creative piece pretending to be one of the characters that would indicate a different orientation toward reading literature. In that case, the goal would be connecting with characters, the tool would be creative writing, and the source would be the teacher’s writing prompt.
During the Intervention Unit: Student Data

The quartile students’ culminating writing assignments from each unit were collected for the stimulated-recall interviews. Further, the culminating discussion of the authorial empathy unit was audiorecorded and transcribed for comparison to the pre-intervention teacher-selected discussion and post-intervention teacher-selected discussion.

**Student responses to their writing.** A typical way of assessing student approaches to literature in ELA classrooms is through their composition work so I collected the culminating student writing pieces from the intervention unit and engaged the four quartile students in stimulated-recall interviews about their writing pieces.

Because I wanted to analyze the ways in which the quartile students were responding to texts across the three units of the study, I engaged them in stimulated-recall interviews which gave me access to their responses in ways not accessible through scoring their essays on the AES. Instead, I used the stimulated-recall interviews on their essays as the unit of analysis and drew on Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999) to code the goals, tools, and sources at work in the quartile student stimulated-recall interviews. Lastly, I situated each interview on the Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016) to further typify each student’s response.

Further, the stimulated-recall interviews on each teacher's responses to the student writing pieces provided a corresponding data set of how each student was responding to the texts in the study. The interviews had the capacity to shed more light on students’ thinking than the essays themselves.

**Student talk.** Shulman (1986/1987) explains how studying student talk can guide teachers in better understanding their students’ thinking (Grossman, 2001). Since another key marker of student learning in the ELA classroom is their spoken response to literature, I
observed, audiorecorded, and transcribed their culminating discussion in response to literature. By the end of the study, I had audiorecorded a teacher-selected student discussion from the pre-intervention unit, a student discussion from the authorial empathy unit, and a teacher-invited discussion from the post-intervention unit. By collecting this data set I was able to move beyond the quartile students and study the responses of a broader range of students in the class.

I divided the whole-class discussions into conversational episodes. Episodes in class discussions were determined by the ways a series of turns cohered around one topic (Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995). Having parsed the discussion into episodes I drew on Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999) to identify the goals, tools, and sources at work in the discussion. Then, I situated each episode on the Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016) in order to describe the extent to which each episode in the discussion embodied authorial empathy.

To ensure reliability and validity I shared both my goals, tools, and sources coding decisions and my Authorial Empathy Scale placement decisions with another literacy education professional. We discussed my codes and placements, focusing especially on any areas of disagreement in order to develop decision rules. I then applied these decision rules to the entire corpus of the data.

The Post-Intervention Unit: Student Data

For the same reasons that guided the collection during the intervention unit, I enacted stimulated-recall interviews on the written artifacts of the four quartile students from each class to explore their reasons for the choices they made in their essays. Again, I coded their responses using the goals, tools, and sources framework (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). The protocol was the same as the one used in the pre-intervention with the goal of exploring the extent to which the AE unit impacted students’ responses to literature. Again, I audiorecorded,
transcribed, and coded the teacher-selected student culminating discussion, divided it into episodes, and situated each episode on the Authorial Empathy Scale.

**Ethical Concerns**

The following ethical considerations were attended to for the protection of the participants in the study: (1) a clear understanding of the research objectives were conveyed to the participants verbally and in writing, (2) written permission was obtained from the participants, (3) the study was sanctioned through the Institutional Review Board, (4) all data collection and analysis was made available to the participants, (5) the participants’ rights and queries had principal consideration when reporting data, and (6) pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of all participants.

The next ethical consideration arises from the groupings in the study. For ethical reasons I did not study a control group as a comparison to the two classes of the intervention. Instead, I used data from the instructional units flanking the intervention unit to draw conclusions about the impact of the authorial empathy intervention. In classroom studies like this it is the researcher, and potentially the participants, who are most likely to benefit from receiving the intervention. It would not have been ethical to prevent a control group from receiving the potentially beneficial authorial empathy intervention unit. To appropriately minimize this risk, the research study was not designed to qualify as an experimental or quasi-experimental study.

**Exploring the Utility of the Authorial Empathy Approach**

The current study was generated from a need to reflect on my own practice, collaborate with colleagues, and guide students in ways of responding to literature in balanced ways that allow for thoughtful consideration of authors’ aesthetic choices as well as empathetic engagement with literary characters. Enacting this study enabled me to explore whether the
authorial empathy approach is useful for my colleagues and the students they teach. The study helped me to discern the extent to which the deep thinking I have been engaged in regarding my own teaching beliefs and practices has value within our department and beyond.

The willingness of the teachers in the current study to take the time to reflect on their pedagogical beliefs and try out a different instructional approach made me confident that the current study has value for them on their teaching journey. The data collected and analyzed in the teacher portion of the study constitutes a research manuscript exploring the utility of the authorial empathy approach for secondary teachers seeking to guide their students in attending both to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement in the narrative world. The findings presented in Chapter 4 may be useful for any English teachers who struggle in their approach to teaching literature by offering a potential tool for thinking about how to guide students in recognizing authors’ aesthetic choices and also engaging empathetically with characters in literature.

The study begins and ends with concerns about the ways students approach and respond to literature. I was excited about the ways the authorial empathy approach allowed students in the classes I teach to develop their attention to author’s aesthetic choices in literature while also engaging empathetically with characters in literature in ways I believe to be vital. This study enabled me to extend my reach and potentially guide students that I do not get to teach directly. The data collected and analyzed in the student portion of the study constitute a research manuscript about the ways in which the authorial empathy approach shapes students’ approaches to literature.
The combined layers of the current study have the potential to contribute to what students, teachers, and scholars think about how to approach literature. In this way, the study aligns with my concurrent passions: the reading and teaching of literature.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Thus far I have argued that authorial empathy offers a way out of the divide between clinical formalist approaches to literature and untethered reader-response reactions to literature because the approach invites students to respond to literature in ways that balance attention to authors’ aesthetic choices as well as engagement with characters in the narrative world. But how did the authorial empathy approach shape the teaching practice of two teachers with different approaches to teaching literature to different student populations? And how did it shape students’ responses to texts in a 9th grade College Preparatory course and an 11th grade Honors course? Before I present the findings in detail with key excerpts from the data set, I will begin with a general summary of the findings of the study as they relate to the research questions. By first providing a summative overview of the findings in the opening of this section, I can then systematically drill down to a more specific presentation of the findings throughout the remainder of Chapter 4.

As I explained in Chapter 3, my interest was in what impact, if any, the authorial empathy unit would have on two colleagues: one with an approach that tended to foreground authors’ aesthetic choices and the other with a primary goal of empathetic engagement with characters in literature. I selected these teachers because I noticed they were very different in terms of their approach to teaching literature, and having them as participants allowed access to different groups of students in terms of grade and course-level. Nancy’s approach to teaching students in a 9th grade College Preparatory class foregrounded how to attend to authors’ aesthetic choices in literature. Dorothy’s approach to teaching students in an 11th grade Honors class prioritized how to connect with characters in literature.
In order to understand each teacher’s journey, I needed to see where they began. The Authorial Empathy Scale (AES) allowed me to understand each teacher’s orientation to teaching literature. As I have explained, the AES is designed to invite its users to consider where they are reading on the scale and how to shift toward balance. Responses that are focused primarily on analyzing authors’ aesthetic choices would be situated toward the “1” end of the scale whereas responses that are focused primarily on empathetically engaging with the narrative world of texts would be situated toward the “7” end of the scale. Responses that manage to be equally attentive to authors’ choices and ethical engagement with characters in the narrative world would be situated at the center of the scale at a “4.”

Although the Methodology outlined in Chapter 3 explains the way I understood each colleague’s distinct approach to teaching literature prior to the study, the data collected during the study offers a clearer picture of just how “1-ish” Nancy was and just how “7-y” Dorothy tended to be. And yet, in both of their teaching journeys over the course of the authorial empathy intervention, they came to embody a more balanced approach to teaching literature. I drew on the analytic of goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999) to explain the approaches that the teachers evidenced in their response to student writing and in discussion as well as the approaches that students evidenced in their writing and discussions throughout the study. Further, I situated the stimulated-recall interviews with teachers and students as well as each episode of their discussions on the Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016) as a way of indicating the extent to which the approaches to writing and discussion evidence balance. The teacher findings are a story of their journeys toward balance and the challenges that they face when trying to guide students in their responses to literature. The
student findings reveal the ways in which students at different performance quartiles take up and enact the authorial empathy approach in their written responses and discussions.

**Overview of Findings**

What I found was that though each teacher started at a very different place, the authorial empathy approach seemed to enable them to guide their students in becoming more balanced in their responses to texts. Although Nancy and Dorothy took up the scale in different ways, when not explicitly asked in Unit 3, their teaching practices evidence the ways in which they were shaped by the AE intervention. Nancy continued to use the authorial empathy language in her Unit 3 prompt although the text selection and task assignment did not fully work in support of the authorial empathy approach. Dorothy designed a Unit 3 that reconceptualized the AE approach as a writerly meta-tool for students to use to evaluate and draft college entrance essays.

In her response to student writing, Nancy shifted from solely using an institutional rubric focused on writing conventions in Unit 1 to filtering her response to student writing through the lens of the authorial empathy approach. The AE approach enabled Nancy to engage in more balanced ways with the students who were currently performing in the first and second quartile levels. However, Nancy’s response to the students who were performing at the third and fourth quartile remained firmly situated at a “1” on the AES and primarily focused on writing conventions.

The shift in Nancy’s discussions that occurs during the authorial empathy intervention is quite striking. Whereas Nancy’s Unit 1 discussion consists of one lengthy episode that scored at a “1” on the AES, the introduction of the AE approach resulted in a Unit 2 discussion that spans 11 balanced episodes. However, the analysis of the Unit 2 discussion data reveals a tension between enacting AE and the prevalence of the IRE discussion typical in classroom discourse.
Indeed, by Unit 3 the discussion tool of the Authorial Empathy Scale that was present in the Unit 2 discussion had been overcome by the tool of IRE. The data analysis reveals the necessity of deliberate text, task, and tool selection in order to most effectively enact and sustain reading with authorial empathy.

For the 9th grade students in Nancy’s College Preparatory class, the authorial empathy intervention resulted in writing that evidenced more balance in Unit 2 in ways that were sustained through Unit 3 for the first and second quartile students. The AE intervention temporarily freed students from the more procedural and utilitarian goals of writing that dominated their Unit 1 pieces. However, these utilitarian goals return in Unit 3 again revealing the importance of text and task selection in sustaining authorially empathetic responses.

In their discussions the 9th grade students evidence a striking shift in Unit 2. In Unit 2 the students use the AES to generate their own questions and respond in consecutive turns, but during the Unit 3 discussion they return to the IRE framework so prevalent in Unit 1. The findings presented from the data analysis of Nancy and the 9th grade students are particularly powerful when viewed alongside the findings from the data analysis of Dorothy and the 11th grade students.

After the authorial empathy intervention, Dorothy became more balanced than she was in Unit 1 in her response to student writing at every performance level. However, the data analysis reveals the tension between the source of the Common Core rubric and Dorothy’s articulated goals and orientation towards literature. Dorothy has a deep philosophical commitment to empathy, yet in responses to student writing she tended to be at the “1” end of the scale. I was struck by the extent to which the rubric Dorothy used required her to evaluate the writing in terms of the conventions of analytical writing. Even though she was inviting her students to read
and respond with authorial empathy the evaluative piece was driven by the rubric that prioritized a highly formal and conventional analysis of authors’ aesthetic choices.

Dorothy’s discussions increase in their number of balanced episodes in Unit 2 and Unit 3 as she enacted the authorial empathy approach and AE becomes the dominant goal. This suggests that in a classroom with students who are engaging in and sustaining whole-class discussion, a teacher can draw on the AE approach to guide students in more balanced talk in response to texts.

Three of the four quartile students in the 11th grade Honors class became more balanced in their responses during the AE unit, but by Unit 3 the source of the expectations of the college entrance essay dominate the source of the AE unit. This again suggests the necessity of selecting texts and tasks that work in accordance with the tenets of authorial empathy.

A notable shift occurs in the dominant discourse pattern of the 11th grade student discussions in Unit 2. The students shift from episodes that are typified by lengthy parallel I-feel monologues to utterances that are responsive, collaborative, and embody a class-focused approach rather than a self-focused approach. In Unit 3 the students take on the AES as a writerly meta-tool in ways that indicate the AE approach is shaping the ways they evaluate and respond to texts.

The ways in which the teachers and students enacted the Authorial Empathy Scale indicate its utility as an approach to texts. But the findings suggest the need for the AE approach to be enacted in concert with specific types of texts, tasks, and tools that invite and allow for reading with authorial empathy.
Teacher Interview Data: Establishing Each Teacher’s Typical Approach

Guided by research on the relations between teachers’ literary and pedagogical theories and their classroom instruction (Grossman, 1994; Hines & Appleman, 2000; Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999), I established the literary orientations that typify the instructional approaches of the two teachers in this study. The data collection choices for this study were informed by research that holds that ELA teachers’ approaches to teaching literature can be understood through their curricular and instructional choices (Applebee & Purves, 1992; Zancanella, 1991) and their interaction with students in classroom learning activities like discussion (Nystrand, 2006; Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck, 1993).

Each teacher in the study engaged in an audiorecorded interview about her approach to teaching English. In order to make the initial characterization of each teacher’s approach, I analyzed the transcribed interview and extracted any content units (Smith & Strickland, 2001) that related to each teacher’s goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). The coding process revealed the primary goals each teacher had in her teaching, the main tools she most frequently used to enact her approach, and the main sources she drew upon in making her instructional decisions.

I coded teacher goals sorting them into categories such as analytical argument writing conventions, collaboration among students, having students empathetically experience literature, or increased cultural awareness. I coded teacher tools sorting them into categories like questions, quizzes, writing prompts, essay assignments, rubrics, small-group discussions, Socratic circles, or essential questions. I coded teacher sources sorting them into categories like curriculum, past practice, teacher collaboration, research and reading, state education standards or initiatives, or the Common Core. In instances in which there was a seeming overlap between tools and sources
I took care to differentiate between a tool like the Common Core rubric and the source which was the Common Core standards.

The coding process, though illuminating, did not capture the spirit of the interviews in two ways: the presence of specific repeated phrases and the unsolicited use of metaphors from both teachers. I understood the repeated phrases and articulations of the teaching approach to be integral to the teacher’s approach and thus worthy of analysis. However, I analyzed these repetitions with an alertness to disconfirming data by making sure the repeated phrase was relevant to the teaching approach.

I also noted that each teacher used metaphors during the interview to explain her approach to teaching English. Therefore, I drew on White and Smith (1994) who found that personal teaching metaphors can reveal tacit theories of teaching English. I chose to focus only on metaphors that were clearly articulated and fully developed during the interviews rather than those made in passing reference.

The analysis of the teacher interviews allowed for a presentation of each teacher’s approach to teaching English prior to the authorial empathy training sessions and enactment of the AE unit. In this way, any shifts in teaching approach can be noted during the course of the study. During the portions of the study when I describe where teachers are situated on the scale I employ phrases such as “1-ish” and “7-ish” to indicate that these orientations are not static and that teachers may be moving around a certain pole of the AES based on the text and task.

In short, each teacher’s placement on the scale is temporally bound, not permanent. There is great potential for teachers to move along the scale from lesson to lesson or over the course of a career in English education. My description of each teacher’s orientation represents their primary approach to literature based on their stimulated-recall interview data and classroom
observations; it is not meant to be a permanent diagnosis or evaluation. But the Authorial Empathy Scale is a useful tool for typifying a teacher’s approach to literature in ways that promote awareness of that approach and if and how it shifts. Therefore, it is important to note each teacher’s placement on the AES prior to the start of the intervention. See Table 1 for the distinct teaching approaches of each teacher prior to the authorial empathy intervention.

Nancy’s Approach to Teaching English: Toward a “1” on the Authorial Empathy Scale

Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999) establish that understanding a teacher’s goals, tools, and sources provides insight into how teachers’ orientations toward literature affect their literary instruction. For this reason, I engaged each teacher in a stimulated-recall interview about her approach to teaching literature as a way of typifying each teacher’s placement on the Authorial Empathy Scale prior to the intervention. In her 40 minute interview Nancy discussed an essay assignment that she felt encapsulated her approach to teaching literature. Nancy’s approach is outlined in Table 1.

**Goals, tools, and sources.** In the interview, I discovered 16 goal statements, six of which were about analyzing authors’ choices through textual analysis which clearly orients Nancy toward the “1” end of the AES. The next most frequent goal code was split between the goal of inducting students into the conventions of analytical arguments and the goal of communication among her students. Nancy may feel the pressure to induct 9th grade College Preparatory students into the expectations of analytical essay writing and how to closely read a text so they can engage in more creative or cultural explorations at a later developmental stage.

Of the 18 tools Nancy references, the top three reveal a teacher with a focus on guiding students to analyze authors’ aesthetic choices in literature: five tool codes are the teacher-created bookmark quiz questions to guide student reading, five tool codes are the teacher-provided essay
assignment with topic choices and student checklists, and four tool codes are for close reading to gather textual evidence. Whereas Nancy employs tools that reveal a more “1-ish” orientation on the AES, Dorothy’s primary tools are discussion and conversation in Socratic circles to answer essential questions that invite a more “7-ish” immersion in the narrative world.

Of the 26 sources Nancy references in her interview, the five most frequently occurring codes with three counts each were for the sources of the curriculum, past practice and years of experience, real world or college need for a skill, teacher collaboration/compromise, and teacher pleasure. The next most frequent source codes with two counts each were the rubric, MLA, state education standards/initiatives, and time constraints. The sources of Nancy’s literary teaching decisions are most striking when viewed alongside Dorothy’s sources.

Nancy is a teacher with 15 years of experience and an established approach that she deems useful to her students. Dorothy, in her third year of teaching, draws on self-selected philosophy readings as a source of decision-making as indicated by five source code counts, but the presence of the curriculum as a source is also of note with four counts. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, neither teacher cites their teacher training or specific theoretical pedagogical approaches as their primary sources for their decisions in their approach. This is in keeping with research that outlines that secondary education preservice teacher programs struggle to offer teachers a sustained consistent pedagogical approach (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003). However, both teachers have frequently occurring counts that cite the curriculum as a source.

In her interview, Nancy repeatedly speaks about guiding students to evaluate authors’ choices in literature and preparing students to use textual analysis to write effective analytical essays. Her primary goals were for students to be able to analyze authors’ choices in literary texts, write effective thesis statements, support their assertions with textual evidence, and enact
the conventional MLA rules of a literary analysis essay. Nancy set out to achieve these goals by using what she calls bookmarks that consist of teacher-crafted questions designed to prepare students for reading quizzes. The other tools Nancy uses are quizzes as well as essays with clear directions, checklists of requirements, and rubrics. The sources of Nancy’s approach as articulated in the interview are mainly her experience in the field, the pleasure she derives from reading, teacher collaboration, expectations that students will need to know how to argue persuasively in their future lives, and institutional standards from the state and MLA. Nancy expressed how curricular requirements, compromises with colleagues, and time constraints also exist as sources shaping her teaching approach.

**Repetitions and metaphors.** Nancy’s most repeated phrases in the interview are “the text,” “analysis,” and “author’s choice.” These phrases would seem to indicate a more “1-ish” orientation on the AES. When asked what she wants her students to get from the essay assignment, Nancy explains:

I want them to get really, really small with it. And from there, I want them to be able to say, alright well this is in the text and the author made this choice, here is what they are trying to say. I want them to really think about why the author did what they did in terms of the whole text, but using that small piece as the example.

In the following excerpt, in which the researcher is referred to as R, Nancy explains how she wants her students to marvel at author’s craft:

R: What made you decide that being aware of an author’s use of language, or like you said, the precise use of language, why is that important?
Nancy: I think that it’s something that I thought was always really cool. And I think that’s why. I think just putting a comma in a different spot or just changing the word just a little bit. I think it makes such a profound difference in the meaning and I think that that is cool so I wanted them to think that is cool too.

This focus on authors and their meanings evidences itself in Nancy’s writing tasks with clear instructions. When asked about her choice of providing such explicit directions in her essay
assignments, Nancy reveals her other goal of inducting students into the conventions of the analytical essay genre:

I don’t want the ‘I think, I feel’ statements. I’d like them to come up with something a little bit more sophisticated. So that’s me trying to keep them in third person, appropriate word choice, I don’t want slang, I don’t want colloquial conversations in here, this is not a conversation you are having with a friend, this is a formal essay that they are writing.

The repeated focus on the ways of analyzing authors’ choices in texts is further illuminated through the metaphor Nancy shares in the interview. Through her Easter egg metaphor, Nancy describes how she guides students in hunting and finding the amazing things authors do with language:

R: If you had to name your own approach, that you do, what is it that you do?
N: I think it is to find those neat things, those little, like the kids know the term Easter eggs; find those little Easter eggs in the text and then explore those. I’ve heard another reference where you take something small and just put your thumb on it and press and see what happens. So I like looking at those little things because the little details in literature and in life really impact the overall idea or themes or symbols in everything.

For Nancy, the Easter egg metaphor embodies the genuine joy she experiences in guiding students to recognize the power of language wielded by authors in literature.

The predominance of phrases related to the text and an emphasis on analyzing authors’ choices does not preclude Nancy’s inclusion of other goals. In her interview Nancy reveals that she wants her students to be collaborators: “I don’t want them sitting there as their own island, I want them to be able to communicate effectively with others. That is just one of the life skills you cannot go on without having.” She also sincerely wants students to experience the joy and pleasure she believes literature offers. When asked about how she came to be a teacher, Nancy responds:

English seemed to be a good fit for me because I loved reading and that was a way for me to escape other things, so it was a way for me to, to just travel to different locations or meet different people from the safety of my couch...I wanted to share that with other people that maybe also find it that intriguing, but maybe also who don’t, but will buy
into it because, okay well that person obviously really cares about it, and if they really care about it, maybe I will give it half a chance and look at it.

For Nancy, the teaching of English is not only about passing on conventional rules of analyzing authors’ choices in literary texts; it is also about providing an escape and sharing a passion.

Nancy’s stimulated recall interview illuminates the ways in which the different literary theoretical orientations teachers bring to a classroom and texts lead to different practices (Hines & Appleman, 2000). Nancy’s stimulated-recall interview ultimately typifies her instructional approach and practice as oriented toward the “1” end of the Authorial Empathy Scale. Her primary focus on analyzing authors’ aesthetic choices meant it would be particularly interesting to see if and how the authorial empathy approach would shift her teaching practice toward a more balanced authorially empathetic orientation toward literature.

**Dorothy’s Approach to Teaching English: Toward a “7” on the Authorial Empathy Scale**

Because teachers’ orientations towards literature affect their literary instruction (Grossman, 1991), I engaged Dorothy in a stimulated-recall interview in order to articulate the relationship between her approach to and practice of teaching literature prior to the authorial empathy intervention. Drawing on the same analytic that guided my stimulated recall interview with Nancy, I coded the interview in terms of statements that revealed the goals, tools, and sources that shaped her teaching (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). I used this analytic to situate Dorothy’s teaching orientation on the Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016).

**Goals, tools, and sources.** In her 40 minute interview, all of Dorothy’s seven goal statements were encapsulated by the goal of guiding students to have empathetic experiences with literature in ways that reveal her belief in literature as a medium to explore the human condition and connect with other cultures. The recursive coding process allowed me to unite the initial goal statement codes that included increased cultural awareness, empathetic engagement
with new characters, and to engage the soul under the code of guiding students to have empathetic engagement with characters in literature. Dorothy’s goals, especially when compared to Nancy’s, which have a tendency to focus on analyzing author’s choices and teaching analytical literary conventions, reveal a teacher with an orientation toward the “7” end of the AES. See Table 1.

Six of Dorothy’s 12 tools referenced in the interview reveal the importance of conversation and discussion through Socratic circles in reaching her goal of empathetic connections with characters. Dorothy’s second most invoked tool is that of the essential question which by its very nature invites students to engage with literary characters in ways distinct from tools such as reading quizzes. The “7-ness” indicated by Dorothy’s tools is further solidified when viewed in comparison to the “1-ish” nature of Nancy’s tools of bookmarks with quiz questions to guide student reading, rubric checklists, and close reading strategies.

The primary sources for Dorothy’s teaching approach were found in philosophical texts with five of these coded sources including philosophical texts on how reading makes people nicer, spiritual versus carnal reading, and the concept of teachers as servant leaders. The next most frequent source code was the curriculum. In contrast, Nancy’s primary sources are the curriculum with its focus on analyzing author’s’ choices as well as sources like her many years of teaching experience.

In her interview, Dorothy repeatedly spoke of engaging her students using essential questions designed to get them to empathize and connect with human universal experiences best understood through literature. Her goals were to increase empathetic cultural awareness in her students and guide them in becoming more global citizens. She set out to achieve these goals using diverse texts that showcased a wide range of the global human experience. She used
essential questions, discussions, and writing prompts as tools that invited students to make choices and engage with diverse human experiences presented through literature.

The sources of Dorothy’s approach as articulated in the interview were her own readings of philosophy and religion texts, personal experiences with literature, and teacher-selected readings on topics such as the distinction between spiritual and carnal reading. But the analysis of Dorothy’s interview also includes four counts that cite the curriculum as a source. The 11th grade Honors course curricular focus of Global Literature lends itself to an empathetic exploration of humanity across cultures in ways not available to Nancy who is tasked with guiding 9th grade students in a College Preparatory course in their transition to academic analytical writing at the secondary level.

**Repetitions and metaphors.** Dorothy’s most repeated phrases were “engagement” and “human experience” which attest to an orientation situated toward the “7” end of the AES. Dorothy repeatedly references the image of the human heart. Her approach to teaching English rests on the belief that students must ethically recognize their own humanity and the humanity of all people:

R: What is your main goal, what is it that you want your students to do or get?
D: I think it is clear that at the root of it, there is a heart to it, an actual beating heart here, we are human. We are not robots that should eat, sleep, repeat. So with the heart, we have to recognize that in order to engage that and to help people go out into the world and, like I said, to be empathetic is such an important, not a skill, it’s not actually a skill. It is not something we teach through a series of steps; we teach it through experiences. So I want to give students experiences.

Dorothy’s repeated references to the role of the heart casts the work students do in her class as largely an experiential recognition of the heart and soul within all humans. In the interview, the heart becomes a metaphor for Dorothy’s instructional approach; the heart is the process through which students recognize and experience their shared humanity.
The predominance of the heart metaphor does not preclude Dorothy from referencing more authorial-centered beliefs that contributes to her approach. The italicized portions of the excerpt indicate disconfirming evidence revealing facets of Dorothy's approach that incorporate the analysis of author's’ choices:

D: Within the actual individual experiences with the text, I do have the students looking at, you know, how does the author use imagery to convey pride in African culture or how does author’s use of flashbacks, that sort of thing that is embedded in there, in the work that they are doing. But, ultimately through this unit I was hoping to really kind of dive in deeper into a new culture and have them essentially looking at outside what they know. Let’s broaden that horizon a bit and to see what is a common thread through the human experience.

Despite her consistent articulation of an approach that focuses on student engagement with the heart and soul of the human experience, our exchange at the conclusion of the interview reveals Dorothy’s desire to clarify her approach in terms of what it is not:

R: Is there anything else you would like to share about your approach to teaching English or anything you didn’t get to share or articulate?
D: No, and I think, and I think that you understand this as well, it is very easy to, if I express all of this about culture and diversity and everything, someone could easily say, well do you light a campfire in the middle of your classroom and roast marshmallows, and sing Kumbaya sessions and obviously that is not the case at all...So I do think that, you know, the heart is very much a theme in all of this, but it is important to recognize that there is more to an English class than just talking about how I feel about this grandmother baking cookies.

It is clear that Dorothy wants her students to engage empathetically with literature in ways that would situate her teaching approach toward the “7” end of the AES.

The majority of Dorothy’s interview focused on what she calls the human experience and connections to literature in contrast to close reading and analysis of author’s choice, explicit instruction on the tenets of argument, or an unemotional utilitarian reading. In contrast to Dorothy’s primary goals, Nancy’s goals reveal a teacher whose approach is focused primarily on authors’ choices and textual analysis; this approach situates Nancy toward the “1” end of the
AES. Earlier, I explained how Nancy’s decidedly “1-ish” approach made the impact of authorial empathy on her teaching practice worth exploring. Dorothy’s “7-ness” on the AES prior to the intervention made her an equally compelling case to study particularly in light of research highlighting that new teachers despite their experience teaching are likely to be solidifying their goals as teachers (Agee, 2004; Grossman, 1990; Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003). In order to further corroborate each teacher’s placement on the AES, I drew on classroom observations of each teacher during the unit of instruction preceding the authorial empathy unit.

I situated Nancy’s pre-intervention teaching at a “2” on the AES because she does not focus on authors’ aesthetic choices to the absolute exclusion of empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative. I situated Dorothy’s pre-intervention teaching at a “6” on the AES because she does not guide her students in ethical engagement with literary characters completely independent of the analysis of authors’ aesthetic choices. Having a clear understanding of each teacher’s typical approach allows for a richer investigation of the potential impact of the authorial empathy unit on their approaches to teaching English. See Table 1.
### Table 1

*Distinct teaching approaches prior to the authorial empathy intervention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nancy</th>
<th>Dorothy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course</strong></td>
<td>9th grade College Preparatory</td>
<td>11th grade Honors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Typical AE Orientation</strong></td>
<td>2 – Primarily focused on analyzing authors’ aesthetic choices</td>
<td>6 – Primarily focused on empathetic engagement with characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pseudonym origin</strong></td>
<td>Eager to investigate and scrutinize the choices at work in the text in ways akin to the savvy sleuth Nancy Drew</td>
<td>Eager to immerse herself in the narrative world and engage with the characters along the journey like Dorothy from <em>The Wizard of Oz</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repetitions</strong></td>
<td>The text; analysis; author’s choice</td>
<td>Engagement; human experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Metaphors</strong></td>
<td>Easter eggs</td>
<td>The conversation; the human heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Goals</strong></td>
<td>Analyzing authors’ choices through textual analysis; teaching conventions of analytical argument</td>
<td>Empathetic experiences with literature; literature as medium to explore human condition and connect with other cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Tools</strong></td>
<td>Teacher-created bookmarks with questions to guide student reading; teacher-provided essay assignment with topic choices and rubric checklist; close reading to gather textual evidence to support analysis</td>
<td>Discussion; conversation; Socratic circles; essential questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Sources</strong></td>
<td>Curriculum; past practice/years of experience; colleague collaboration/compromise; teacher pleasure; real-world or college needs the skill</td>
<td>Teacher’s own philosophical readings on teachers as servant leaders, how reading makes people nicer, spiritual versus carnal reading, role of play; curriculum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Authorial Empathy Shapes Teacher Practice

Nancy’s Teaching

Two prominent ways by which we come to understand an English teacher’s approach to teaching literature are through their responses to student writing (Applebee & Purves, 1992; Zancanella, 1991) and through the ways they guide class discussion in response to literature (Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck, 1993; Nystrand, 2006). Conducting stimulated-recall interviews allowed me to study Nancy’s teaching by way of her responses to four quartile students’ written pieces across the three units of the study. Using the stimulated-recall interview as the unit of analysis, I situated each interview on the Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016) in terms of the extent to which the teacher attended to authors’ aesthetic choices, empathetic engagement, or a balance of both in her explanation of her evaluative moves on the student’s writing piece. Then, I used the teacher’s goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999) as an analytic to articulate how the interview was situated on the Authorial Empathy Scale. Through repeated analysis of the data it became clear that the teacher’s goal statements were the most salient code in typifying her practice. For this reason, tool or source code counts are only included in analysis when they illuminate an important finding not evident in the goal code counts.

As I explained in Chapter 3, the grades teachers give students’ essays are a part of their teaching practice. For this reason, I report the scores the teachers gave each student writing piece across the three units of the study. Essay grades are, of course, impacted by each teacher’s goals, tools, and sources, but they are the academic data point most likely to be invoked by teachers and students.
Transcribing and coding the culminating discussions curated by Nancy across the three units of the study provided me with a second data set for understanding Nancy’s teaching. I divided the culminating discussion from each unit into episodes and situated those episodes on the Authorial Empathy Scale. I then analyzed the moves the teacher made during the discussion in terms of goals, tools, sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). This analytical approach afforded me access to the teacher practice findings discussed in this section and the student response to texts findings outlined in a later section.

**In her response to student writing across three units.** Nancy’s Unit 1 writing piece invited students to select a question to answer about *Lord of the Flies* in order to craft an argument about a symbol or theme in the novel. See Appendix E for writing prompts across three units. In Unit 2, Nancy enacted the AE unit and invite students to use the AE approach to explain what they thought and felt in response to a short story by Ray Bradbury titled “Sun and Shadow.” The deliberate text selection, task creation, and tool enactment in Unit 2 was designed to provide the best opportunity for teachers and students to enact the AE approach. Unit 3 allowed each teacher to decide on her own texts, tasks, and tools with no explicit invitation to enact the AE approach. Nancy’s Unit 3 writing piece invited students to identify elements of Romanticism and Byronic heroes in an excerpt from Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.

In her evaluation of the Unit 1 writing pieces, Nancy relied primarily upon a Common Core-inspired rubric. Analysis of the observational field notes reveal that the state argument rubric is actually stapled to the front of all of the students’ Unit 1 essays indicating its dominance as an evaluative tool. The first finding that emerges from the data analysis is that as Nancy enacts the authorial empathy approach in Unit 2 she draws upon the tenets of the AE approach and AES to supplement her evaluation of the student writing pieces. This is noteworthy because
it suggests the utility of the AES as an evaluative tool that can work in congruence with previously existing teacher practices for evaluating student work. Further, Nancy employs AE as a source in different ways depending on the needs of the quartile student. For example, in her response to Q1 student Ayan, Nancy uses AE as a source to praise an empathetic engagement move Ayan made in her writing that led to more balance; but in her response to Q2 student Kevin, Nancy uses AE to provide supportive feedback on the way he notes author's craft as part of a balanced response. Nancy draws on the AE approach as a source in Unit 2 despite years of experience with a rubric driving the evaluation of students’ written responses to literature.

The second finding is about the ways the AE approach interacts with the extensive and often convention-centric feedback that typifies Nancy’s response to the Unit 1 essays. In Unit 1 Nancy’s comments are dominated by conventions of academic writing that focus on things such as misplaced apostrophes, misuse of italics, and run-on sentences. In Unit 2, AE mediates Nancy’s responses insofar as she narrows her attention and provides more manageable feedback that focuses on things like the strength of student comments, the ways in which students use textual support, or how students showcase style and voice. This is a decidedly more readerly stance that allows Nancy to engage with students’ thinking as opposed to an evaluator’s stance tasked with correcting every grammatical mistake. Particularly in her responses to higher quartile students who struggle less with the conventions of formal writing, Nancy is able to enact the AE approach and evaluate the student writing piece by using AE as a source. Despite the presence of AE as a source code in all of the Unit 2 interviews, it is never the dominant source code; that position is reserved for the rubric with its focus on conventions. As I will explore in Chapter 5, the data analysis reveals a potential tension between AE and the rubric as a source of evaluation in Nancy’s response to student writing.
The analysis of the Unit 3 stimulated-recall interviews reveals that for Nancy the AE approach is not capable of bucking the dominance of the rubric or the conventions for formal academic writing in the source codes motivating her evaluative decisions. However, AE can be enacted in to support of the rubric as it allows for a refined focus within that tool. Again, the analysis reveals that Nancy’s teaching in response to her students’ written responses to literature is more likely to shift toward AE balance the higher the quartile of the student.

In Unit 3 Nancy’s response to the writing of Q1 student Ayan scores a “3” on the AES and the response to the writing of Q2 student Kevin scores a “2” on the AES. However, the AES scores of Nancy’s response to the Unit 3 essays of the Q3 and Q4 student remain at an unbalanced “1” indicating that the more likely a student struggles with writing conventions and grammar then the less likely the AE approach will be made manifest as an evaluative source in Nancy’s response to student writing. Because the AE approach is most evident in Nancy’s response to the Q1 9th grade student it can be theorized that the AE approach may have a greater likelihood of being enacted by Nancy in response to students who are in a higher grade or course level. The findings derived from the data analysis of the 11th grade students will test this theory.

The third key finding shows that the AE approach is best enacted using certain types of texts and certain types of tasks. The analysis reveals the necessity of selecting literary texts that allow for both thoughtful attention to the impact of authors’ aesthetic choices as well as empathetic engagement with the characters in the narrative world. Nancy’s text selection in Unit 3, a linguistically complex excerpt from Dracula, did not invite meaningful engagement with characters. Further, the task of identifying the traits of a Byronic hero and elements of Romantic writing were taken up as a hunt-and-find by students resulting in responses situated toward the “1” end of the AES. The selection of text and task in Unit 3 shut down the potential for student
responses to be balanced. This finding is critical because it reveals the necessity of selecting texts and creating tasks that invite reading with authorial empathy; the AE approach cannot be sustained independent of text and task. Table 2 summarizes that data analysis of Nancy’s responses to the writing of 9th grade students across four quartiles.

Table 2

*Nancy’s stimulated-recall interviews on students’ written responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q1 Ayan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions; AE</td>
<td>Conventions; conventions; style/voice; AE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Source</td>
<td>Rubric; MLA</td>
<td>Rubric; AE</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q2 Kevin</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions; AE</td>
<td>Conventions; curricular goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Source</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q3 Eve</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Source</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q4 Jenny</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Source</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Quartile 1 student Ayan. In Unit 1, Nancy’s goal statements were primarily focused on the conventions of a formal literary analysis argument. Fifteen of her 25 goal statements in Unit 1 were focused on the conventions of argument. Of the 18 source codes, 10 were referencing the rubric and seven were referencing MLA conventions; these code counts reveal the extent to which conventions outlined by the rubric drive Nancy’s evaluation of the essay. She shares how the rubric came to be: “This one was put together with two other ninth grade teachers and myself and I think it was based on some of the standardized testing and writing that we have to do.”

The coding analytic led me to situate the Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview at a “1” on the AES. The Unit 2 stimulated-recall interview was a “3” on the AES indicating more AE balance, but still toward the typical pole of Nancy’s orientation. Of 11 coded goal statements, seven remain convention-centric, but three explicitly reference AE balance. This reveals that Nancy does not abandon her focus on inducting students into the conventions of formal academic writing, but there is an uptick in explicit invitations for them to respond with AE balance. Nancy even views Ayan’s writing in terms of the AES when she explains:

Towards the end of the paragraph I wrote down clarify, give a quote to support. So, she was closer to the “7” end than the “1,” which is fine there is nothing wrong with that, but I think just to strengthen her argument, she could have pulled something else from the lower end of the scale and I’d like to see, I kind of push her a little bit further because I think she is capable of it, so where I may have not made that comment for some other people, I wanted to make that comment for Ayan because I think she can use that to help better her writing.

Nancy’s response reveals how she uses the tenets of authorial empathy to suggest how Ayan could bolster her assertion. The initial request to clarify using a quotation for support is sanctioned by the tool of the rubric, but the reasoning for the request is sourced to the tool of the Authorial Empathy Scale which indicates how the approach is manifesting itself in Nancy’s teaching in her response to student writing.
That Nancy sees ways that AE can support the sources like the rubric already at work in her teaching highlight a significant strength of the tool. The approach can work in concert with other teacherly tools. It is also interesting to note that Nancy views the Q1 student as more likely to be able to draw on AE than lower quartile students which offers a useful feedback loop in terms of teachers’ perceptions of the tool’s utility for students at different performance levels.

Nancy’s Unit 3 interview scored a “3” on the AES so her shift away from the extreme pole of “1” was sustained although her tendency to enact an approach that leans toward analyzing authors’ aesthetic choices remained. Of the nine goal statements in the Unit 3 interview, three were focused on Ayan’s style and voice in the piece and the three corresponding sources for those goal statements were about what the teacher deemed to be authentic, engaging writing. What is of note is that Nancy seems to be responding in a more readerly way to Ayan’s writing with less attention given to grammatical or conventional concerns. This is not to say that conventional goals and sources disappeared, or that they should disappear. Rather, it is noteworthy that after the AE intervention Nancy seems to adopt a more readerly stance as opposed to a teacherly stance. And in terms of the student’s essay score, this comes without any cost to the student’s ability to enact conventional argument writing; this will be referred to as the Ayan Effect in Chapter 5. See Table 3 for the 9th grade essay scores across the three units of the study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unit 1 Essay Scores</th>
<th>Unit 2 Essay Scores</th>
<th>Unit 3 Essay Scores (in-class essay; ‘due not done’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Ayan</td>
<td>24/25; 96</td>
<td>24.5/25; 98</td>
<td>20/20; 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Kevin</td>
<td>21/25; 84</td>
<td>21/25; 84</td>
<td>18/20; 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 Eve</td>
<td>18/25; 72</td>
<td>20/25; 80</td>
<td>17/20; 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Jenny</td>
<td>21.5/25; 86</td>
<td>23/25; 92</td>
<td>15/20; 75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are two AE goals and corresponding sources in Unit 3 which is significant because there was no guarantee that Nancy would draw on AE as an evaluative tool in Unit 3. Nancy’s concluding thoughts in the Unit 3 stimulated-recall interview highlight her perceived utility of the Authorial Empathy Scale:

N: I definitely see a difference in her writing. In fact, I see a difference in all of their writings. I think that going through and talking about the scale definitely gave them an 'in' to the piece…Even if they weren't sure what to write, they could always say here's what it reminded me of, here's what I was thinking and I think that helped them a lot. R: Can you talk to me a little bit more about that? How the scale functions as an 'in'? N: It's rather than looking at the piece and going 'well I have no idea' and 'I don't know what to write' they should at least say 'well I have no idea, but I can say that this is what I'm confused about here' or 'here's something this reminded me of.’ It gives them a chance to feel like they have some control over it so they are not at the whim of the piece.

What is most striking about this excerpt is how Nancy asserts the value she sees in students personally connecting to the text; this is a move that would have been atypical within a strictly I on the AES approach. She also references the stating a confusion strategy from the AE intervention (Brett, 2016). Nancy’s concluding thoughts showcase the way she views the AE approach as potentially empowering for students. It is important to note that Nancy makes this assertion in response to the work of a student performing at the first quartile. The study was designed to allow for the analysis of how each teacher would respond to the writing of students at each performance quartile.
Quartile 2 student Kevin. In Unit 1, Nancy’s goal statements focus on the conventions of formal academic writing. Eighteen of her 20 goal statements are coded as conventions with six of those 18 focused on grammatical conventions. The source for all 18 of these evaluations is the rubric. The Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview is situated at a “1” on the AES as is typical of Nancy’s approach illuminated by the coding analytic.

In Unit 2, the stimulated-recall interview shifts to a “3” on the AES so it moves towards a more AE balanced position, but still leans toward a focus on authors’ aesthetic choices. This orientation is reflected in the coding of goal statements; for Unit 2 there were eight goal statements, five of which were driven by conventions of academic writing that prioritize the analysis of authorial choice. Yet a goal statement searching for authorial empathy and exploring the unit’s essential question also occurred in the interview indicating the presence of the AE concept and the essential question from the unit in which it was enacted. Five of the eight source codes referred to the rubric even though Nancy had not stapled the rubric to the student essays as in Unit 1. Nancy explains: “I am not checking off a rubric like I checked a rubric before, but the exact same things are in place and these are the types of writing we have been doing all year so.” In many ways, Nancy has internalized the rubric as a guide for the expectations of formal academic writing, so it is not surprising that she does not abandon it as a source in Unit 2. As in the case of Nancy’s evaluation of the Q1 student, there is a potential tension between the sources of the rubric and the AE approach in Unit 2, but many instances where the AE approach can work within the rubric’s framework.

The presence of the rubric, though powerful, does not prevent Nancy from stating AE as a goal and source in her evaluation of the Unit 2 writing piece. Nancy explains that she does not
need Kevin to explicitly state that he is using the AE approach, but she is looking for moves that indicate he knows how to use the scale:

I want to see him do the scale, and he is doing that, which is good...He made some good moves, I could tell he was using the scale, I could tell that was a thought process and that he very clearly had that mind during his writing, but I think maybe it would have been a lot stronger had he developed his ideas a little more. He put them down, but didn't give supports for them.

This request for more support meshes both with the typical expectations of formal literary argument writing called for by the rubric, but also with achieving balance on the AES by anchoring ideas about the characters in consideration of authors’ aesthetic choices. The point here is that using AE is not mutually exclusive from the other types of expectations at work in Nancy’s teaching approach.

In Unit 3, the stimulated-recall interview scored a “2” on the AES so while Nancy’s teaching remained firmly situated on the aesthetic side of the scale there is a net move of one place on the scale away from a full-blown “1” in Unit 1 which may suggest the potential for a future move toward balance. Of the nine goal statements in Nancy’s Unit 3 interview all but one of them focused on writing conventions or curricular goals. The final goal was for the student to “note author’s craft” which is a strategy from the AE unit designed to invite students who are at the more “7” end of the scale to work toward balance by taking note of author’s craft (Brett, 2016).

Nancy’s aesthetic orientation is not abandoned across the stimulated-recall interviews of Kevin’s writing pieces. And, indeed, her choice of an excerpt from Dracula paired with a task asking students to identify elements of Romanticism invited responses more toward the “1” end of the AES than toward balance. However, it is of note that in Unit 3 Nancy does praise Kevin’s use of an AE strategy when she explains: “I think he’s able to pull some of that author’s craft
stuff where he’s noticing what they’re doing within the time period and applying it directly to here which I thought was a nice move for him.” Even in Unit 3 which did not require Nancy to draw on the AE approach, she continues to use language and strategies from the AE intervention which suggests the potential for this approach to become part of her practice.

When examining the Q1 and Q2 interviews together it is worth noting that Nancy applauds the Q1 student for incorporating a “7-y” personal tidbit and praises the Q2 student for making the “1-ish” move of noting author’s craft, so we see Nancy making both types of moves that can assist students on their journey toward crafting more authorially empathetic responses depending on which end of the scale students currently occupy. Not surprisingly, Nancy maintains her aesthetic focus across the three units of study with the Q1 and Q2 students, but she does clearly enact AE in their Unit 2 essay evaluation and remnants of the approach remain in her Unit 3 responses. The ways in which Nancy’s choice of text and writing task in Unit 3 impacted students’ written responses will be discussed in Chapter 5.

**Quartile 3 student Eve.** The coding of the stimulated-recall interview of Nancy’s evaluation of Q3 student Eve’s Unit 1 essay reveals an unwavering focus on analysis and inducting the student into the conventions of academic writing. The 12 goal statements focus on conventions of writing and the accompanying 12 sources are found in the rubric. There are a substantial amount of corrections and markings on the student’s essay and the interview received an AES score of “1” for its sole focus on academic conventions of analytical writing.

I theorized that perhaps the AE focus of Unit 2 would allow Nancy to scale back from the amount of grammatical fixes that dominated the markings on the Q3 Unit 1 essay in order to engage with the extent to which Eve wrote with AE in her Unit 2 essay. However, the Unit 2 corrections remained focused on grammar and other conventional corrections. Nancy does take
note of one balanced response, but eight of the nine goal and source codes are centered on conventions and the rubric. Informed by these code counts, the Unit 2 interview also scored a “1” on the AES.

Nancy’s responses to Eve’s writing across all three units reveal how a focus on grammar and conventions can get in the way of accessing and assessing the student’s ideas and responses to literature. In her Unit 3 evaluation of Eve’s writing, Nancy continues to focus on grammatical edits and conventions of writing. The AE approach cannot free Nancy from having to correct Eve’s clarity-preventing writing mistakes. The AES score of “1” across all three units of Nancy’s stimulated-recall in response to 9th grade Q3 student Eve is noteworthy because it suggests that AE has the best chance of being taken up as a teacherly tool in evaluating student writing when the student is not evidencing a large amount of grammatical and conventional writing errors.

Despite this impediment, Nancy notes the ongoing impact of the scale on Eve’s writing:

I'm definitely seeing more of the framework idea trying to pull in. She seems like the scale has benefited her by giving her that foothold in, but she still needs to look over things one more time. And it could be because I told them that this was not something that they were going to take home and work on. It was work on in class, finish at home, bring it in the next day. It was due not done.

Even though Nancy values the impact of AE, she still emphasizes the importance of conventions of formal writing such as editing for mistakes. It is also notable that the Unit 3 essays in Nancy’s class allowed students less time for revision than those of the prior units. Nancy’s response to Eve’s writing piece further illuminates just how powerful the rubric is as an evaluative tool regardless of the specifics of the writing task or the time permitted for the task.

In Unit 2, it would have been noteworthy if Nancy responded to Eve’s writing in terms of the extent to which it enacts AE, but instead she continued to draw on the source of the rubric as
her dominant form of evaluation. This suggests the need for AE to be enacted with an accompanying rubric that supports the goals of the approach; this recommendation will be taken up more comprehensively in Chapter 5.

**Quartile 4 student Jenny.** Nancy’s stimulated-recall interview for Q4 student Jenny’s Unit 1 essay reveals a rubric-driven focus on the conventions of an analytical argument. Nancy wants more evidence to support assertions, she requires more depth of analysis, and she strives to induct students into the conventional expectations of academic argument writing. The entirety of the coded goal and source statements were goals anchored in the conventions of academic writing sourced to the rubric. Not surprisingly in light of the coding analytic, the Unit 1 stimulated-recall for the Q4 student Jenny scored at a “1” on the AES.

Even though the entirety of Nancy’s goal statements in the Unit 2 stimulated-recall are about the conventions of analytical writing sourced by the rubric and even though the interview scores at a “1” on the AES, Nancy notes Jenny’s improved score and the salience of the AE approach in the writing piece:

N: For the comments I wrote great points, I like your organization. Yeah, I marked off other things in the paper, but I wanted to focus on some positives here for her because I would like to see her push herself into an Honors class, not next year, but the following year. So I think she can do it, and I am just trying to set her up for that.
R: She scored more highly on this essay, so this is our Q4 student, and she scored more highly on this Unit 2 essay than she did on the Unit 1.
N: Yeah, she got a 46 out of 50 here.
R: Anything else you wanted to say about this paper?
N: I am really proud of what she did, I mean I can definitely tell she was very conscious of the scale while writing and tried to employ it subtly in here. So she made some more sophisticated moves than some of the others.

This excerpt suggests that Nancy sees the potential of the AES as a tool that can be enacted to challenge students to read in ways that will be expected of them in Honors level courses. The
authorial empathy implementation principles derived from the focal student data, including the potential Nancy sees for *Jenny’s Journey*, will be explored in Chapter 5.

By Unit 3, six of the seven coded goal statements focus on conventions with one referencing authorial empathy as a goal. The interview in response to Unit 3 remains at a score of “1” on the AES. The combined story of the Q3 and Q4 students in the 9th grade CP class taught by Nancy reveals that the lower the quartile placement of the student the more difficult it seems for the teacher to look for and foreground AE in her evaluation. However, as we will see later in the analysis of each quartile student’s stimulated-recall interview, the teacher’s experience of the AE approach at each quartile level may be entirely different than the student’s experience with AE.

Further, the analysis of Nancy’s responses to student writing before, during, and after the AE intervention suggest that a comparison to the 11th grade Honors students taught by Dorothy could reveal whether there are developmental or course-level factors at work in how AE is enacted by different grade and ability grouping levels. The findings from the analysis of Nancy’s stimulated-recall interviews also suggest that AE as a concept can be best taken up by those students for whom conventional academic writing requirements in terms of grammar, sentence structure, and essay organization are not impediments.

One recommendation derived from analysis of this data set suggests that for teachers to better understand the extent to which their students are writing in accordance with the AE approach they may have to step away from a typical focus on academic writing conventions prioritized in standardized rubrics and engage with students’ conceptual work by using the Authorial Empathy Scale as a dominant source of evaluation. A challenge to this recommendation is the difficulty some teachers experience in evaluating students’ conceptual
development when grammatical issues or ruptures in convention make it difficult to understand the students’ thinking. Consideration of how the AE approach could be supported by rubrics will be explored in Chapter 5.

The three key findings from Nancy’s responses to student writing confirm the particular utility of the AE approach and the AES in response to 9th grade students currently performing in the two upper quartiles, show the potential of the AE approach to work in tandem with other preexisting rubrics despite potential tensions, and emphasize the importance of selecting texts and designing tasks that invite students to respond with authorial empathy. Because ELA teachers consider students’ spoken responses in addition to their written responses, I studied Nancy’s teaching practice during the culminating discussions from each unit in the study.

In her discussions. To provide a picture of Nancy’s discussions, I audiorecorded and transcribed the culminating discussion from each unit. I divided the discussions into episodes, coded them in terms of the goals, tools, and sources evident in the episode, and situated each episode on the Authorial Empathy Scale. As they were in the stimulated-recall interview data analysis, the goal codes tended to be the most illuminating in terms of the discussion data analysis.

Episodes can be scaled toward the “1” or “7” end of the scale for varying reasons. For example, a discussion episode situated at a “1” could have as its sole focus the analysis of authors’ aesthetic choices, or a discussion of plot and character elements solely in terms of their symbolic function, or a total refusal to treat the characters in the narrative world as provisionally real. Episodes situated toward a “7” could be full-blown immersions in the narrative world to the total exclusion of awareness of authorial choice or they could be totally subjective responses completely untethered from the text being discussed.
The discussion Nancy invited me to observe for Unit 1 was a discussion of the final chapter of *Lord of the Flies* using the bookmark tool of teacher-created questions about the text to prepare students for a quiz. The Unit 2 culminating discussion was in response to Ray Bradbury’s “Sun and Shadow” with a task inviting students to draw on authorial empathy and the unit’s essential question in their talk. The Unit 3 discussion concluded a study of the elements of Romantic era literature through a discussion asking students to identify traits of a Byronic hero and elements of Romanticism in the narrative ballad poem “The Lady of Shalott” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. See Appendix E.

The first story that emerges from the data analysis of Nancy’s discussions across the three units of the study is the way in which the introduction of the AE unit coincides with a discussion with many more episodes than in the Unit 1 discussion. And these episodes are primarily balanced on the AES. Instead of helming one lengthy discussion march through the text as occurs in Unit 1, Nancy in Unit 2 curates a discussion with 12 distinct learning episodes wherein students generate questions and respond consecutively to each other. This is important in light of research that holds that those who are doing the talking in class are likely doing the learning (Cazden, 1988).

The analysis of Nancy in her discussions across the three units of the study reveals the ways in which the tool of IRE, so prevalent in classroom discourse (Cazden, 1988), became an impediment to sustaining the AE balanced discussion that occurred in Unit 2. The three-turn pattern of teacher-initiated question, student response, and teacher evaluation described as IRE is typical of classroom discourse wherein teachers are responsible for orchestrating the openings, closings, and topic shifts of a discussion largely through the use of literal, closed questions rather than more open, interpretive questions.
In their work on patterns of discourse in classroom discussions of literature, Marshall, Smagorinsky, and Smith (1995) offer a series of categories for understanding the nature of a teacher’s evaluative response within the IRE model. These categories include acknowledgment, restatement, positive or negative evaluation, request for explanation-elaboration-clarification, and lastly, elaboration wherein the teacher substantively alters the student speaker’s language oftentimes by offering an interpretation of what the speaker is saying. It is this type of elaborative response that is most evident in Nancy’s discussions.

In Nancy’s enactment of IRE her remarks do not tend to be evaluative as often as they are elaborative; she fleshes out what the student is saying and repeats it to the class. This is a type of discussion that is entirely different than one in which students generate their own questions and respond to each other. The tool of the AES in Unit 2 allows for a more student-generated, less teacher-centered discussion to occur. In fact, Nancy requests this when she asks students to not have her be the “central spoke of the wheel” in Unit 2. However, the IRE pattern so dominant in classroom discourse is in tension with the AE approach which thrives within discourse patterns that allow for consecutive turns of student talk mediated through the AES. By Unit 3 the dominance of IRE as a tool has returned. See Table 4 for a summary of the teacher and student discussion data.
Table 4

*Nancy and the 9th grade students’ discussions across three units*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of episodes</strong></td>
<td>1 lengthy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dominant AE score</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Six are a 5 on AES Four are a 4 on AES One is at a 3 on AES</td>
<td>Two 6s and two 2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salient teacher goals, tools, or sources</strong></td>
<td>Goal: march through plot Tool: IRE Source: curriculum; essay; quiz</td>
<td>Goal: AE Tool: IRE</td>
<td>Tool: IRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salient student goals, tools, or sources</strong></td>
<td>Goal: Participate for quiz grade Tool: Brief responses</td>
<td>Goal: Engage with story; generate questions Source: AE, EQ</td>
<td>Tool: Asking some 7-esque questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student talk data</strong></td>
<td>Only two instances when student asks question</td>
<td>Generating questions, lengthier responses, consecutive turns, disagreeing</td>
<td>Attempts to overcome IRE, but not successful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in terms of Nancy’s discussions generate certain implications for the ways in which the AE approach is best enacted. In short, the AE approach is more likely invited and sustained in class discussions that do not rely primarily on the IRE tool and rather use small-group discussion or approaches that place the onus of generating and sustaining discussions on the students through use of the AES. The ways in which certain classroom discussion protocols would need to be enacted to best support the AE approach will be more fully explored in Chapter 5. It is important to note that the dominance of IRE is not a failing on the part of the teacher; instead it is the dominant and institutionalized pattern of classroom in most classrooms (Cazden, 1988). It is very challenging to upend this dominant pattern, but tangible recommendations for doing so will be made in Chapter 5.
**Unit 1.** The Unit 1 discussion is one lengthy episode in which Nancy’s goal of preparing students to understand what’s happening in Chapter 12 of *Lord of the Flies* drives the entirety of the discussion. The source for this decision is the curriculum and past practice supported through her primary tool of IRE. For Nancy, IRE follows the pattern of initiate, collect a student response, and then elaborate on that response. Every student utterance is channeled back to the teacher and the students in this discussion do not ever respond directly to each other. Nancy uses the tool of the bookmark to help students understand the plot of the chapter. The typical questions for Chapter 12 were closed lower-order thinking questions which fit Nancy’s goal of making sure students understood the basics of plot before taking on any interpretive challenges. See Appendix E. The Unit 1 discussion is a “1” on the AES because it does not invite engagement with characters in the narrative world. Instead, the discussion is plot-centric and characters are viewed as symbols enlisted by the author in making his point.

In Unit 1 there are a multitude of moments that reveal the ways in which IRE reduces discussions to declarative knowledge of plot:

N: Absolutely, this is great, you know we are going to have fun on this island and fun means also to kill. Now, what does Ralph do to the pigs on the stick?
Jon: He makes a weapon out of it
N: Sort of, he punches it and then what happens to it?
Ann: It falls
N: It falls, it shatters, but what happens to the smile?
Jon: It gets bigger
N: Huge, why is it so much bigger now?
Lou: Because he’s a savage
N: He is hitting, he is using violence, write it down, that use of violence, some with rational thoughts here and taking a pig’s head off of it and you know using the spear he is smashing it, which is making the lord of the flies happy. So, what does he think about this discovery?
Jon: He’s scared.
N: Yeah, they decapitated a pig and put its head on a pipe. Yeah, super violent right? So we’ve gone beyond just killing pigs in order to eat the meat so, we are now killing pigs so they can be decapitated and leave offerings for this kind of a god. So where are we here?
Ann: Savagery
N: They are way over here, right, so it is not looking so good

In this excerpt every student utterance is channeled back to Nancy to elaborate upon or ask another question to elicit elaboration for the student. Her goal of ensuring that students understand the plot and the tool of IRE dominate the episode. These excerpts are also typical insofar as the majority of the discussion is sustained by Nancy and a few repeated students. Nancy is solely responsible for generating and sustaining the discussion:

N: They start burning the thicket, and they are going to make sure they get Ralph, what happens?
Amir: They burn everything
N: Yeah, they keep fanning the place with fire. Now if we talk about symbols here, what is the symbolic meaning of this fire?
Multiple: Death.
Multiple: Rescue.
N: Ultimately what happens, that is the initial intention of the fire, but in this case they lose control of it and burn the island, so what symbolically is happening here?
Ed: Chaos.
N: Why?
Ed: Fire.
N: Because why?
Jon: He lost control
Ann: Civilization is destroyed
Multiple: Savagery.
N: Yeah, so we have a couple things going on here, so there are a couple good points, let’s write them down. So, the fact at this point, the fire doesn’t represent rescue or civilization, the fire at this point represents their savagery and they are so out of control at this point, that the fire is now out of control, so everybody should be writing this down. So the fire at this point represents their savagery, their savagery is out of control, so the fire is out of control.

By reviewing the basic plot elements of Chapter 12, Nancy is able to move toward analyzing Golding’s aesthetic choices in the form of the pig head on a stick and the fire. This focus on making sure the students understand the plot and author's choices is derived from the source of the curriculum. Additionally, Nancy’s repeated request for students to “write this down” is derived from the source of the essay so students have evidence to support their assertions. The
analysis of the culminating discussion of the authorial empathy intervention sought to discover what impact, if any, the AE approach would have on Nancy’s practice during class discussions.

**Unit 2.** The most striking difference revealed by the analysis of the Unit 2 discussion is the increase in number and sort of episodes that occur. Whereas Unit 1 was one lengthy episode sustained by the teacher and situated at a “1” on the AES, the Unit 2 discussion has 11 episodes; six episodes scored at a “5,” four episodes at a “4,” and one episode at a “3.” The majority of the Unit 2 discussion episodes evidence a strong degree of balance on the AES. Nancy wants the students to initiate and sustain discussion and indeed these episodes are marked by discourse in which students generate questions and respond to each other in ways that did not occur in Unit 1.

However, the prevalence of IRE as a tool and the challenges it presents in supporting students in generating AE balanced response to literature is still evident as a major finding from the analysis. The tool of the bookmark quiz is entirely absent from Unit 2 and in these episodes Nancy forgoes her expert status to invite the students to talk about what happened in the Bradbury story. This is entirely different than if Nancy had made a bookmark to check that students got the points she found most salient from the story or that she knew they would be responsible for in terms of the curriculum. In this way, Nancy’s different approach to discussion in Unit 2 could be a symptom of the new text and task of the AE unit instruction. If given the chance to teach this story for years maybe Nancy would succumb to the pressure to guide students toward a pre-established reading of coherence rather than allow students to engage in readings of configuration (Rabinowitz, 1987).

Of note is Nancy’s explicit desire to not use IRE as a tool, but because the students lack a framework for engaging in discussion independent of the teacher Nancy defers to the popcorn reading tool which makes students responsible for calling on the next student to speak, but does
not necessarily result in more generative discussion. Nancy and the 9th grade students she teaches have the shared goal of enacting AE, but they do not have a discussion tool at their disposal that allows them to enact it in more fruitful ways. A consideration of this excerpt reveals the need for AE to be enacted with the explicit support of discussion tools that foreground student voices and invite them to draw on the AES as a talk-generating tool:

N: Okay do we have questions of the overall story itself at this point? I really like the comments I have heard so far. So, here is what I want to do. Remember, I said yesterday I didn't want to be the spoke of the wheel and you guys keep bouncing back with questions, well now that we are pretty good with the content with what happened, it is your turn to take over, so who would like to start? You can ask a question or make a statement. Adam, go for it.

Adam: I said I like how the author just kept making Ricardo go back into the photographer’s way to just to keep traveling.

N: Good, can anyone ask a question or add a comment to that, and I am going to try and step out now. So a question you might ask, AJ is what is he doing to make Ricardo so upset or what was Ricardo doing to make the photographer so upset.

Adam: So he dropped his pants to make it final, and he keeps saying oh yeah.

N: How about you popcorn someone else and see if they can help you and add to it.

With support from a tool other than IRE or popcorn reading, such as Socratic circles, perhaps the students could use the AES to explain their readings of the story and engage each other in discussion. For example, if the 9th grade students were fluent in generating and sustaining their own discussions Nancy would not have had to continue to prompt each student utterance. Eliciting this type of classroom culture change in a class of 9th grade students would seem to be particularly challenging. In Chapter 5 I will suggest the ways in which the teacher training module can showcase how the AES and small-group configurations can potentially work to create this change.

Despite the omnipresence of IRE, the Unit 2 episodes are noteworthy because they evidence students asking the questions instead of the teacher as well as a larger variety of student responses beyond monosyllabic one word answers or short staccato utterances in response to a
closed question. In the Unit 1 discussion the students’ passing questions were steamrolled by IRE, but in Unit 2 they are taken up and explored via high-level evaluation (Nystrand, 1997).

And the following excerpt shows how Nancy affirms that students are asking good questions, but she refrains from giving them an answer. Instead, she allows them to negotiate consensus and generate multiple interpretations of the text in a series of consecutive utterances that are markedly different from Unit 1:

Olivia: I was thinking about a question, I don’t know if you can answer, but I was wondering why it was called “Sun and Shadow?”
N: Why is it called “Sun and Shadow?” That is a great question. Why do you think it is called “Sun and Shadow?” Alright go ahead.
Steve: I think because it sums up his ending with the photographer and he is running the show, and the conflict, maybe.
N: Ooh I like that, why do you think that?
Steve: Just because that is what I was thinking of.
N: Just what you were thinking of, alright Steve, do you want to call on someone else?
Ayan: I could touch on that, light is trying to compare how the photographer is rich and has money and the poor are like the dark and the shadow, so it is kind of comparing them.
N: Good Ayan, why don’t you call on someone else?
Eve: I think it is called “Sun and Shadow” because all the dresses are in the shadowy places, like the cracks in the wall, make it stand out more.
N: Okay, good. So anything in the sun then?
Eve: I am saying the dresses are in the sun
N: Oh I am sorry, I thought you said the dresses were in the shadow.
Eve: No, I am saying the dresses are the sun in the shadow
N: Oh okay, the sun in the shadow, okay the dresses in the sun in the shadow, I like that, okay good.
Eve: I was going to say how maybe the sun and the shadow kind of play like a smoke and how they use lighting and all the darkness on concrete to make things look better.
Jon: We have like the poor people who will always be in the shadow of the richer people, they will always be behind them.
N: Is there any time a scenario rather than rich and poor, so sun and shadow, it would be reversed so you have Ricardo in the sun and the photographer in the shadow?
Amy: Well I was going to just add something else to that, it feels like the rich are more focused on, that people focus on, and nobody really focuses that much on the poor, that is how some people feel.

In this excerpt, although Nancy continues to serve as the conduit linking student responses, the students themselves are generating questions that initiate episodes, and the students are
elaborating on their responses, and Nancy is flexibly responding to where students lead the discussion in ways that are distinct from the fixed agenda in the Unit 1 discussion in which Nancy knows exactly what answer she is looking for to each bookmark quiz question.

The weight of sustaining discussion shifts from solely on the teacher in Unit 1 to more dependent on the students in Unit 2 who have generated questions and responses using the Authorial Empathy Scale. In Nancy’s reflection on the Unit 2 discussion, she shares:

I think they were able to come up with much better connections, I think not only within the text, but to the text and looking at author’s choices and all that. They were able to point to different things they would not have been able to have done a couple of weeks ago.

This excerpt indicates that Nancy is pleased with the ways in which students are making connections as well as attending to authors’ choices within texts.

In the design of this study, great care was taken to not dictate the approach to each teacher in their Unit 3 text selection and task creation. In this way I was able to study the extent to which the increased number of balanced episodes, the increased length of student utterances, and the attempts to mitigate IRE that appeared in the Unit 2 authorial empathy unit would manifest themselves in the Unit 3 discussion.
Unit 3. Unit 3 has more episodes than Unit 1 and a greater range of AES scores compared to Unit 1 which was one lengthy episode situated at “1” on the AES. However, the analysis reveals the necessity of selecting texts, tasks, and tools that can invite authorially empathetic responses. The text selection of the lengthy narrative poem “The Lady of Shalott” with its archaic language does not readily invite a balanced reading. Rather it invites a more “1-ish” appreciation of Tennyson’s stylistic choices in the formulation of the poem. The discussion task invited students to note the elements of the Romantic era at work in the poem which further invited a more symbolic reading of authors’ aesthetic choices. Chapter 5 will offer more comprehensive recommendations on the interplay of texts, tasks, and tools that teachers will need to consider in enacting authorial empathy.

Episode 6 of the Unit 3 discussion scored a “2” on the AES as Nancy directs students to focus on certain stanzas, does the bulk of the cognitive work of generating questions, and relies on IRE to guide students in responding to the text:

N: Yep. So take a look at stanza two, three and four, what descriptions do we get with Lancelot here? It is critically noticed turn the top, go. Look for adjectives. Alright what other descriptions did you get?
Frank: He has a helmet on.
N: Helmet, good, what else?
Cora: She says the weather is blue and not clouded.
N: Yes we have that sun shining down beautifully. What else do we have?
Beth: His saddle was jeweled
N: Good what else do we have?
Cora: His coal black curls
N: Good, so essentially he is being described with all this light imagery, because again shining armor, light imagery for what purpose?
Holly: To make him seem wonderful.
N: Yeah, write it down, it is making him seem really wonderful. Why does he have to seem really wonderful?
Ger: So the person in the castle would go down to see him.
N: So she will leave the castle and go see him. She has seen a lot of people pass by at this point, and now she is willing to leave. Take a look at the last stanza please on page three, what do you notice is a commonality the first word here?
Class response: She
N: She, so let’s look at that one. “She left the web, she left the loom...she looked down to Camelot.” Why use she repeatedly there? What is the effect?  
Tara: It is describing her leaving the house  
N: Absolutely, it is describing, it is really participating her leaving the house. Why else, what is the effect?  
Tara: Kind of saying, it was all her doing it, I don't know.  
N: That is part of it.  

Nancy’s desire for her students to take note of authors’ aesthetic choices and Tennyson’s use of imagery is clear. And there are times when teachers want to foreground this approach in keeping with curricular mandates. But certainly, a different text that invites both empathetic engagement and awareness of authors’ aesthetic choices could result in a more balanced discussion. Further, a task that does not explicitly foreground one end of the scale is also essential for inviting balanced responses. Lastly, a tool other than IRE, such as asking students to select a stanza and respond at a “4” on the AES and discuss their responses in small groups could potentially lead to more balance. The analysis of the Unit 3 discussion suggests that it is not enough to only change a teacher’s orientation; teachers must tactually use the tool of the Authorial Empathy Scale.

To review, in Unit 1 the tool of the bookmark dominates, in Unit 2 the tool of AE replaces the bookmark and disrupts IRE, and in Unit 3 IRE is the dominant cultural conceptual tool. Not having the authorial empathy tool expressly present in Unit 3 prevents the teacher from resisting the allure of IRE and, as will be presented in the student discussion findings, prevents students from having an entry point into generating questions or experiencing consecutive turns in discussion.

Again, it is so important to reiterate that Nancy’s reliance on IRE as the primary tool at work in her discussion is not unique; it is systemic and by no means a fault of the individual teacher. But identifying the role IRE plays in hindering certain types of discussion and response is essential in working to implement AE effectively. It is also important to note that the study’s
design did not invite teachers to enact their Unit 3 in response to Unit 2 or provide them any clue that their practice would be evaluated in terms of AE. I wanted to study the impact the isolated unit and AE approach would have on their teaching practice as an indication of their conceptual approach to teaching literature to illuminate areas of support that would need to be made explicit in future enactments of the AE approach.

**Dorothy’s Teaching**

The belief that it is not sufficient to view teacher cognition as equivalent to teaching as craft and skill (Grossman & McDonald, 2008) motivated the need to engage the teachers in stimulated-recall interviews about their instructional choices. Therefore, as I did with Nancy, I used stimulated-recall interviews to study Dorothy’s responses to student writing across the three units of the study analyzing them in accordance with the coding process presented in Chapter 3. Because research holds that ELA teachers’ approaches to teaching literature can be understood through their interaction with students in classroom learning activities such as discussion (Nystrand, 2006; Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck, 1993), I also observed, audiorecorded, and transcribed Dorothy’s culminating discussions across the three units of the study. The discussions were divided into episodes (Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995), situated on the Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016) and coded in terms of the goals, tools, and sources at work in each discussion (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999).

**In her response to student writing across three units.** In Unit 1 Dorothy called for 11th grade students in an Honors course to grapple with the essential question about culture and identity and explain which characters they sympathized with most across a series of stories. See Appendix E for writing prompts across three units. Having used the AE approach as a readerly tool during Unit 2, Dorothy decided to conceptualize it as a writerly tool for students writing
their college entrance essays in Unit 3. In their writing and discussion for Unit 3, 11th grade students in Honors ELA would consider themselves as the author of their college entrance essays and think deliberately about the aesthetic choices at work in their essays. And simultaneously they would recognize themselves as a character in their essay that they would want college readers to engage with empathetically.

Seeing the parallels between short literary fiction and narrative college essays that often feature the student as main character, Dorothy taught her students how to use the AE approach while writing their essays with the goal of eliciting a response at a “4” on the AES in their college admissions readers. To give students practice in evaluating college entrance essays using the AES tool, Dorothy had students sort a series of sample college essays in terms of the type of response they elicited on the AES. In addition to the final product of their college entrance essay, students submitted an accompanying reflective piece explicitly outlining how they used AE in crafting their college entrance essay.

The analysis of Dorothy’s stimulated-recall interviews in response to the written pieces of focal students at each quartile reveal three key findings. In Unit 3 what is most striking is how different Dorothy is as a teacher of reading as opposed to a teacher of writing. The AES offers Dorothy a way to mediate the two approaches and provide a shared language and approach; it can remedy the divide evident in the stimulated-recall between discussions that invite empathy, but essays that require conventional analysis of authorial choices. Dorothy evidenced a more AE balanced response to the focal students at each quartile in the Unit 2 and Unit 3 stimulated-recall interviews than in Unit 1. Specifically, the Unit 2 interviews for the Q1, Q3, and Q4 students scored a “4” on the AES and the Unit 3 stimulated-recall interviews for students at every quartile
scored a “3” on the AES. This is important because it shows that the AE approach impacted Dorothy’s teaching practice in the way she responded to student writing.

The second striking finding is the extent to which the source of the Common Core rubric with its focus on the conventions of literary analysis dominated Dorothy’s evaluations of the Unit 1 essays, despite her articulated orientation that focused much more on students’ empathetic engagement with characters in literature. In some instances, the AE approach was able to coexist with or mitigate the dominance of the Common Core rubric, but ultimately the rubric accounted for a prominent source code across the Unit 2 data analysis, particularly in Dorothy’s response to students currently performing in the lower two quartiles. This finding is noteworthy because it indicates the extent to which curricular sources like rubrics can dominate a teacher’s evaluation of student written responses to literature despite goals that prioritize approaches not reflected in the rubric.

The third finding that emerged from the analysis of Dorothy’s stimulated-recall interviews in response to students’ written responses is the impact that the genre of the writing task has on the way Dorothy evaluated the student responses. This finding parallels the finding in the analysis of Nancy’s text and task selection in her Unit 3 and will be more fully explored in Chapter 5. Despite creating a Unit 3 anchored in the AE approach, Dorothy’s primary source in evaluating the student written pieces is the genre of the college entrance essay. This highlights the need for the AE approach to be enacted with not only certain types of texts, but certain types of tasks that allow for and invite students to respond in authorially balanced ways. The inability of AE to contend with the power of genre in the teacher’s evaluative responses to students’ written responses will be taken up in Chapter 5, but now the particularities of the analysis of
Dorothy’s response to the writing of each quartile student will be reported. See Table 5 for a summary of the data analysis of Dorothy's stimulated-recall interviews.

Table 5

*Dorothy’s stimulated-recall interviews on students’ written responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Tim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Empathetic engagement; conventions of writing; textual evidence</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Understand college entrance essay genre; AE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Source</td>
<td>Common Core rubric</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>College entrance essay genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Kayla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Conventions of writing</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Understand college entrance essay genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Source</td>
<td>Common Core rubric</td>
<td>AE; Common Core rubric</td>
<td>College entrance essay genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 Margy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Conventions of writing</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>AE; conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Source</td>
<td>Common Core rubric, MLA</td>
<td>Common Core rubric</td>
<td>AE; college entrance essay genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Derek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions; AE</td>
<td>Conventions; AE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Source</td>
<td>Common Core rubric</td>
<td>AE; Common Core rubric</td>
<td>Conventions; college entrance essay genre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Quartile 1 student Tim.** The analysis of Dorothy’s Q1 Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview reveals Dorothy to not be as concerned with empathetic engagement as her preliminary interview would indicate; the analytic reveals her source for evaluation is primarily driven by the tool of the Common Core argument rubric. Six of the total 13 sources coded in her interview are directly invoking the Common Core rubric. Yet, six of her 11 goal statements call for students to demonstrate empathetic engagement with human universals in literature which is a goal that is not foregrounded in the dominant source of the rubric. The stimulated-recall interview was situated at a 2 on the AES because of its primary focus on presenting an argument and supporting it with analysis of textual evidence; these types of tasks are favored by the rubric.

In Unit 2, Dorothy’s primary source of evaluation is the AE approach which works in concert with her tool of the Authorial Empathy Scale and goal of a balanced reading of authorial empathy. As a result, the interview was situated at a “4” on the AES. In Unit 2, Dorothy made comments asking the student to make moves that evidence his understanding of authors’ aesthetic choices; this is a more AE-request than the request for textual evidence more broadly that occurs in Unit 1.

In Unit 3, Dorothy enacted the AE approach as a writerly tool for students to use when writing personal college essays. She challenged students to use the scale as a way of anticipating how readers of their college essays could be invited to note both their authorly aesthetic choices and engage with them as characters in their own essays. The interview was situated at a “3” on the AES because the genre of the college essay was a main source in Dorothy’s evaluation that had her attending more to authorial choices. However, AE is repeatedly referenced as a tool in her evaluation and the Unit 3 interview embodies a more AE balanced approach than the Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview.
The conventions of the college essay genre dominate Dorothy’s sources for making evaluations of the writing pieces in Unit 3. However, despite a focus on conventions, the AE approach is present as a goal, tool, and source in the Unit 3 interview analysis. In sum, in Dorothy’s work with the Q1 student Tim, the Unit 2 AE approach proved sufficiently powerful to resist the influence of the rubric which was dominant as a source in Unit 1, but not powerful enough to resist the impact of genre in the form of the conventions of a college essay in Unit 3. Dorothy’s decision to rework her Unit 3 in light of Unit 2 is an important indicator of the extent to which the approach impacted her pedagogical content knowledge. Also of note, Tim’s writing score improves across the three units. See Table 6.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Unit 1 Essay Scores</th>
<th>Unit 2 Essay Scores</th>
<th>Unit 3 Essay Scores (different scale)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Tim</td>
<td>22/25 -- 88%</td>
<td>23.5/25 = 94%</td>
<td>Advanced (20/20 = 100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Kayla</td>
<td>21/25 -- 84%</td>
<td>21/25 = 84%</td>
<td>Proficient (16/20 = 80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 Margy</td>
<td>16/25 -- 64%</td>
<td>17/25 = 68%</td>
<td>Below Basic (12/20 = 60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Derek</td>
<td>7/25 -- 28%</td>
<td>11/25 = 44%</td>
<td>Below Basic (12/20 = 60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dorothy’s focus on empathetic engagement with what she calls the universal human experience appears prominently in her Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview; it occupies six of the 11 coded goal statements. However, the increased presence of the rubric as an evaluative tool and source is seemingly at odds with her emphasis on empathetic engagement with the universal human experience. In short, her goal was at odds with a tool and source that focus on the conventions of analytical argument. Further, the repeated occurrence of the source of performance expectations for good students suggests that the teacher was also evaluating the extent to which students performed as curious students willing to draw on additional texts. Her
comments praised the moments when students were engaged with human universals, yet the rubric scoring focused on textual analysis and evidence.

The predominance of authorial empathy as a goal, tool, and source in the Unit 2 stimulated-recall interview is useful to note in terms of the fidelity of Dorothy’s instruction, but not particularly surprising as that was the focus of the unit. It does suggest that teachers who adopt the AE approach for a ten-day unit can maintain the approach in ways that are consistently represented in the goals, tools, and sources of their pedagogical content knowledge. Dorothy’s Unit 2 interview featured the repeated explicit goal of having the student analyze an author’s choice as a way of achieving balance on the AES so she very much applied the need for awareness of author’s aesthetic choices in crafting AE balanced responses. In the following excerpt, Dorothy explains her increasing awareness of how she is using AE as an evaluative tool in responding to essays:

D: But the only thing is that was the last sentence of the paragraph and I felt that there was something missing. So I wrote him a question, ‘I do have to wonder why did Bradbury choose this and what goal did he have in mind?’
R: Why do you think you decide to ask that question?
D: Number one, well the question is obviously like having authorial empathy in mind and it's something that at least for me is a more natural response now as a teacher so I'm just seeing my own evaluative moves are definitely more focused on those balanced responses and making sure that he's addressing that the author, that choice that he made, why, that sort of thing.

It is striking that a teacher with an orientation that is typically toward the “7” end of the AES is drawing on the “1” end of the scale to guide her student to a balanced authorially empathetic response. The consistency with which AE featured in Dorothy's Unit 2 stimulated-recall data analysis is promising, but another measure of the utility of the approach is its staying power as indicated by the Unit 3 interview.
The presence of AE as a coded goal in Unit 3 suggests the potential staying power of the approach in shaping teachers’ evolving pedagogical content knowledge. Dorothy’s decision to use the AE approach indicates the utility of the approach and the malleability of the tool, but in terms of evaluating the writing piece the AE approach was secondary to the conventions of the genre of a college entrance essay as a primary source of evaluation which accounted for eight of the 11 source codes. The powerful presence of conventional expectations of genre as a source in Unit 3 again reveals the need for the AE approach to be enacted with texts and tasks that support its balanced goals.

Quartile 2 student Kayla. The analysis of Dorothy’s Q2 Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview again reveals the dominance of the Common Core rubric as a source of evaluation. Although Dorothy also references the prompt and her desire for students to empathetically engage with what she calls human universals, the vast majority of her comments focus on the conventions of academic writing required by the Common Core rubric. Indeed, the source of the rubric and the conventions of analytical writing account for 13 of the 16 source codes. The interview was situated at a “2” on the AES because of its primary focus on correcting grammatical errors and recommending adherence to the conventions of formal academic writing.

In Unit 2, Dorothy still uses the Unit 1 rubric, but now five of seven coded goal statements articulate the goal of balanced authorially empathetic responses. Although AE occupies five of nine source codes in Unit 2, Dorothy’s evaluation of the writing piece is still filtered through the Common Core emphasis on the grammar and conventions of formal academic writing. In Unit 2, Dorothy made comments about the extent to which the student’s thesis evidences an AE balance; she hybridized the Focus strand of the rubric to explore the extent to which the thesis embodies AE. Though the interview was situated at a 3 on the AES, it
does not achieve a “4” because the majority of the responses still focus more on the conventions of formal academic writing than on crafting authorially empathetic responses.

In Unit 3, Dorothy uses the AE approach as a writerly tool for students to use when writing college entrance essays. She challenged students to use the scale as a way of anticipating how readers of their college essays could be invited both to note their authorly aesthetic choices and to engage with them as characters in their own essays. The conventions of the college entrance essay genre dominate Dorothy’s sources for making evaluations of the writing pieces in Unit 3. Seven of the 10 source codes are traced to the genre of a college entrance essay.

Despite a focus on genre conventions during the essay evaluation, Dorothy repeatedly references the follow-up conference she will be having with Kayla and how she will ask her to use the AES as tool to reflect on her writing piece and work to make it engage the reader at a “4.” This is suggested by the remaining three of 10 sources coded as authorial empathy approach. The interview was situated at a “3” on the AES because the genre of the college essay was a main source in Dorothy’s evaluation that had her attending more to conventions and authorial choices. However, authorial empathy is repeatedly referenced as a tool in her evaluation and the Unit 3 interview embodies a more AE balanced approach than the Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview.

In sum, in Dorothy’s work with the Q2 student, the Unit 2 AE approach was able to decrease, although not eliminate, the influence of the Common Core rubric that was dominant as a source in Unit 1. But just as was the case with the Q1 student, the AE approach was not powerful enough to resist the impact of genre in the form of the conventions of a college entrance essay in Unit 3. In her responses to semi-structured interviews Dorothy repeatedly shares her decision to host additional AE writing conferences with students during Unit 3 in light
of Unit 2. This is an important indicator of the extent to which the approach impacted her pedagogical content knowledge.

To an even greater extent than evidenced in her Q1 interview, Dorothy’s goal of empathetic engagement with what she calls human universals in the Q2 student’s writing was overshadowed by the expectations of formal college-level writing and the strands of the rubric. However, it is of note how Dorothy uses the language of authorial empathy within the rubric’s requirement of Focus. The rubric drives the evaluation of the writer’s Focus, but Dorothy hybridizes it by defining Focus as the extent to which the student enacts the AE approach in her writing. The following excerpt illuminates the ways in which Dorothy uses AE as a way of evaluating Kayla’s Unit 2 essay:

R: You do write several times about understanding the concept of authorial empathy. Was there an example that you remember in here that sort of struck you as evidentiary of her understanding of that from somewhere in the essay?
D: In the first part, the first body paragraph, Kayla says ‘Bradbury chooses to go into detail about the characters to make the readers empathize with them. After the character is introduced he tells the backstory of Mr. Ramirez...By learning more about Mr. Ramirez the reader can further relate and insert themselves into the text.’ So that’s balanced. She’s recognizing that Bradbury made a choice and it was helpful that he added about how he [Ramirez] moved to the United States and how long ago and that sort of thing and then how the reader can eventually make inferences about Mrs. O’Brien based on Bradbury’s choice to go into detail about her background as well.

Though the tension between goals and evaluative tools remains, there is evidence to suggest that the two can be reconciled because Dorothy continues to use AE as an evaluative tool alongside the tool of the rubric.

In her responses to student written pieces in Unit 2, Dorothy, like Nancy, is less AE-focused and more dependent on the rubric with the Q2 student than the Q1 student. The analysis of Dorothy’s stimulated-recall interviews of students performing in lower quartiles allows for an
exploration of the extent to which the performance quartile of the student impacts the teacher’s likelihood of using the AE approach as a primary source.

**Quartile 3 student Margy.** The analysis of Dorothy’s Q3 Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview further reveals the tension between her goal for students to empathetically engage with universal human experiences across cultures in their writing piece and her evaluative tool of the Common Core rubric driven by a focus on the conventions of formal academic argument writing. Indeed, the conventions espoused by the rubric accounted for 14 of the 15 source codes in Dorothy’s Unit 1 interview. Because of the perceived needs of the Q3 student Dorothy uses the source of the rubric to induct Margy into the conventions of arranging a formal piece of writing. So although the occasion for the writing piece is an empathetic consideration of human universals, the evaluation attempts to guide Margy through the multitude of expectations of a formal analytical essay from formatting policies and citation procedures, to thesis crafting and essay organization, through the revision process as a whole. The Unit 1 interview is a 2 on the AES with so much focus on conventional moves, but there is the invitation to consider what Dorothy calls human universals.

In Unit 2, the rubric is present as an evaluative tool, but Dorothy’s primary goal is encouraging Margy to use the AES to craft responses that are more balanced through the inclusion of analysis of authors’ aesthetic choices. Though conventional expectations of formal essay writing as outlined by the rubric appear as tools and sources in the evaluation, Unit 2 is most notable for the explicitness with which Dorothy articulates a goal of achieving balance through the use of the AES. Indeed, the goal of enacting authorial empathy accounts for eight of the 13 goal statements, but the source codes are still primarily convention-focused via the rubric. Despite the presence of the rubric as a source, the Unit 2 interview is a “4” on the AES due the
prominence of AE as an articulated goal and the explicitness with which Dorothy references and advocates for Margy to use the AES to achieve balance. The same trend that appeared in Nancy’s evaluation of the written responses of 9th grade CP students occurs in Dorothy’s responses to the writing of the 11th grade Honors students whereby the lower the quartile of the student in Unit 2 the less likely the teacher will be to invoke AE as a source because the teacher is drawing on the conventions of writing as a primary source.

The Unit 3 analysis is surprising because the AES as a tool and the AE approach as a source for evaluative moves manage to trump the expectations of genre. The formal expectations of the genre of a college essay are present as sources in her evaluation, but Dorothy repeatedly draws on the AES to make explicit recommendations to Margy about how to make authorial decisions in her own essay via the “1” end of the scale in order to garner engagement toward the “7” end of the scale as a way of achieving balance. Dorothy becomes more prescriptive with the Q3 student in focusing on how to use the AES to fulfill the expectations of essay writing, specifically the genre of the college entrance essay. Eight of the 16 goal statements are authorial empathy goals, but the other half are conventions and grammatical concerns. The Unit 3 interview is a “3” on the AES insofar as it focuses on authorial moves, but also evidences a desire for balance.

The disconnect between Dorothy’s goals of empathetic immersion with human universals and her primary sources of evaluation in the form of the Common Core rubric and conventions for formal argument writing so evident in the Q1 and Q2 interview grows even more pronounced in the Q3 stimulated-recall interview.

The AES appears as a prominent tool in the Q3 stimulated-recall interview. Dorothy consistently references the AES as a way for Margy to shift her responses toward more balance.
The following excerpt from Dorothy’s stimulated-recall interview for her Q3 student Margy’s Unit 2 essay typifies the ways in which Dorothy uses the AES as a way of inviting Margy to craft a more authorially empathetic argument within the conventional framework of a formal essay:

R: As we move down to I guess the fourth paragraph, at the start of it can you tell me what you were trying to do with this evaluative move?
D: Sure, so I underlined ‘Throughout the story, the author Ray Bradbury uses descriptive language and words to help the reader...’ so basically she’s echoing what she wrote in her first paragraph which was fabulous, but I have two questions that I posed to her. I said, can you think of any other examples where Bradbury uses descriptive language? Or do you think you could elaborate in each body paragraph about the author’s choices? So really the part that was most problematic was that Margy sets forth this notion that the author makes aesthetic choices to help the reader visualize, but she never actually talks about the reader visualizing and doesn’t really discuss the moves that the author made. It’s just sort of one quote for each body paragraph, but then just shifted to a “7” and talked about ‘I really believe.’

Operating within the conventional expectations of a formal analytical essay, Dorothy foregrounds the ways Margy can and should use the AES as a tool for not only crafting more balanced responses, but for maintaining coherence and focus by delivering on pledges she made in earlier paragraphs. The excerpt shows how Dorothy wants Margy to use the tool to generate balanced “4” responses rather than a volley between “1” and “7” responses. The AES as a tool works in support of the teacher’s goal of inducting the student into formal academic writing with its expectations of coherence and evidence outlined by the Common Core rubric source.

Another excerpt occupying a place of prominence in Dorothy’s response to Margy’s essay exemplifies the way the AE approach drives her recommendations in Unit 2:

D: I said, ‘In your thesis you mentioned Bradbury's aesthetic choices. However, this concept needed a bit more real estate on this document to show me that you have achieved the balance of reading with authorial empathy.’
R: What made you decide to do that?
D: I think that if I refer back to balance with the idea of reading with authorial empathy, I think hopefully she should visualize the scale and say like, that’s right I didn't really work
Dorothy explicitly draws on the authorial empathy approach and AES to make recommendations to the student; this suggests the teacher is weaving the AE concept into her pedagogical content knowledge.

Again, the analysis of the stimulated-recall interview reveals expectations of performing as a student with a mastery of conventions; the less the student adheres to expectations, the more markings occur focusing on grammar and conventions. Yet despite this continued attention to conventions, Dorothy repeatedly invokes authorial empathy as a goal in the Unit 3 interview. As noted earlier, half of the sixteen goal statements in Unit 3 pertain to AE. Dorothy draws upon the approach in her evaluation of the essay, but the evaluation is filtered through the tool of the rubric and the source of the genre of the college entrance essay. At times, Dorothy draws on the language of the AE approach to make recommendations to Margy about a rubric-required attentiveness to audience. In this way, the AE approach operates within the framework of the rubric and the expectations of the college essay genre. Dorothy explains: “Considering your audience as well as this authorially empathetic part of her essay she definitely, she goes on and definitely has an empathetic story, but making sure she's making choices that would match that I think is important.” The rubric emphasizes the conventions of academic writing that highlight the importance of audience. Within that source, Dorothy nests the AE approach recommendations of balancing writerly choices to invite empathetic engagement from the readerly audience.

The analysis of Dorothy’s response to Margy’s writing when paired with Margy’s response to the same piece reveals the potential of the AE approach for teachers and students to
develop a shared language around their responses to texts. For example, Dorothy recognizes that Margy reads and writes toward the "7" end of the scale when she says:

Margy said, ‘I was hoping that the people who read my essay connect and feel as strongly as I do’ so she understands there’s a reader and she wants the reader to feel for her and with her. So that's great that that concept of compassion and empathy, she’s got that.

The analysis of the student stimulated recall interviews reveals Margy’s own recognition of the way she tends to read at the “7” end of the scale. The shared language that the AE approach facilitates between teachers and students will be presented via Margy’s Message in Chapter 5.

**Quartile 4 student Derek.** In the Unit 1 stimulated recall interview for Q4 student Derek, Dorothy’s primary source is the rubric. Dorothy does not have the opportunity to engage with a formal thesis or organized essay because Derek’s writing does not evidence those conventions. As such, Derek breaks the contract of studentness that Dorothy expects to the point where Dorothy foregoes numerous comments and defers to the rubric to deliver the score. All 11 of the coded goal statements pertain to the conventions of formal writing and are sourced to the rubric. Again, this is surprising in light of Dorothy's AE orientation and articulated goals in the teacher interview, but not surprising in the trend of conventions dominating the goal statements of both Dorothy and Nancy as they respond to the writing of students in lower quartiles. Derek scores 28% on his Unit 1 essay.

In Unit 2, Dorothy makes an equal amount of goal statements: seven that invoke the AE approach and seven that invoke the conventions sanctioned by the Common Core rubric. Derek’s score improves to a 44%. Derek’s Unit 3 writing piece receives a score of 60% and Dorothy sees evidence of authorial empathy conceptual development even while conventional issues remain. Five of the 13 goal statements are coded AE, but conventions retain the primary code count with the remaining eight goal code counts.
The Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview for the Q4 student scores fully at a “1” on the AES. The writing piece that the Q4 student submits results in the teacher having to focus almost entirely on conventions. Despite the Unit 2 writing piece also earning a failing score, the stimulated-recall interview for Unit 2 is a “4” on the AES. The increased presence of AE goal codes reveals how Dorothy can begin to engage in discussion because Derek is actually trying to make those AE moves. Derek is hindered by his lack of mastery of conventions, but he is attempting to enact his emerging understanding of authorial empathy. The language of AE gives the Q4 student and his teacher a shared language for discussing his thinking and writing. The Q4 stimulated-recall interview for Unit 3 is a “3” on the AES as it has many grammatical and conventional markings, but the focus of the teacher was on how Derek could use the AES in his essay writing.

There are several themes in the analysis of Dorothy’s Q4 stimulated-recall interviews. Most salient is the extent to which the teacher directly links her evaluation in Unit 2 to authorial empathy. The goal statements are evenly matched between AE and conventions which is worth noting considering the extent of Derek’s challenges in adhering to writing conventions. This is evident in the way Dorothy leads with an AE evaluation in her final comment and then includes the rubric:

D: I said, ‘you mention the author's choice in the first sentence of the first paragraph which is fabulous and balanced, but never mention any examples again. Let’s chat.’ ...So in the end because of some of the things that we discussed his grade was lower than a 50% and that’s because balanced responses: he was only at one side of the scale. His Focus was lacking because he never followed through with what he promised. Content as well, there were no real examples from the text or analysis. Organization was a little fuzzy at times just because the second body paragraph I wasn’t really sure what the point was. Style and Conventions also two out of five for both of those just because he was not understanding the conventions of writing, stylistically he can’t really make moves stylistically if we’re not even writing complete sentences so. That’s where we end up here with Derek.
Ultimately, Dorothy fills out the rubric, but the equally prominent presence of the AE approach as a goal code suggests its utility in her evaluation in ways similarly evidenced in the Unit 2 interviews for the students performing in the first three quartiles.

In Dorothy’s evaluation of the Q4 student Derek’s Unit 2 writing piece, she expresses her excitement at seeing him enact the language of the AE approach, but her disappointment that he fails to convey a deeper understanding of authorial empathy throughout his essay. It is like he is using the correct language of the approach, but not enacting the concept in ways that demonstrate full understanding:

D: And so earlier in the first paragraph he writes ‘the author’s aesthetic choices.’ I mean he uses the terms. In the first sentence he says, ‘When thinking about the author's purpose along with empathetic engagement with the story and the author's aesthetic choices throughout the passage ‘I See You Never’ many will begin to notice that the author chose to talk mostly about how Mr. Ramirez has been staying too long and the author decides to appeal to the emotion of the readers by exposing a man named Mr. Ramirez...’ and then it goes on. So that first, I mean, he’s using the terms, he talks about the author choosing and empathetic engagement so right from the start I’m thinking, ‘Ok, ok we’re on to something’ and then it just kind of fizzles out.

Of note is Dorothy’s goal of having the student write with authorial empathy; it is becoming part of her pedagogical content knowledge as she evaluates his writing.

In Unit 3, Dorothy continues to use the AE approach as a source of her evaluation, but she finds the writing unscaleable because Derek does not make authorial moves or invite empathetic engagement from the reader of his college essay. It is noteworthy that even with a piece of ineffective Unit 3 writing, Dorothy draws on the language of AE as an evaluative tool that can perhaps guide Derek in his revisions. The concept seems to be taking hold to a degree where she views pieces of writing in terms of their placement on the Authorial Empathy Scale:

D: I want him to consider his audience.
R: Ok. In terms of the assignment why was it important that he was thinking about that?
D: Sure, so obviously the discussion here is you are now the author, you now have a reader or multiple readers. You know so the concept of reader has to come into play here
so for someone like Derek he needs to think about what do I want to show about myself, how am I going to do that, you know that's why the discussion of the [AE] scale came up so what do you want this person to know about you and how are you going to do it? I don’t know if he really considered the person actually emotionally connecting to him that's my concern there.

R: So that’s the “7” end, the notion that the reader would emotionally connect with him as the character?

D: Right and also the concern too is his aesthetic choices are really not at this level where someone would say like, ‘Wow great move!’ or ‘Love this!’ or ‘Love this sentence structure!’ or his play on words here, I don't even think he has.

R: No.

D: So what we can see is this essay isn’t even scaleable.

Dorothy concludes by noting the emerging authorial empathy conceptual development in Derek:

D: I know that Unit 2 had had an influence on him - he understands the concept.[reading portion of his reflection] ‘I wanted the reader to be able to feel in a way that they don't feel bad for me, but understand that I overcame a lot of struggles throughout my high school experience. To do this, I focused on word choice.’ So he, he’s using the language [of authorial empathy] and I think for someone like him, I wasn’t sure in the middle of the unit, there were times when students were asked to craft “4” responses and he wasn’t really at a balance yet, but this is a really balanced statement here. [imitating the student’s voice here] ‘I want the reader to feel this, therefore I used certain word choice.’ That’s that’s really exciting to see that he did that! I know that his end result isn’t all that excellent, but the fact that he’s reflecting in this way is great and we can build on that. So that’s exciting at least.

So *Derek’s Dilemma*, further outlined in Chapter 5, reveals the potential disconnect that occurs when a teacher knows that a conceptual approach like AE is developing in a student, yet the writing piece contains so many errors in convention that it receives a low score. The initiative Dorothy took in designing a Unit 3 anchored in authorial empathy is indicative of the potential of the concept to take hold in teacher instructional practices, but it would seem the approach would need to be enacted with the support of a rubric that evaluates the extent to which students are writing with authorial empathy.

**In her discussions.** In Unit 2 Dorothy draws on the AE approach to curate 15 discussion episodes, nine of which evidence balance. This is a striking shift from her Unit 1 discussion containing eight episodes that were primarily scored at a “7” on the AES. Despite
inviting students to initiate discussion in Unit 1, Dorothy asked the opening question; this is different from Unit 2 and Unit 3 in which students were more likely to make the opening moves that began many of the episodes. During the authorial empathy unit, the initiating moves shift from teacher to student. Further, in Unit 2 Dorothy’s corrective interjection moves were informed by AE because she interjects when students veer into solely “7” territory on the AES in an effort to guide them toward balance. In Unit 3, the AES gives Dorothy an entirely new way of teaching students to evaluate and craft college entrance essays by using the AES as a writerly tool for meta-understanding. See Table 7 for Dorothy’s discussion findings.

Table 7

*Dorothy and the 11*th* grade students’ discussions across three units*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of episodes</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dominant AE score</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salient teacher goals, tools, or sources</strong></td>
<td>Tool: teacher initiates episodes Source: rubric, curriculum</td>
<td>Goal: AE, EQ Tool: teacher interjects only when discussion is unbalanced (7)</td>
<td>AE, college essay genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salient student goals, tools, or sources</strong></td>
<td>Goal: express sympathy; participate Tool: I-feel statements Source: prompt</td>
<td>Goal: AE, EQ Tool: students initiate episodes and respond to each other</td>
<td>Goal: AE Tool: AE as meta-tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student talk data</strong></td>
<td>I-feel statements; parallel monologues; lengthy utterances; focus on the self</td>
<td>Consecutive turns; opportunity to continue developing the thought; responsive contributions; focus on the class</td>
<td>Direct invocations of the AES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 1. Across the eight episodes of the Unit 1 discussion, the most frequently occurring AES placement is a “7.” The 11th grade students in Dorothy’s Honors class are used to sustaining discussion for a class period and so their teacher’s uttered interjections are few. However, the utterances she does offer indicate Dorothy’s orientation to literature and the types of tasks she invites students to engage in via discussion. Dorothy’s opening utterance of Unit 1 reveals a decidedly “7ish” approach to literature:

D: Alright so, let’s start with, out of this unit, which character is worthy of the most sympathy from our class and why? Which character is worthy of the most sympathy from our class and why?
Nia: I think the character that deserves more than, what was the question again?
D: Deserves the most sympathy.
Nia: Yeah, the character that deserves the most sympathy was from the last story, “The Guest.” His whole life he is basically has lived in isolation, like away from everyone but you know he has the chance to kind of break the rules when he was asking to get the prisoner from one place to another, but he decided to do something good and try to give him his freedom back but in the end the prisoner still went with to jail so, after like he was isolated and tried to do good in the end, and still something bad ends up happening to him because the rungs at the end.

Of note is how Dorothy is the one to initiate the episode with a question inviting students to engage with characters and the first to clarify the question when a student needs clarification. This is markedly different than a student-initiated and sustained dialogue with a series of consecutive and collaborative turns. The AE intervention resulted in striking shifts in the ways students contributed in discussion that will be presented in the student data analysis section. But it is important to note that Dorothy curates a greater number of balanced discussion episodes in Unit 2 in which she has fewer interjections.

Unit 2. There are five student-led discussion episodes in a row without teacher interjection in Unit 2. And when Dorothy does interject she does so very deliberately to invite more balance when conversation is becoming more “7-y.” This finding suggests the AE concept is informing Dorothy’s teaching:
Tim: I think it is interesting because it is saying he is like that by nature and barely changes
Hannah: I’m off topic, but I am going to bring up *Zootopia* now because that makes me wonder, thinking about the story why is a fox always portrayed as so sneaky?
D: Other responses to the story or important passage or quote that you responded to? Maybe you could dive into how the author helps us to understand the characters or setting, anything about those decisions that were made and what you were able to glean from any of the examples.

In response to students becoming too “7-y” in their responses Dorothy emphasizes the more aesthetic end of the scale indicating that perhaps the AE approach has given her a tool for noting these moments and helping students realign in balanced ways.

**Unit 3.** In Unit 3 Dorothy employs the AES as a meta-tool for guiding students to evaluate college entrance essays and establish goals in crafting their own college entrance essays. Even with texts and tasks that are different from those stipulated by the authorial empathy approach, Dorothy’s Unit 3 discussion has more balanced episodes than Unit 1. Dorothy’s informal interview after the lesson reveals her pleasure with what the AE approach has afforded her in terms of her teaching practice in Unit 3:

D: I was just really pleased with the conversation especially how the students were referencing the scale, I never said to them reference the scale when you are having this discussion, but obviously authorial empathy was a part of the prompt so it was the same style as last conversation where I said off you go you have the prompt in front of you so just get started where ever you would like to start, so they did and they were able to spend basically the entire period speaking which is great. I really liked certain moves that were made especially talking about what was the author trying to convey about themselves in this situation or maybe they could have added this as an example instead. So I really liked that that was the mindset and that was really from the scale and their experience with authorial empathy, and even a student a mention like yeah that was actually really helpful for understanding these essays and how we are supposed to go about writing them. So that was such a clear contrast from in past years where students are given examples but there was no framework with which to work and I thought that was just edifying to hear that.

Though Dorothy’s shift in teaching practice across the three units of the study reveals the potential of the AE approach, equally important findings emerged through the data analysis of
the student discussants which will be presented in the final portion of the student data analysis section.

**How Authorial Empathy Shapes Students’ Responses to Texts**

The second research question guiding this study explores if and how the authorial empathy intervention impacts student responses to texts. Because written responses and class discussions are two prominent ways teachers attend to how their students respond to literature (Applebee & Purves, 1992; Nystrand, 2006; Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck, 1993; Zancanella, 1991), I decided to engage students in stimulated-recall interviews of their essays from each unit in the study and to observe, audiorecord, and transcribe the culminating class discussions for each unit in the study. In this way, I was able to analyze writing and talk data to answer the student portion of the research question: In what ways, if any, does the authorial empathy intervention shape secondary English students’ responses to texts?

Students at each quartile engaged in a stimulated-recall interview in response to their writing pieces from each unit. As I outline in Chapter 3, the question protocol for the stimulated-recall interviews invited students to articulate their decisions by responding to each of the following questions for every paragraph in the essays written across the three units of the study:

- **Question 1**: Can you tell me what you were doing in this paragraph?
- **Question 2**: What made you decide to do that?
- **Question 3**: Did you think about doing anything else here?

After transcribing the interviews which varied in lengths from 15 minutes to 45 minutes depending on each student, I coded student responses to the protocol in terms of goals, tool, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). Having completed that coding, I discovered that the way students took up instruction was made most visible through goal
Therefore, in the analysis, I draw primarily on goal statements, referencing tools and sources only when they illuminate something pertinent. The greatest number of goals and the variety of goals in each stimulated-recall interview illuminate the intentions of the students in their essay writing across the three units of the study.

In Chapter 3, I explain why stimulated-recall interviews allowed me more access into students’ thinking than the essays themselves. For example, analysis of the stimulated-recall interviews of the 11th grade student Derek who was performing in the fourth quartile illustrates the ways in which students’ thinking may be more accessible in their interviews in response to the writing than in the writing itself. Further, the disconnect between what the students reveal to be thinking via their stimulated-recall interviews and what the teachers sometimes think about the writing pieces of students as evidenced by the teacher-stimulated-recall interviews and essay scores further reveals why student stimulated-recall interviews have such value in this study.

In his Unit 2 stimulated-recall interview which is situated at a “4” on the AES, Derek reveals a deep understanding of authorial empathy with six of 12 goal statements about AE. However, his essay which evidences major struggles with writing conventions, scores a 44% in terms of teacher evaluation. As Derek’s data analysis reveals, the student essays are not sufficient for understanding how authorial empathy may be shaping their thinking process during their writing work because the conceptual understanding of AE that may be evident in the interview may not be readily evident in the written piece. In Chapter 5, the potential pedagogical value of student-stimulated-recall interviews in response to their writing will be stated.

**Responses of 9th Grade Students in a College Preparatory ELA Course**

In order to understand the ways in which 9th grade students responded to the AE intervention, I used the goal, tool, and source coding as an analytic to situate each interview on
the AES. Student goal statements about wanting to include textual evidence, make a claim, develop a topic, or write a conclusion were grouped under the code of conventions of writing. Student tool statements can be things such as making particular word choices, enacting organizational strategies, or using sentence stems. Student source statements can cluster around sources such as the expectations of the teacher, awareness of a reader, requirements of a genre of writing, or the particularities of a rubric. Students’ goal statements were most useful in situating their interviews on the AES and thus constitute the majority of the data analysis.

If the goal statements were largely concerned with issues of analyzing author's aesthetic choices, then the student interview would be situated toward the “1” end of the scale. In contrast, student interviews that contained goal statements focused on empathetic engagement with characters in literature would be situated toward the “7” end of the scale. Goal statements, tool use, and sources that drew upon a balance of both via authorial empathy would be placed toward the center of the scale.

To analyze the approach to literature manifested in the 9th grade students’ class discussions across the three units of the study I observed, audiotaped, and transcribed their culminating discussions. These discussions were parsed into episodes (Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995), coded in terms of their goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999), and situated on the Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016). The 9th grade discussion findings will be presented after the analysis of their stimulated-recall interviews.

In their writing across three units. In Unit 1 the 9th grade CP students were invited to evaluate the characters in Lord of the Flies in terms of the role they played in Golding’s point about savagery and civilization. In Unit 2, these students were invited to enact the authorial empathy approach in sharing what they thought and felt in response to a short story titled “Sun
and Shadow” by Ray Bradbury while simultaneously grappling with the essential question: To what extent do we have control over our lives? In Unit 3, students were invited to respond to an excerpt from Dracula. Nancy’s Unit 3 task asks students to analyze how the excerpt exemplifies Romantic period elements, but students are also invited to draw on the AE approach. See Appendix E for writing prompts from each unit in the study.

The analysis of the 9th grade students’ stimulated-recall interviews resulted in three key findings: the many ways the authorial empathy approach guides students in generating balanced responses to literature, the impact text selection has on the extent to which students will respond with authorial empathy, and the ways in which writing tasks hinder or support authorially empathetic responses.

By far the most striking finding of the 9th grade stimulated-recall interview data analysis is that students across all performance quartiles responded to texts in more balanced ways for Unit 2 as compared to Unit 1. The prominence of utilitarian and procedural goals particularly in the interviews of students performing in the lower quartiles diminished in striking ways in Unit 2. Indeed, students at all quartiles improved or maintained their essay scores across all three units; the only exception is the student performing at Q4 who improves from Unit 1 to Unit 2, but has a lower score in Unit 3. In Unit 2, the Q1 student invested in the characters as real and worthy of respect without cost to her attention to authors’ aesthetic choices or her essay scores. Further, students across multiple quartiles demonstrated increased awareness of their current reading orientation in ways that can benefit their continued work in responding to texts; several students even made this readerly tool their own by reconceptualizing it as a writerly tool.

The second finding reveals the importance of text selection in fostering AE responses as evidenced by Unit 3. The complexity of the text and the extent to which it allows for an
authorially empathetic response, especially in combination with its accompanying task, is worthy of consideration.

The third key finding concerns the ways the writing tasks shaped student responses in two important ways. One, the specifics of the writing prompt can invite or diminish the potential of students to respond with authorial empathy. For example, the task of Unit 1 privileges responses toward the “1” end of the AES because 9th grade students are asked to view the characters as symbols deployed as an authorial choice rather than as real people. Two, the conventional expectations of the genre of formal academic writing so often called for by the writing tasks also invite or diminish the likelihood of certain types of responses. Because the instructional decisions of teachers embody their approaches to teaching (Grossman, 1994; Hines & Appleman, 2000; Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999) it is critical to consider the impact writing tasks have on the range of responses that can be elicited from students. This is particularly relevant in terms of the task 9th grade students engaged in for Unit 3 that was grounded in a similar orientation to their teacher’s Unit 1 task; this confirms how challenging it is to shift teachers, and by proxy, student orientations toward literature. See Table 8 for a summary of the findings from the 9th grade students’ stimulated-recall interviews.
Table 8

9th grade students’ stimulated-recall interviews across three units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1 Ayan</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Presenting an argument, adhering to academic writing conventions, and fulfilling the requirements of the rubric</td>
<td>6 of 11 goal statements are about AE, specifically empathizing with characters from the stories; treating them as worthy of ethical respect and engagement, not solely as authorial symbols</td>
<td>Claim-making, but explicit references to AE and now includes empathetic engagement as part of a formal academic response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: rubric and course curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2 Kevin</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Procedural adherence to conventions filtered through purely utilitarian approach</td>
<td>Evidence of burgeoning awareness of AE theoretical approach to responding to literature</td>
<td>Still utilitarian and procedural, but AE is present as a thinking tool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q3 Eve</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Purely utilitarian approach</td>
<td>More ethical engagement with characters in narrative world in a way that was absent from Unit 1; not dominated by utility goals</td>
<td>Return to utility; hunt-and-find; illuminates importance of task and text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q4 Jenny</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE Score</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Goal</td>
<td>Conventions; utility</td>
<td>Conventions remain, but AE character engagement appears; student uses ToM</td>
<td>Respond to the prompt; hunt-and-find overshadows source of AE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quartile 1 student Ayan. The analysis of Ayan’s stimulated-recall interview for her Unit 1 essay reveals her primary goals of presenting an argument, adhering to academic writing conventions, and fulfilling the requirements of the rubric. The interview scored a “1” on the AES because of its strict attention to authors’ aesthetic choices.

At no time does Ayan engage with the characters in the narrative world as actual ethical people that could be treated, even provisionally, as real. For Ayan, the characters are strictly symbols used by the author to make a point. This is evidenced repeatedly throughout the interview. Ayan explains: “So each character symbolizes something throughout the book and Ralph, as said, is law and order, he is a leader.” For Ayan, the characters are symbolic pawns employed by Golding to make a point with “Simon being the Christ-like figure” and “what Piggy does is he represents intelligence and science so science being an important part of civilization.”

Analysis of the field notes from classroom observations reveals the ways in which the 9th grade students develop their interpretation of texts in accordance with their teacher. Nancy says things like: “I need you to go to your character foldable and write down ‘Jack likes power and control and he does it through violence.’” The declarative statements Ayan makes about the meaning of the text in Unit 1 are striking in the ways they parallel moments in the observations when her teacher says things like: “Golding is showing this is an abusive relationship here.” The teacher’s focus on Golding’s aesthetic choices shapes the Q1 student’s response to the text.

Ayan’s primary source for her decisions is the rubric and secondarily the class material. The bulk of her argument about the descent of the characters from civilization to savagery is derived from the curriculum’s introduction of the theories of Thomas Hobbes. Ayan explains: “We went over the theory of Thomas Hobbes in class, so I kind of interpreted, we interpreted the theory to the Lord of the Flies and I thought that this is a good thing to support my claim so I put
it in there.” The extent to which Ayan’s Unit 1 goals were derived from the curriculum made the potential impact of the Unit 2 intervention noteworthy.

In the opening response of her Unit 2 stimulated-recall interview, Ayan explains how the first essay was more content and fact-based and the Unit 2 essay is more her argument. This reveals a sense of ownership mediated by the Authorial Empathy Scale. Six of the 11 goal statements in her Unit 2 interview focus on AE, specifically the facet of empathizing with characters as real and worthy of ethical attention. This empathetic engagement in the narrative world is in stark contrast to Ayan’s way of reading the text in Unit 1 wherein the characters all represented concepts and she never referenced an emotional connection with a character. This, of course, could be symptomatic of the different genres of the texts used in each unit: a novel that can be read as an allegory in Unit 1 and short stories in Unit 2. The impact of genre will be explored in Chapter 5, but it is important to note that a student who was reading in a strictly “I-ish” way was able to explicitly focus on engaging with characters in a way that did not prevent her from noting authorial choices as her interview scored a “4” on the AES. And in terms of the teacher essay score she even improved from a 96 to a 98 from Unit 1 to Unit 2.

In her Unit 2 interview response, Ayan invokes the AE strategy of inserting oneself into the text to foster deeper empathetic engagement with the characters in the narrative world:

R: Here you say ‘either she really doesn’t care about him or she’s in shock’ and then you say ‘I’ll be honest I probably wouldn’t have been able to say much too, but I would have been full-out sobbing when Mr. Ramirez was saying ‘I see you never.’’ Can you tell me what you were doing with that portion of the paragraph?
Ayan: Since as I said she doesn’t react when he says ‘I see you never’ she just kinda looks at him and I kinda put myself in her shoes and said what would I do if I was her? And as I said I would be full-out sobbing.

In Unit 2 Ayan is willing to ethically engage with the characters in ways entirely absent from her response in Unit 1; and in ways that come at no cost to her ability to analyze authors’
aesthetic choices. The implications of these findings are encapsulated by the Ayan Effect explained in Chapter 5.

The following excerpt reveals Ayan’s musings on what she would do differently in her Unit 1 essay if she had been able to enact the authorial empathy approach:

Ayan: I think I would definitely add my own opinion cuz that essay is completely a “1” in my opinion right now
R: Oh what do you mean by completely a “1”?
Ayan: Well it’s just I just state what the author.
R: Golding.
Ayan: What Golding does and I just say why what it represents and what it does, but in this [AE Unit 2] essay I kind of try to empathize with the character and express how it makes me feel along with what the author does.

Ayan expresses the way AE allows her to both empathize and analyze, yet the conversation continues and reveals a key finding supported by the teacher stimulated-recall interviews. Ayan asserts the value of the AE approach, but feels the expectations of a formal essay require her to be more “1-ish.”

R: And what do you think? Do you think that’s better writing?
A: I mean it depends on what type of writing you do.
R: Hmm.
A: Obviously. If I were just to do like my own response to an essay I would definitely do something like my second one [AES: “4”] but if I were to just do a formal essay I would use my first one [the self-described AES: “1”].
R: So does it seem informal to share an empathetic reaction?
A: For me it does.

There is a perceived tension between the expectations of academic writing and writing that is authorially empathetic. Chapter 5 will take up ways of potentially alleviating this tension. In short, it is noteworthy that Ayan recognizes that she can change her way of writing based on the requirements and expectations of the task. This flexibility would seem to be a valuable skill for students writing in response to a variety of texts and tasks. The design of the study allowed me
to explore what approach Ayan would enact in Unit 3 when called to craft an academic response to an excerpt from *Dracula* without being required to use the AE approach.

What is most striking about Ayan’s Unit 3 interview is the extent to which she speaks about how she draws on the tenets of authorial empathy in making her claim. Her goal statements remain focused on the claim-making moves of a conventional academic writing, but it is clear from the analysis that the source of AE has impacted her writing process. The Unit 3 interview was situated at a “4” on the AES and Ayan scores a 100 on her essay so the shift toward balance came at no cost to Nancy’s evaluation of her ability to analyze authors’ aesthetic choices. This is significant because some teachers may be resistant to an approach like AE out of fear it could diminish their students’ abilities to be successful at the types of writing tasks valued by standardized testing and the Common Core rubric. The *Ayan Effect* shows how a high performing student in a 9th grade CP class can enact the AE approach and still score successfully on formal academic writing tasks.

Throughout the Unit 3 interview, Ayan cites AE as a source for her decision-making in the essay:

R: Can you tell me what you were trying to do in this paragraph?
Ayan: So I used authorial empathy obviously in here I kind of stated what it made me feel and I pointed out why specifically from the text and how the author did that. And I also stated the setting which was a key component which in a big gloomy castle you expect terrifying things to happen so it was kind of it played along.

Ayan again reiterates the divide she sees between empathizing with characters in literature and writing formal essays, but in this Unit 3 response which called for formal academic writing it is striking that Ayan now deliberately inserts herself into the narrative world to connect with the characters:

R: As you think back on the unit you had before this did that unit have any impact on how you were responding to the *Dracula* excerpt? In your reading and writing?
Ayan: Normally I would definitely not try to empathize with the characters or sympathize at all. I’d just be formal, flat-out essays. But I guess I kind of add a part of myself in the essays now.

Indeed, in her stimulated-recall interview about Ayan’s Unit 3 essay, her teacher Nancy notes that Ayan is less author-centric and flatly formal in her response. Nancy explains: “Though she's not saying she's using the scale, she's definitely using the scale...I could see especially for her writing she seems to be reflecting more on her personal connection to it which I thought was good.” The data analysis reveals that Ayan is engaging in more balanced responses and Nancy is noticing and praising those moves toward balance even though they are arising from a different end of the AES than is typical in her approach.

The AE approach is a way of reading and responding to literature, but like any tool it can be adapted by the user. Ayan shares how she uses the AES in her writing. Throughout the stimulated-recall interviews both teachers and an array of students spoke of the AE approach as a writerly tool in addition to its function as a readerly tool. This is of note considering the ways in which reading and writing are intertwined in the ELA classroom:

R: What’s different when you’re reading with authorial empathy?
Ayan: I don’t see a difference when I’m reading, but I see it when I’m writing.
R: Ahh tell me can you talk to me about that?
Ayan: I guess I wouldn’t really, I don’t really empathize when I read. I have nothing to do with characters, I’m just in the story with them. I just watch, like I watch it in my mind like a movie. But that’s basically what the difference is.
R: And so now when you go to write about them, complete that thought, so what is the difference?
Ayan: Rather than just watch I try to put me in the story itself.
R: And what’s challenging about that? What’s good about that? What’s bad about that? How do you feel about that?
Ayan: What’s challenging is you don’t always connect with what’s happening. Me most of the time it could be something that you’ve never come across or never will so you can’t really make that connection and put it in text.
For Ayan, the AE approach helps her in preparing to write in ways that evidence both engagement with characters through the AE inserting self into text strategy and analysis of authors’ choices.

**Quartile 2 student Kevin.** Kevin shifts from being motivated primarily by a utilitarian desire to complete the writing task in Unit 1 to a more intentional approach to crafting authorially empathetic responses in Unit 2. His essay scores remain the same across Unit 1 and 2 although his AES placement becomes more balanced. In Unit 3, Kevin’s grade increases and his AES placement remains at a “3.”

Kevin’s Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview reveals his largely procedural and utilitarian decisions in his essay. By utilitarian I mean the way Kevin’s goal statements often illuminate the desire to just finish the writing task in the easiest way possible. For example, Kevin recognizes the procedural convention requiring him to cite textual evidence to support his argument, but that is secondary to the goal of utility: “I was going to add a quote about where he said that, but I couldn't find it so I didn't.” When asked why he needed a quotation, Kevin responded, “Because we needed to have to quotes” which reveals that he is engaged in the task in purely procedural ways. This made Kevin a particularly interesting case to study in terms of how or if the AE approach would impact his responses to literature. His Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview contained 10 goal statements: three are about curricular concepts, three are about conventions, and four are about ease and utility in completing the task. The interview was situated at a “1” on the AES because of its sustained focus on how Golding uses the characters in *Lord of the Flies* to say something about power.

In Unit 2 Kevin shifts to a focus on AE and explanations of the deliberate effort that went into crafting balanced responses so there is an increased awareness as evidenced by four of
the nine goal statements explicitly referencing authorial empathy. This does not translate into an improved essay score, but the difference in the stimulated-recall interviews is striking so much so that the interview scored a “3” on the AES.

Excerpts from the interview reveal Kevin’s emerging understanding of the concept of authorial empathy and the ways in which one can strive to craft a balanced response to literature:

R: Can you tell me why you say, “The author Ray Bradbury made it so that some characters in the book had control over their own lives” and then “The author makes him go over his visa time?” Can you talk to me a little about that?
Kevin: Like so I was trying to make it so it would be the good response for the authorial empathy chart thing so like it wouldn’t just be a “7” saying ‘Mr. Ramirez did all that.’ And I didn’t want it just to be a “1” where it’s like the author did this, the author did that. So I tried to include the author and say what he did.

I then explicitly asked Kevin:

R: And what role did authorial empathy play in how you went about crafting this essay?
Kevin: Like it’s like how I use ‘author’ sometimes down here I was trying to make sure it would be near to a “4” at least and how I kept using characters so it could be at least close to a “4” too.

Kevin’s approach is still a highly utilitarian approach for academic discipline-specific writing insofar as he is likely enacting the AE approach because his teacher has invited him to do so; he uses a balanced approach so he can, in Kevin’s words, “get a good response.” However, he is aware that his writing can draw on a balance of authors’ choices and engagement with the characters to craft an authorially empathetic response. There is evidence of a theoretical approach to responding to literature that was entirely absent from Unit 1.

Of the six coded goal statements in Kevin’s Unit 3 stimulated-recall interview three of them concern the conventions of academic writing and three of them reference his utilitarian desire to complete the task. But when asked, Kevin references the AES in ways that are illuminating:
R: In terms of the work that you did in the unit before did you draw on that in any way when you were writing this essay?
Kevin: I tried to use some of how what the author wrote and all to try to get some “1s” in, but it looks like I didn't do that all the way correctly.

Kevin’s essay score in Unit 3 improves, but he feels he wasn’t too effective in enacting the AE approach in his efforts to “get some 1s in.” But Kevin continues to reference the scale in ways that suggest the AE concept is beginning to take hold; he understands that he needs to attend to authors’ choices and also engage with the characters in the narrative world:

R: Any other standout moments that you think show some authorial empathy or reading with a balance?
Kevin: Like connecting to the characters like how the Count is kind of like the Byronic hero so it's trying to connect with the characters.

Kevin has not relinquished his primarily utilitarian approach to writing essays in English class, but there is evidence that the AE concept is beginning to shape his understanding of the process that goes into generating balanced response to literature. In Kevin’s Corollary, presented in Chapter 5, teachers are invited to consider how students with a primarily utilitarian approach to English class can benefit from tools that are both useful and theoretically informed.

The concluding episode of the Unit 3 stimulated-recall interview reveals Kevin’s developing awareness:

R: How, if at all, has the work you've done with authorial empathy changed how you're reading or thinking about how you're responding when you read a short story or an excerpt?
Kevin: I want to try to get close to a balanced response and try to use like “1s” and “7s.”
R: When you say that 'use “1s” and “7s” what does that mean?
Kevin: Use like how the author did word choice and all and for “7s” try to connect with the characters and all.
R: And in doing both of those you think it's more balanced?
Kevin: Yeah.
R: Why is that?
Kevin: Cuz like in the scale if it's closer to a “4” it's a little bit of both how it's related to the author and what he did and how it connects to the characters.
R: Any other thoughts or take-aways from that unit, any final questions you've got?
Kevin: Nah, I just thought it helped me with how I'm going to write in the future.
In addition to Kevin’s burgeoning awareness of a theoretical approach for responding to literature, it is also notable that Kevin references the AE tool as a writing tool which makes sense as so much of the reading students do within school contexts typically gives rise to writing tasks.

**Quartile 3 student Eve.** Like the 9th grade Quartile 2 student, Eve’s writing decisions are primarily motivated by a utilitarian desire to finish the task. However, in Unit 2 there is evidence that Eve is drawing on the concept of AE to engage with characters in the short stories and craft more balanced responses. By Unit 3 the writing task requires the sort of definitional writing that does not invite authorial empathy. Eve’s AES scores move from strictly aesthetic in Unit 1 to more balanced but leaning toward empathetic engagement with characters in Unit 2. In Unit 3, the textual excerpt and writing task invite a more “1-ish” response so Eve’s interview reveals an AES placement of “2” indicating a tendency toward analysis of authorial choices. Her essay scores improve in her teacher’s evaluation across the three units: 72, 80, 85.

Although the conventions of writing prescribed by the rubric account for the largest number of codes in Eve’s Unit 1 interview, it is worth noting that four of the 10 coded goal statements refer to utility and ease. When asked how she went about deciding which question to take up in her Unit 1 essay response, Eve replied, “which one that looked the easiest I guess.” The following excerpt wherein Eve shares how she would rework the Unit 1 essay if given the chance captures the extent to which completing the task for a grade drives her writing decisions:

R: Do you think you would do anything different if you revisited this essay?
Eve: Yeah.
R: Like what?
Eve: Probably put more detail and change some words around.
R: And why, what would your reason for putting more detail be?
Eve: Just to make it stronger and longer.
R: Why would longer make it, why would you want to make it stronger?
Eve: Like for a better grade.
R: And why is longer better?
Eve: Because, I don't know, so it doesn't look so short, like I want it to look like I put a lot of effort into it.

Eve’s focus on getting the task finished for a good grade in Unit 1 make the findings of her Unit 2 stimulated-recall interview all the more interesting because her AES placement shifted toward a “5” indicating a more ethical engagement with the characters in the narrative world.

Whereas there was no attempt by Eve in Unit 1 to engage with the littluns from *Lord of the Flies* as provisionally real, in Unit 2 Eve empathetically considers the characters in Bradbury’s short story “I See You Never.” Again, this could be symptomatic of the genre of the text; however, it is of note that in her stimulated-recall interview Eve highlights connecting with the characters. This indicates that the AE approach is shaping her approach to literature:

R: Can you tell me what you were trying to do in this paragraph?
Eve: Like what they were feeling now, like what Mrs. O’Brien was starting to feel and Mr. Ramirez.
R: And why did you decide to do that?
Eve: Cuz since I explained what their life was like in the first paragraph I wanted to like say like why they would be so sad because he was leaving.

Eve’s Unit 2 interview had only five coded goal statements: three of them were about writing conventions and two were about authorial empathy. But what is most striking is that the plethora of coded goal statements for utility and ease of accomplishing the task that dominated Unit 1 drop out during Unit 2 suggesting Eve is more authentically engaged in the AE writing piece. Unit 3 highlights the importance of pairing the AE approach with a text and task that invite responding in a balanced way. If Unit 3 had invited Eve to continue to enact the AE approach on the type of literary text that invites genuine engagement with characters in the narrative while also offering an array of authors’ aesthetic choices to consider, perhaps Eve would have continued to develop the goal of writing in authorially empathetic ways.
The Unit 3 text and task are different from the Unit 2 text and task in important ways. Whereas Unit 2 invited students to read a short story that allowed for and invited authorially empathetic responses, the Unit 3 task was a sort of hunt-and-find of elements of a Byronic hero in a textual excerpt from *Dracula*. Therefore, the task does not invite analytical attention to authors’ choices or very deep engagement with the characters in the excerpt. In Eve’s interview the conventions of the writing task are her primary goal and the code for utility and ease returns as she selects elements that are emblematic of a Byronic hero. This sort of clinical analysis of story elements leads to a score toward the “1” end of the AES although she scores a “2” because of some references and attempts to engage with the characters. AE has the most likelihood of being drawn upon when supported by a task that asks for an evaluative analytical reading; the genre of Unit 3 writing task does not call for this.

The conclusion of Eve’s stimulated-recall interview for Unit 3 does however make clear the ways in which she is taking up authorial empathy as a conceptual tool:

R: Did you consider the Authorial Empathy Scale when you were writing this?
Eve: Yeah because I think I was more towards the “1.”
R: Ok why?
Eve: Because I said more about the author's choices than what I was feeling, but towards the end where I gave my opinion I think I was more near the “7” and yeah.
R: So where do you think your essay is overall, do you think it has balance or?
Eve: I think it's like a “3” maybe.
R: Ok why do you say that?
Eve: Because it's more towards the “1” but it does have some of the “7,” but not really, so more towards the “1.”
R: What do you think about that?
Eve: I should have gave more try to be at a “7” so I could be a “4” right in the middle
R: Ok what sort of stuff would you have shared?
Eve: More like of my opinion I guess and more engaging into the story.
R: Is there a character that you could connect with in this story?
Eve: Hmm maybe Harker and tell about him or maybe what I thought about him.
R: Cool this is a broader question. As you read a piece of fiction or a short story do you think of the Authorial Empathy Scale? Has that impacted the way you think about responding to literature at all or not really?
Eve: Yeah kind of cuz now as I read it just kind of pops in my head and yeah.
R: What does it make you think? When that pops in your head how does that shape you?
Eve: Well like it makes me think like what the author was trying to think like if he was using the scale when he was writing it.

In the conclusion of the stimulated-recall interview, Eve’s ability to identify that she wrote in a “1-ish” way does indicate that she has retained the AE concept and the potential to enact the approach in her experience of future texts. The interview analysis reveals that Eve seems to focus more on combining a balance of “1” and “7” statements to average at a “4” instead of crafting “4” responses. I theorize that if given more support, Eve could become more proficient at responding in authorially empathetic ways; Eve’s Evolution will be presented in Chapter 5.

By the very end of the interview Eve suggests that the scale has been internalized and she views herself in conversation with others, like authors, who are potentially using the scale. What’s fascinating here is that the student is manifesting an explicit awareness of the rules of reading literature through some preliminary Theory of Mind work (Rabinowitz & Bancroft, 2014; Zunshine, 2006). The concluding excerpt also illuminates just how much the schoolish procedural nature of some of the writing tasks students experience in school do not invite them to tap into their burgeoning understanding of how to approach and respond to literature with authorial empathy. Though Eve speaks of AE in her concluding excerpt, the writing task does not invite her to draw on that conceptual understanding.
Quartile 4 student Jenny. In her Unit 1 essay, Jenny used her symbols chart to make an argument about power and leadership in Lord of the Flies. Analysis of Jenny’s stimulated-recall interview revealed that nine of the 11 stated goals are about making an analytical claim in keeping with conventions of argumentative writing. The primary sources driving her choices are the essay writing prompt and the rubric. The Unit 1 interview was situated at a “2” on the AES for its primary focus on analyzing the author's use of symbols in the novel.

There are immediately salient differences in Jenny’s Unit 2 interview that indicate the impact of the AE approach on her response to literature. Jenny explains the reasons for her choices in her opening paragraph:

Well him being deported seemed like a really big deal to the author so maybe the author had a connection to that so that's why he made his story about it and that's how I felt towards it so I just made the opening paragraph so the reader could know what was going on before I get into how the author feels about how the character feels.

In this brief statement Jenny reveals a sophisticated awareness of author, characters, and audience. In Unit 2, Jenny attends to how her reader will become aware of how the author feels about how the character feels; the importance of this type of inferential thinking in response to literature is supported by research on Theory of Mind (Rabinowitz & Bancroft, 2014; Zunshine, 2006).

The conventions of analytical essay writing continue to dominate Jenny’s goal statements in Unit 2, but her sources of decision-making shift from primarily the rubric to mainly the AE approach. When asked about the reason for her choices in her concluding paragraph, Jenny’s response evidences the impact of authorial empathy on her response to literature. She explains:

I said he was being deported so it was like a summary of the story and how the author made the characters feel and like how it affected me. So I just said that he let everyone feel bad whoever read this because you wouldn't want to be deported you wouldn't want to, so you feel sad about it and he did too. So I just connected it with it.
Here Jenny explicitly demonstrates her awareness of authors’ aesthetic choices involving their characters, but she also explains how the author is inviting her and other readers to feel about the deportation of Mr. Ramirez. Jenny continues, “For the balance I say ‘you would feel bad for Mr. Ramirez’ and then I say why you feel bad because the author made the character get deported.” The tenets of authorial empathy enable Jenny to demonstrate a clear rendering of what Rabinowitz (1987) would hail as an authorial reading that encompasses reading as a member of the narrative audience.

As with other students of differing grade levels and course groupings, Jenny sees utility in the AES as a readerly and writerly tool; this is an unexpected trend in the findings that will be explored in Chapter 5:

R: Do you think that scale and reading in an authorially empathetic way, do you think it's more useful, if you think it's useful at all, for reading or for writing?
Jenny: For writing.
R: How?
Jenny: Because when you're reading I guess like you can point out a “1” through “7,” but like when you’re writing you can be like well this is my “1” paragraph, this is my “4” paragraph, this is my “7” and that's why I did that.

Jenny has not yet started to understand how to deliberately generate responses at a “4” on the AES, but her burgeoning understanding indicates she is aware of different types of responses and how to enact them in ways that amount to balance. Jenny elaborates: “So I feel like the first paragraph is the author's opinion and the second one that's how I felt. And the last one is the balance between the two.” Also, noteworthy is the way Jenny is using the scale as an organizational tool. It is exactly this type of flexibility that makes tools like the Authorial Empathy Scale so important for students because tools by their very nature invite students to mold the tool for their own learning purposes.
In Unit 3 the writing task results in a hunt-and-find approach to elements from the *Dracula* excerpt that embody elements of Romanticism. There are only five coded goal statements in Jenny’s Unit 3 stimulated-recall interview and four of the five articulate the goal of responding to the prompt. Surprisingly, one of her goal statements names the specific goal of crafting a balanced response. So even with a text that did not necessarily lend itself toward AE and a writing prompt that primarily precluded it, this student performing at Q4 enacted the AE conceptual approach as an explicitly stated goal.

At the conclusion of the Unit 3 stimulated-recall interview Jenny sums up her current understanding of the utility of the scale:

Jenny: It does help because when you see the word author you know you're going to “1,” you're towards that end. Or if you're talking about feelings or you're saying how you feel it's more of a “7.” But if there's a balance between the two you have both and then the in-between numbers are still confusing to me, but they just mean you lean towards the 1 or you lean towards the “7.”

R: Why do you think it's important to do that balanced “4” authorial empathy response? What do you get from that?

Jenny: I feel like you're answering the prompt more efficiently because you're saying how you feel and you are also answering the question of the author's purpose or approach.

Jenny understands that reading and responding at a “1,” “4,” or “7” are options and approaches to literary texts that she can control. Even though she is not fully clear on the specificities of each point on the AES, she nominates the scale as a useful tool. It is particularly important that the student performing at the lowest quartile in a 9th grade College Preparatory ELA course can make sense of the AE approach because it suggests that she and other students currently performing at that level have the potential to enact authorial empathy as a portable tool and conceptual approach for responding to literary texts. *Jenny’s Journey* as a guiding principle for teachers wishing to enact AE will be presented in Chapter 5.
**Text selection and task creation.** The findings across the analysis of the 9th grade stimulated-recall interviews make clear the impact of the AE approach on the ways in which students respond to texts. But it also makes clear the necessity of considering the interplay between text selection and writing task as it relates to most effectively enacting the AE approach and AES tool.

The 9th grade findings suggest the important role text selection plays in supporting the AE approach. The 9th grade students in the study referenced that in terms of length and complexity they found the short story by Ray Bradbury used in the AE unit easier to engage with and write about than the Unit 1 text *Lord of the Flies*. And the Q4 student shared how complex and difficult to understand she found the *Dracula* excerpt. So if the text is not suited to AE and the prompt does not invite it, then AE drops out in terms of its utility and likelihood of being enacted. If teachers see AE as useful, then they will need to select texts and create writing tasks that support students in developing this approach to reading.

In the same way that AE is an approach best suited for responding to certain types of texts such as literary fiction with characters, certain writing prompts are more likely to invite authorially empathetic responses. The genre of the writing piece can preclude the necessity or even utility of using AE as a theoretical framework for approaching the writing. The 9th grade students’ Unit 2 responses were the most authorially empathetic in part because the prompt explicitly invited that sort of response and drew on a text that allowed for and encouraged that type of reading.

English teachers invite students to write across a wide variety of genres for a wide variety of purposes. This study has illuminated the need for writing tasks to work in concert with
reading approaches. Students will likely be best supported in reading with authorial empathy if
the writing task invites them to craft an analysis that draws on the tenets of authorial empathy.

For example, a writing task that invites students to find literary elements that embody a
certain style of writing will guide students in crafting more aesthetic-focused responses detached
from empathetic engagement with characters. In contrast, a piece of writing that invites students
to examine a character’s choices may not immediately lend itself to a close reading of authorial
choice. The prompt and writing task must align with the approach in order for students to fully
demonstrate their understanding of the approach. Students in Unit 3, particularly the 9th grade
CP Q4 student Jenny demonstrated her emerging understanding of the AE approach, but it
cannot be fully showcased with the writing prompt that was used.

It is very important to note that the two teachers in this study were not given any
direction regarding how to proceed in Unit 3. This aspect of the study’s design is what allowed
me to understand the importance of text and task. I have no doubt that with guidance or
explanation both teachers in the study would be eager to reflect on how to best select texts and
create tasks that invite more authorially empathetic responses. Nancy did not abandon AE in
Unit 3 and indeed some students drew on the approach, but the textual excerpt and writing task
did not necessarily invite or privilege an AE reading. As a point of comparison, Dorothy’s entire
Unit 3 explicitly drew on AE, but could not overcome the expectations of the genre of a college
entrance essay. This suggests the importance of the interplay among text, task, and tool when
enacting AE.

In their discussions. The stimulated-recall interviews allow for a deep investigation of
the ways in which four quartile students in the 9th grade class responded over the course of the
three units of the study. But the discussion analysis provides insight into the impact of the
authorial empathy unit on the discussions experienced by the entire class. In addition to the writing tasks she assigns, Nancy uses whole-class discussion to guide and gauge the learning of the 9th grade students she teaches. I observed, audiorecorded, and transcribed the culminating discussion from each unit parsing it into episodes that I situated on the Authorial Empathy Scale as a way of indicating the extent to which each discussion episode embodied a balanced response to literature. Drawing on Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999), I coded the primary goals, tools, and sources in each discussion episode to explore how the students and teacher participated in the discussion. The codes that were most salient to illuminating each discussion are presented in the findings. See Table 4 for the 9th grade students’ discussion findings.

As explained in the teacher discussion findings, the Unit 1 discussion was in response to the final chapter of *Lord of the Flies*, the Unit 2 discussion invited students to enact authorial empathy in their response to Ray Bradbury’s short story “Sun and Shadow,” and Unit 3 was in response to Tennyson’s “The Lady of Shalott.”

For the 9th grade students in the study, their discussion experience in Unit 2 was notably different from Unit 1 because students used the tool of the Authorial Empathy Scale to generate their own responses to and questions of the text. This shift was not without tension though as the IRE framework for discussion so dominant in classrooms made it challenging for students to contribute for sustained period of time via consecutive speaking turns to each other. The Unit 3 discussion analysis reveals a return to the pre-intervention discussion type. This finding further reveals the necessity of enacting AE with specific types of texts, tasks, and tools that support its application. This interplay is further explored in Chapter 5.
Unit 1. The 9th grade student utterances throughout the Unit 1 discussion are in response to their teacher’s primary use of closed questions that have only one correct answer. This fits Nancy’s goal of a discussion to help students review for the quiz by moving through the bookmark questions. But the student responses are mainly used to fill in the script of what happened in Chapter 12 of Lord of the Flies. There are no substantive opportunities for students to respond to each other or generate their own questions in response to the text.

The following illuminating excerpt reveals the types of student utterances elicited in the Unit 1 discussion:

N: Cannibalism. Alright so, who is really the chief now?
Multiple: Roger
Evan: He is like Jack
N: Exactly, Jack is the one who held that power for a few seconds, Roger is really the one now who is trying to outdo him and take control. Obviously this doesn’t go well because once you take over as chief, what happens to the prior chief?
Mae: They get mad at you.
N: And?
Mae: They try to kill you
N: They get dead too. Okay, so that is something important to, so let’s keep going through here.
Olivia: Is Jack okay with this?
N: No, not in parallel, he definitely wants power, but Roger is so violent that he I think doesn’t know how to approach it yet, because if you put it between Roger and Jack, Jack is downright civilized to Roger. Alright so, let’s talk about the hunt, what starts off the hunt? Did they stick a line and go across the island?
Amir: No

The teacher does the heavy lifting of driving and curating discussion with students filling in the correct utterances. Also typical of this excerpt is that despite a class of 26 students, the discussion is often between only a very few students and the teacher. I also chose this excerpt because it shows a rare instance of a student asking a question, but the question is always directed to the teacher not a fellow student and requires Nancy to provide the response rather
than challenging students to do the interpretive work. Every question originates with Nancy and any student question that interrupts the flow of IRE is immediately answered by Nancy.

Another excerpt reveals this IRE pattern:

N: Alright so, he is on the beach, he is trying to cry out for mercy, very similar to who else?
Steve: Sam and Erik
N: Nope, who else got killed?
Evan: Simon.
Ger: Piggy.
N: Piggy didn’t get a chance to say anything, Simon, hold on, Simon he was trying to call out for mercy, now at this point they’re all rushing him on the beach, is there any place for him to hide?
Multiple: No.
N: What’s going to happen?
Steve: He is going to die
N: He’s going to die, yeah, he’s going to be stabbed a whole lot and his head is going to be removed, now we have this break here, breaks usually indicate a jump in time, perspective, there is something going on here.

The excerpt reveals the ways in which the 9th grade students guess answers and attempt to mind-read the teacher until they get the correct answer in preparation for the quiz.

Unit 2. A multitude of student discussion moves that were not evident in the Unit 1 discussion occur in the 11 episodes of the Unit 2 discussion: students generate their own interpretive questions in response to the text, students respond to each other in consecutive talk turns, and students disagree with each other. It is noteworthy that the AE approach was able to impact the 9th grade student discussions in this way considering the data were collected in April of a school year, a time in which patterns of discussion are well-established.

In the following excerpt from episode 9 of the Unit 2 discussion, Nancy’s primary goals are to elicit student participation and an AE balanced discussion of the short story. Nancy’s source is the AE approach and her tool is the task of the discussion prompt and the text of “Sun and Shadow” provided by the AE unit intervention. The students’ goals were to participate in
the discussion and the primary tools that are used in the excerpt are student-generated questions which were rarely present in the illuminating excerpts from Unit 1. The source of student learning is the AE unit.

Even Nancy is engaged in a different way as she is free to respond to the questions students ask that are not rooted in the particularities of plot sanctioned by the bookmark quiz tool. The following episode was situated at a “5” on the AES because of the ways students address the meaning of the story and interactions between characters; it would be a “4” if it more explicitly referenced authorial choice or evidence from text:

N: Alright, someone else I haven't heard from.
Beth: I only had a question, is the end supposed to be the poor people winning and the rich people lose, kind of?
N: Good question, what do you guys think? The ending, is it poor people win and rich people lose? Beth, why don't you call on somebody?
Amy: I don't think it was a win or lose, I think it was just the photographer got, he wanted to move from somebody else's perspective because he was so selfish and not thinking about how other people felt, so it feels like he gave knowledge and noticed how they felt even though he probably won't admit to it but he probably noticed how they were feeling, so I don't think it was a win or lose, I think it was he learned.
N: Why do you think he learned something? I think that was the goal, but why do think he learned it?
Amy: Well, because of how determined Ricardo was, he just kept coming after the photographer, and what's right and what's wrong, and it really bothered him, it was something really wrong with it, you know. It really touched Ricardo and it was a good thing.
Frank: Like with what she said, that he probably coming out, I am sure the photographer, like throughout the day or like when he went home, like why was Ricardo so mad. He probably put himself into Ricardo's perspective and then learned his lesson. And then I also think that Ricardo gained something along with this because the people were clapping at the end and they probably were a mixture of people that were rich and the people who were poor, they probably also let themselves into Ricardo's perspective.
Deirdre: In my opinion, I don't think the photographer ever learned something because he walks away instead of apologizing, or saying in regard of what he did to Ricardo, so I think by him walking away and going somewhere else is him, his way of saying that.
N: He didn't get it, that's interesting.
Tara: I feel like that is what makes it more, makes more sense that he wanted to do because, I don't know saying you did something wrong usually you don't want to admit that you are wrong and you just want to get away from it and just move on, so I felt like
when he walked away he noticed that it really hurt Ricardo, so he probably just wanted to
get away from it and move on with his life instead of adjusting it and saying sorry,
N: He just wanted to move on.

In Unit 2, the 9th grade students generate utterances of greater length and balance than in Unit 1,
they respond directly to each other, and they engage in interpretive disagreements in response to
the text. Nancy often continues to play the conduit role linking responses, but she is not forced
to lead the students on an IRE march through the text.

In episode 5 which was situated at a “4” on the AES, students have time for their own
small group discussions; this is in contrast to Unit 1 where it was a rapid teacher-driven march
through the bookmark. In episode 10 which also scored a “4” on the AES there is an insightful
conversation about the genre of the short story; here the students’ utterances impact the questions
Nancy decides to ask; in Unit 1 it is the reverse because Nancy’s questions drive the entirety of
the discussion. In Unit 2, the students use the AES to generate their own questions that Nancy
responds to in discussion. And in episode 11 which scored a “5” on the AES students have a role
in shaping the discussion; their questions impact the discourse in contrast to the IRE bookmark
review of Unit 1.

In her reflection interview, Nancy was pleased with the Unit 2 discussion:

R: What else stood out to you about the discussion?
Nancy: I think they made some good points, good questions, I did try to stop it, I don't
know two or three points, just okay regroup, look at your notes, talk to the person next to
you and come back because I have found in the past, doing activities like this, the first
couple minutes are just trying to figure out what is going on and then after that they are
able to bounce ideas a little more, and by the end of the class they did a really nice job
with that, I was really pleased with what I saw.

Nancy’s past practice has taught her the importance of interjecting every two or three turns in
order to sanction and sustain 9th grade discussions; from teacher interviews this differs from her
approach in an 11th grade AP course. Teacher experience is a valuable source and should not be
overlooked. Nancy has reasons for the choices she makes, but the findings reveal the complex interplay between grade and course level, teacher’s past practice, dominant modes of discussion like IRE, and the attempt to guide students in reading with authorial empathy.

**Unit 3.** The illuminating excerpt comes from episode 5 which scored a “6” on the AES. In it, Nancy leads students in a chronological series of questions to understand the events within the narrative poem “The Lady of Shalott.” Of note is the way students attempt to disrupt this march through the poem by asking “7-esque” questions, but these do not get taken up. This suggests the ways in which students are potentially drawing on AE, but how the typical IRE expectations of whole-class discussion thwart their attempts.

It is important to note that Nancy’s goal required by the curriculum is to ensure students understand the elements of the Romantic period that appear in the narrative poem “The Lady of Shalott” so the students’ potentially AE inspired “7-ish” questions may not fit with achieving that goal:

N: We hear about the curse, we hear about her weaving, and she is trying not to, if you take a look at the second to last line in the second stanza, "and little other care had she." So aside from this curse, does she have anything to worry about?
Class response: No
N: No, everything is provided for her, everything is taken care of, so the only thing she can't do is look down that way.
Amy: Who cursed her?
N: That is a great question, no idea. Great question. Alright, if we go to the next stanza here.
Jon: Does it ever say why she’s cursed?
N: Nope. These are good questions though. Alright jump down to the last two lines of this page, "I am half sick of shadows said the Lady of Shalott," why is she sick of shadows?
Evan: Maybe she is stuck in her house and all she sees is people's shadows.
N: Yeah, she can't look directly at them, she has to look in the mirror. Think of winter, well obviously not this winter, but other winters we have had lots and lots and lots of snow and we can't go anywhere you kind of get sick of the house, right? Okay, that is kind of what is going on here. She is sick of the four walls, she wants to get out and do other things, so what happens that causes that? What happens? Flip the page over.
Amy: Does she have her own personal room?
N: Yeah, based on what we read here we can infer that.
Evan: How does she get food?
N: That is a great question, I don't know. Of course, there is a lot of ambiguity and a lot of questions here but they are trying to focus on different things, and I think some of the basic necessities and asking about those they are not going to tell us right now, it is just not what they feel is important, but those are good questions. Alright, top of the third page, what do we have going on here? She knows there is a curse, she knows there is a problem,
Jon: She sees a knight
N: She sees a knight, what knight does she see?
Jon: Sir Lancelot
N: Sir Lancelot, alright who knows about Sir Lancelot?

Despite the presence of some “7-ish” questions, the students’ roles in the Unit 3 discussion are similar to their roles in the Unit 1 discussion insofar as they are respondents to the teacher’s closed questions about the narrative. This again suggests that it takes time to create change in the face of IRE, particularly considering the teacher was not explicitly invited to enact a certain discussion approach or use AE. If a teacher wishes to support the enactment of AE, the findings suggest that the more IRE can be resisted as a tool the more likely students are to be able to contribute in balanced ways.

In her reflection interview about Unit 3 Nancy is pleased with the impact of AE, specifically how it makes her students more willing to engage and to generate more specific questions:

R: What particularly, what moves, any moves stand out to you that you were pleased with, in terms of, so when you say it seems a little bit different than it would have been last year before the unit, is that about referring to the text, is it about type of response?
Nancy: Actually, all of it. They asked questions more freely and more willing to say I don't understand this, I don't know, which is not something that this group particularly did well in earlier in the year. There wasn't the ‘well I just don't get it,’ it was ‘oh I don't get this line’ or ‘I don't get this word.’ It was much more specific and it opened up dialogue rather than just being like well I give up I'm not going to do it, so I thought that was great. The reference back into the text was good, I liked that. I liked that they were making other connections, drawing some other understanding and they did a nice job paraphrasing, so here is what is going on in this section here, so they were able to give me the gist of it, even if it wasn't perfectly on the nose, they still, I could see there was a thought process behind that.
In her response Nancy references both ends of the scale by way of referring back to the text to examine authorial choice, but also via sharing connections. So there is evidence of a more balanced approach in Nancy’s reflection, but more importantly in this data set is that she notes the ways the students are generating questions and referring back to the text in ways that seem to have their origins in the AE work of Unit 2.

Responses of 11th Grade Students in an Honors ELA course

The second research question driving the current study asks if and how the authorial empathy intervention impacts student responses to literary texts. I followed the same analysis for the 11th grade student written responses and discussions that I previously outlined for the 9th grade students.

In their writing across three units. As explained in the introduction to the findings from Dorothy’s stimulated-recall interviews, Dorothy’s Unit 1 task invited students to grapple with the essential question about culture and identity and explain which characters they sympathized with most across a series of stories. In Unit 2, students used the AE approach as a readerly tool in response to the series of shorts stories with a culminating writing task that asked them to explain what they thought and felt in reading the stories and what the authors did to elicit those responses.

For Unit 3, Dorothy decided to apply the AE approach to college entrance essays. In their writing and discussion for Unit 3, 11th grade students in Honors ELA were invited to think of themselves as the authors of their college entrance essays and to make deliberate aesthetic choices in their essays. Students were also encouraged to view themselves as the types of characters in their narrative pieces that would be worthy of ethical and empathic consideration by the college entrance committees reading their essays.
In Unit 3, Dorothy noted the parallels between short literary fiction and narrative college essays that often feature the student as main character and taught her students how to use the AE approach while writing their essays with the hope of eliciting a response at a “4” on the AES in their college admissions readers. Students evaluated and sorted a series of sample college essays in terms of the type of response they elicited on the AES. Drawing on the tenets of AE, students then crafted a college entrance essay and students submitted an accompanying reflective piece explicitly outlining how they used AE in crafting the piece. See Appendix E for writing prompts across the three units.

There are three main findings derived from the 11th grade stimulated-recall interview data analysis. The first finding suggests how students who have mastered the conventions of academic writing are best positioned to enact authorial empathy effectively. The analysis illuminates the ways in which students’ increased awareness of authors’ aesthetic choices and increased willingness to empathetically engage with characters can guide them in balanced AE responses to texts.

The second finding suggests that AE has the best chance of being enacted with texts and tasks that support it. The findings suggest that writing tasks linked to a Common Core rubric as the primary source of evaluation may not provide the best support for students attempting to enact the AE approach to literary response. Students’ burgeoning ability to enact AE may be stifled by rubrics that emphasize conventions over conceptual content. Further, the analysis of the student data reveals the power that the genre of certain types of writing tasks exerts on students’ writing choices. Despite Dorothy’s decision to make authorial empathy the primary conceptual approach in Unit 3, the conventional expectations of the source of the college
entrance essay that students were tasked with writing tended to overwhelm the presence of AE as a source in the students’ Unit 3 writing piece interviews.

The third finding from the 11th grade student data analysis suggests how students’ writerly identities are informed by the awareness fostered by the AE approach. For example, for the Q1 student Tim in Unit 3 his focus on the audience as a source is of course supported by the genre of the college essay task, but his increased awareness of the audience arose in Unit 2 via the AE approach. The ways in which the AE approach was enacted in writerly ways by the 11th grade students will be explored in the presentation of findings.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that students have the best chance to respond with AE balance when the AE approach is enacted in conjunction with certain types of texts for certain kinds of writing tasks and with a rubric that invites the writing to be evaluated in terms of the extent to which the writing evidences reading with authorial empathy rather than the particularities of conventions. See Table 9 for findings from the 11th grade student interview data analysis.
Table 9

11th grade students’ stimulated-recall interviews across three units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>AE Score</th>
<th>Dominant Goal</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Tim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Organization and procedural tasks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>AE; claim-making</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Showcase self and writing style</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Source: college entrance essay genre; AE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Kayla</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Organization and coherence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Source: writing conventions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adhere to expectations of college entrance essay genre; AE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Source: conventions of academic writing; college entrance essay genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 Margy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Procedural goal of finishing the task</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Utilitarian, complete the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Derek</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Making it easier for the reader to understand</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adhere to expectations of college essay genre Source: college entrance essay genre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quartile 1 student Tim. The analysis of the stimulated-recall data for Tim across three units reveals Tim’s journey from rote adherence to the procedural conventions of academic writing to a more deliberately writerly authorially empathetic identity.
Tim, a student performing in the first quartile of his 11th grade Honors ELA course, shared his rationale for his choices in each paragraph of his three essays. The vast majority of Tim’s statements were goal statements so I focus on them in the analysis. The most striking shift in terms of coded goal statements occurs between Unit 1 and Unit 2 as Tim shifts from goal statements that are primarily concerned with the more procedural elements of essay crafting like organization and coherence to new codes that identify Tim’s goal of showcasing his authorially empathetic reading skill. Another important shift is the decrease from six of the 16 goal statements in Unit 1 that focus on organization to only one of 20 with the same focus in Unit 2. Tim becomes less concerned with the formulaic procedural elements of essay writing in favor of a desire to share his analysis using AE. And this shift toward a more nuanced way of making organizational decisions in his essays coincides with an increase in his essay score from an 88 in Unit 1 to a 94 in Unit 2.

As Tim shifts away from goal statements primarily concerned with procedural tasks to new goals he reveals a more sophisticated awareness of audience. By procedural, I mean statements in his Unit 1 essay interview such as “I wanted to set up what I was going to talk about” or “I wanted to tie together everything I talked about before” that were coded as having an organizational goal that is largely procedural. In Unit 2, the codes capture Tim’s increasing emphasis on his relationship with both his own ideas and his audience as evidenced by the following goal statements: “This is what I wanted to show; how the author's choice of having them remember each other's home country brought out this point of how they weren't really connected” or “so I showed another meaning behind it how he is showing his regret” or “I did this because it was something that many people maybe, may not have noticed at first and I
wanted to add some clarification to that and show my assessment of that.” Tim evidences a desire to craft responses that will engage his audience.

The coding analytic reveals the ways Tim moves beyond mere procedural summary moves in his explanation for a choice in his Unit 2 essay: “So here I wanted to summarize everything that I wanted to talk about, but I also wanted to show what I really felt, like what I really got out of the story.” Of course, organization and coherence continue to be critical parts of essay writing sanctioned by the Common Core rubric, but the goal codes of the stimulated-recall interviews reveal how Tim is moving beyond the procedural rhetorical dimensions of the rubric to a more sophisticated awareness of audience.

Whereas Tim’s Unit 1 essay is dominated by procedural and organizational goal codes that suggest a robotic response to the writing task, the coding of his Unit 2 AE essay shifts away from a predominance of organizational goals to an emphasis on the goal of conveying his ideas and assertions using authorial empathy. This finding is in no way meant to diminish the importance of organization and clarity in academic written pieces. But it does reveal that for this student performing in the first quartile in an 11th grade Honors course, the AE unit resulted in a different set of goals as evidenced by his writing. And when these findings are compared to those of the lower quartile 9th grade CP students, we see how a mastery of conventional procedural moves of essay writing may be a prerequisite for students to fully engage with and benefit from the authorial empathy approach.

Of further note in Unit 2 is the way Tim’s work in the AE unit coincides with an increase in claim-making. Tim has eight of 20 coded goal statements that focus on making a claim in comparison to only two of 16 in Unit 1. The claim statements that Tim makes in his Unit 2
essays are not driven by organizational concerns, but rather pride of ownership as the following excerpt illuminates:

Tim: So here I am trying to show my, what I feel is my strongest point, how both of them they, when they are being pulled apart at this last moment together, they remember what they did and in their memories they don't mention each other at all and I think that really showed how disconnected they really were from each other.  
R: What made you decide to do that?  
Tim: I wanted to show what I felt was my strongest point first, so that is why I had it here.

Tim’s choice to use his own understanding of the best part of his argument as the principle of selection for organizing his essay is in contrast to the more formulaic opening moves in his Unit 1 essay:

R: And what made you decide to do that, to start in that way?  
Tim: Well I did that because it would help to know what is going to be talked about and how it is all going to tie together.  
R: For sure, that makes sense. And did you think about starting the essay in any other kind of way?  
Tim: I don’t think so, no.

In Unit 2 Tim is not merely adhering to conventional organizational procedures; he wants to showcase his strongest point. This seemingly subtle difference in the principle guiding his essay writing decisions is the type of development an English teacher would likely look for in assessing a student’s conceptual development in responding to literature.

An inadvertent offshoot of the authorial empathy unit for the 11th grade students across all of the quartiles was an increased attentiveness to themselves as writers. Consider how Tim thinks about a wider audience beyond his teacher as he explains how he used the scale in crafting his written response to the short story from Unit 2:

R: What role, if any, did the concept of authorial empathy play in how you crafted this essay as compared to your essay from the first unit?  
Tim: I think it did have some impact on how I did it because, as I was writing it myself I wanted to think about what my audience would be reading and how they would be receiving it. I usually do try to think about that, but I did that moreso here thinking about
a wider audience instead of just my teacher, or myself like in a different timeline. And also I wanted to, in the third paragraph where he talks about including his last words, I see you never, I wanted to show what I thought the author was trying to tell me, like more on the “7” side of the scale than through just a pure quote.

Tim’s teacher, Dorothy, anticipated the potential of the AES as a writerly tool and used it to drive her design of Unit 3 which had students using the Authorial Empathy Scale to help them craft essays that would engage readers in their narrative and simultaneously invite their readers to recognize their own authorial aesthetic choices deployed in the essay.

In Unit 3 Tim’s focus on engaging the audience using the AES continues, but it is, of course, supported by the genre of the college essay task. The source codes for the Unit 3 interview are driven by the genre of the college entrance essay. The source codes indicate the source from which the student derived their writing choice. Sources may include things like the writing prompt, a concept from the curriculum, a rubric, the expectations of a specific genre, or MLA formatting conventions. Six of the 10 codes in Tim’s Unit 3 interview are the source of the college entrance essay while the remaining four draw on the tenets of authorial empathy. In this way, Tim’s emerging emphasis on more nuanced writerly choices in Unit 2 is sustained in Unit 3 with support from the genre of the writing task. Tim’s Unit 2 and Unit 3 interviews are both situated at a “4” on the AES.

In the Unit 3 stimulated-recall interview, Tim shares the somewhat complicated spiraling path to concept development (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003) as he explains the reverse way he enacted the authorial empathy reading tool as a writerly tool to engage the audience that would read his college entrance essay:

R: Ok and did you use the authorial empathy approach in your college essay or not really? Like did it guide you or not really?
Tim: I think I did use it so as I was writing I was trying to think about like what my audience would look for and try to like put myself in their place while writing it.
R: And how is that connected to the Authorial Empathy Scale?
Tim: Well, when you're reading something by another author you have to kind of think about what they're thinking so I kind of like did the reverse process of like thinking about what they would be thinking while I was writing...So like I kind of like go back and forth between writer and reader as I'm writing now. I kind of anticipate what how this will be perceived.

Here Tim engages in Theory of Mind work (Rabinowitz & Bancroft, 2014; Zunshine, 2006), an important higher-order inferencing skill. At the end of the interview, Tim even offers evidence of his emerging concept development regarding authorial empathy as he shares how it has changed the way he views and responds to visual texts:

R: Is there anything else to say about the authorial empathy approach or anything else you wanted to say?
Tim: Um I don't know how relevant this is, but it also changed the way I look at films and movies too.
R: O tell me.
Tim: Like I try to like look at how maybe a certain camera angle or like different techniques of filming possibly change how I think of it.
R: Yeah, what would you say the camera angles are on the scale?
Tim: I'd say camera angles, those are a “1” and then the effect of the camera angle brings it more towards a “7” or in between at a “4.”

This excerpt gives rise to Tim’s Tenet which will be set forth in Chapter 5. For Tim, authorial empathy invigorates his writing with responses that are more deliberately designed to engage his reader and not so concerned with the rote organizational constructs of essay writing. Yet, this newfound freedom comes at no cost to his score; his essay score improves from an 88 to a 94 from Unit 1 to 2. The AES may offer different benefits to different students. For students who do not typically engage with literature in terms of authors’ aesthetic choices it may offer them an entry point or foothold as we see with some of Nancy’s 9th grade students. For a student like Tim who may be well-versed in analyzing authors’ choices the AES may allow him to more fully immerse himself in the narrative world while still connecting that immersion back to authors’ aesthetic choices.
Quartile 2 student Kayla. The coding of the stimulated-recall interviews for Q2 student Kayla reveals a similar story to that of the Q1 student Tim. Kayla shifts away from a multitude of goal statements focused on conventions and procedures of essay writing in Unit 1 to more goal statements focused on reading with authorial empathy, specifically through the use of the strategy of inserting oneself into the text in Unit 2. By Unit 3, the expectations of the college essay genre overwhelm the presence of AE.

Kayla’s Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview reveals her focus on organization and coherence and conveying her understanding of double-consciousness; so her goals are primarily about the conventions of academic writing as well as the goals of the curricular unit. In terms of goal statements, six of 13 were organization and coherence and only one was awareness of a reader. Ten of 11 of Kayla’s source codes are conventions of analytical academic writing. Kayla’s Unit 1 interview scores a “1” on the AES because of its sole focus on the aesthetic choices at work in the stories she draws upon in her essay. For example, the characters are referenced as a way of symbolizing the curricular concept of double-consciousness. The way this 11th grade student analyzes the characters as symbolic tools employed by the author connects to the Unit 1 writing of the 9th grade CP students wherein all the characters in Lord of the Flies were considered to be symbols, rather than worthy of ethical consideration as people.

In ways similar to Tim’s Unit 1 piece, Kayla engages in perfunctory procedural moves. The following excerpt about her reason for her choice of how to conclude her piece highlights this sort of robotic response to the writing task:

R: Did you think of doing anything else in your conclusion?
Kayla: I think I could have gone more in detail, kind of reuse or use another quote from W.E.B. DuBois, but I decided just to keep it short, because it is a conclusion, maybe just tie it together, just sum it up, so.
In Unit 2, nine of Kayla’s 13 goal statements are coded as having the goal of reading with authorial empathy or crafting AE balanced responses. The remaining goal statements are linked to conventions of writing so the analysis reveals how the AE approach can work alongside conventions of academic writing. Throughout the course of the interview, Kayla repeatedly invokes the strategy of inserting oneself into the text which is a strategy taught within the AE unit as a way of moving from a more authorial response to a more balanced response via empathetic immersion in the narrative world:

R: I noticed that several times you say this notion of inserting yourself into the text or the readers can insert themselves into the text to see how the characters feel and you talk about making inferences, can you tell me a little bit about that?
Kayla: Yeah I used that part to be like a “7” on the scale, like empathetic into the text, like you are supposed to involve yourself into the text, but not. This is just one part of the balanced response, inserting yourself into the text.

Kayla recognizes that immersing herself in the narrative world is one part of reading in an authorially empathetic way. This strategy when paired with the strategy of noting author's craft can help students craft more balanced responses to literature (Brett, 2016).

Another illuminating excerpt from the Unit 2 interview reveals how authorial empathy is shaping Kayla as a reader and writer:

R: What, if anything, did your work on authorial empathy change about how you are reading?
Kayla: It changed my reading because, you’re reading something and you understand it makes you feel a certain way and then you can go back and read it again and see that oh okay, they used certain words or metaphors to see that that made you feel a certain way. R: Why is it important to do that?
Kayla: I think, I know it is important to do that because learning about your own writing too, when you write you have to be conscious of what the author chose to pick certain names and certain things to make you feel a certain way.

In addition to noting the interplay between authors’ aesthetic choices and the ways in which readers engage with their characters, Kayla adopts the AES as a tool that can guide her in writing pieces that engage her readers in balanced ways. This adaptation of the AES tool as a
writerly instrument matches themes that emerged across several of the 9th grade student interviews. Kayla’s alteration of the tool also anticipates the changes Dorothy enacted in Unit 3 that called on students to use the AES as a writerly tool. Across different classroom contexts, grade levels, and ability groupings, the authorial empathy approach was taken up as a tool in unanticipated writerly ways by teachers and students alike.

The results of Kayla’s Unit 3 stimulated-recall interview analysis reveal a mix of goal statements that arise from the writing prompt, the expectations of the genre of the college essay, the conventions of academic writing, and the authorial empathy approach. The sources of Kayla’s decisions in her Unit 3 writing are evident in six codes for the conventions of academic writing, four codes for the expectations of the college essay genre, and two codes for the AE unit. Indeed, her Unit 3 interview scores a “3” on the AES because of its repeated goal statements of achieving AE balance.

But what is most salient is that the ways in which Kayla draws on the tenets of AE in her Unit 3 writing piece cannot contend against the expectations of conventional academic writing, specifically the college essay genre. However, the awareness this Q2 11th grade student has developed about this way of approaching literature suggests that the concept of AE has the potential to take hold in sustainable ways for 11th grade Honors students currently scoring in the upper two quartiles. In ways similar to some of her 11th grade classmates and some of the 9th grade focal students, Kayla shares her developing awareness of the way she is reading in terms of the AES:

R: Can you tell me any other thoughts about authorial empathy and if or how it changes or impacts how you read?
Kayla: When I read I think it really helped learning about that because like obviously the author puts certain things like even the names of the characters could be used as their choices and just it's important to look at both cuz I'm more of an empathetic reader so like
adding that in there and kind of getting a balance really helps you understand what you're trying to read, if it's difficult sometimes.

Kayla recognizes her typical empathetic orientation and new ways of attending to authors’ aesthetic choices that can supplement that approach to achieve balance.

Quartile 3 student Margy. The stimulated-recall interview data analysis for the quartile 3 student Margy reveals that the majority of her goals, six of the eight coded goal statements, in writing the essay were procedural and focused on finishing the task. The majority of the sources, five of the six source codes, motivating her choices were coded as the student’s understanding of the conventions of writing. Her Unit 1 interview has no mention or awareness of a reader or audience other than her repeated goal to “keep it simple.” The Unit 2 stimulated-recall interview reveals few gains in terms of analytical moves or balanced responses although there is evidence to suggest the student’s increasing awareness of the way she typically approaches literary texts. This increased awareness of her typically “7-ish” approach, listed as Margy’s Message in Chapter 5, may be useful in helping similarly-oriented students move toward balance. However, in Unit 3 the student does not show any increases in authorially empathetic writing. Rather, her goals include staying within the word count and completing the task of the college essay.

The analysis of Margy’s stimulated-recall interview in response to her Unit 1 essay reveals her desire to keep things simple and not give anything away. By not give anything away, Margy means not letting the reader in on her argument too early or she will run out of things to say. In this model, students view essay writing as a game of poker wherein they lose if the teacher finds out what they mean to say. Unfortunately, a student’s quest to not give anything away can sometimes coincide with an essay lacking in clarity or any clear assertions. Adherents to the poker model of essay crafting fear having to write a thesis or commit to an assertion because it creates mandates for providing analysis or explanation for those assertions.
This ‘not wanting to give anything away’ approach is a rejoinder English teachers often hear from students in their writing approach so in this case Margy’s experience of the AE unit could offer insight into the potential for how to guide a student who is hesitant to present an argument toward becoming more likely to craft more balanced responses. The extent to which Margy resists explication or risk-taking in her writing is evident in the following excerpt:

R: Can you tell me what you were doing in this paragraph?
Margy: I think I was just trying to keep it simple and explain what the essay, or the paragraphs after this were going to be about, and just, I don't know, keep it all simple.
R: What made you decide to do that?
Margy: I think because I was discussing three different essays, well not essays but works, just to keep it little, because the rest of the paragraphs are going to be about the works anyways, I didn't really want to give anything away, but not give my commentary or whatever in the paragraph.

And later in the interview, Margy’s responses regarding her concluding paragraph reveal that she is bound by procedural conventions and going through the motions in the way she feels she must present her thinking:

Margy: I think I was trying to make the concluding paragraph simple and to the chase, I guess, but not to the chase, but to the point.
R: Okay, why?
Margy: Because I knew that I needed a closing paragraph. And I needed to put one in and I didn't have much to think on to put in there.
R: Why did you need a closing paragraph?
M: To tie up the other paragraphs and like a closing.

The design of the study allowed me to explore how the responses of a student bound primarily by utilitarian and procedural goals in responding to literature would be shaped by the authorial empathy intervention.

The analysis of the stimulated-recall interview for Margy’s Unit 2 essay reveals an increase in the goal statements focused on authorial empathy with six of the 11 goal statements focused on authorial empathy. The remaining goal statements still focus on the conventions of writing and the directly stated goal of “getting it over with” which was part of the student’s
typical approach from Unit 1. Although Margy ostensibly demonstrates more awareness of the
AE concept, it is still viewed as more of a task than an approach. An examination of the
following excerpt led to this finding:

Margy: Cuz it that was like I guess in the other paragraphs I covered about the
connections that I made and that what I saw was the author's choice or something was the
words he used.
R: Did you think of doing anything else here?
Margy: I probably could have added a little bit more like um evidence from the text but I
didn't. I explained the author's choice for certain things that he did in that and I decide to
do that because I covered the empathy part of the story and I needed to cover the author's
choice.

The language Margy uses to describe her enactment seems perfunctory as indicated by “I
covered the empathy part of the story and I needed to cover the author’s choice.” It is potentially
useful that Margy is aware that empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative and how
they connect with author’s aesthetic choices could be used to generate responses to literature.
However, the way this student seems to enact AE does not seem particularly vibrant, generative,
or transformative. But she is not alone in this approach; a student like 9th grader Kevin
evidenced a similar utilitarian approach to his written responses. Interestingly enough, Margy’s
essay score slightly increases in Unit 2. Margy’s Unit 2 interview remains at a “6” on the AES
as Margy makes connections to characters, but does not take up authors’ aesthetic choices in any
substantive way.

Margy’s Unit 3 stimulated-recall interview continues in a similar vein to that of Unit 1
and 2. Margy expresses the primary goal of getting the essay done, staying under the word limit,
and adhering to the rules of the task. It does not appear that the AE approach had a substantial
impact on Margy’s response to literature. At the conclusion of our third and final interview I
asked Margy what, if anything, had changed about the way she reads fiction after the AE unit.
Her response illuminates, at the very least, the Authorial Empathy Scale’s potential to help students recognize the way they typically approach certain types of texts:

    R: Has it changed any way that you think or not really?
    Margy: If we got assigned something to read in class I’d read it, but I’m always looking to like connect with it to stay interested. I don’t really think about author’s choice or anything.
    R: So you’re more...
    Margy: Yeah I’m like all the way at a “7.”

Across the three units, Margy maintains her strictly utilitarian approach to essay crafting, but it is worth noting how she self-identifies that her reading approach is consistently at a “7.” That is a powerful recognition because I theorize that students who can recognize where their responses can be situated on the AES can be guided via strategy instruction to shift their responses based on the text and task.

    Quartile 4 student Derek. In Derek’s Unit 1 stimulated-recall interview half of his goal statements are coded as a desire to make things easy for his reader to understand. Nine of the 18 coded goal statements are assertions like, “I decided to write about this one since it was easier to talk about than all the other ones and probably the reader might understand more easily.” Simplicity and ease in accomplishing the task drive Derek’s writing choices. Throughout the interview there is no recognition that the proverbial reader is in fact his Honors ELA teacher who would expect a complex and comprehensive argument. In some ways the ‘I want to make it easy to understand’ approach is similar to the poker approach insofar as it is a sort of straw man because when Derek says he wants to make it easy for his reader he also means making it easy for himself. Derek’s Unit 1 interview was situated at a “1” on the AES because it solely treated the characters from the stories as authorial tools that could be used to explain certain human universals.
Again, the stimulated-recall analysis reveals the gap between task and assessment. Derek is connecting to the cultures of the characters, but he is not actually being evaluated on that ability to connect. Instead, Derek is being evaluated on the writing task via a rubric so it really does not matter how much he engages with what Dorothy calls the universal human experiences across cultures; it matters that he writes clearly and in accordance with the conventions of the rubric.

Derek’s Unit 2 stimulated-recall interview evidences his understanding of authorial empathy and his engagement in the writing task. He repeatedly articulates the goal statement of striving to craft AE balanced responses. Derek’s writing piece still evidences the same sort of issues that are picked up by a rubric in terms of grammar and conventions. However, there is repeated evidence of his efforts to enact authorial empathy. Consider the following excerpt from the interview about his Unit 2 writing piece:

Derek: I feel like since the author makes the aesthetic choices, since there’s a lot of choices the author had to make to like emotionally appeal to the readers of the passage. So when I wrote my essay I was trying to balance it between the emotional aspect of nostalgia and everything into just the way the author appealed to the reader. And I wrote about in my essay - well I tried to write about it in my essay.

R: Ok cool. Do you have an example you could show where you tried that? Or you think represents reading with authorial empathy?

Derek: Umm yeah probably on the first page in the second paragraph. Yeah I said, “When I was reading ‘I See You Never’ many readers will begin to notice the author chose to appeal to the readers' emotions and show how difficult it was to see Mr. Ramirez not able to say goodbye and get dragged out so quickly.” And for that I was just trying to say since the author chose to write about how he was getting booted out of the country, kicked out of the country so quickly that it could like appeal emotionally to the readers because like you never know they could have a situation like that too. And I decided to write about that in the second paragraph.

I include this excerpt to show the level of thought that went into Derek’s writing decisions in his AE writing piece. Six of 12 coded goal statements express his intent to write balanced responses using AE; he articulated these goals in ways such as, “I just wanted to introduce it first and
generate a ‘4’ response to it.” The remaining codes consisted of four focused on conventional writing goals and two engaged with the unit’s essential question. In her stimulated-recall interview on Derek’s Unit 2 writing piece, Dorothy notices and responds to the same excerpt Derek referenced in his interview. The following excerpt shows her excitement at his effort to demonstrate an awareness of the “1” end of the AES, but then frustration at his inability to deliver on this effort:

Dorothy: So I underlined ‘the author chose’ and I wrote ‘I like where this is going’...So I saw that and immediately was pretty excited about what’s to come here. So then I continue on, there’s another revision.

R: Ok

Dorothy: A similar need for revision where he just continues on where he should end the sentence or consider a semicolon that sort of thing so I said, ‘Can you figure out the pattern?’ So I continue on reading the paragraph and by the end I wrote, ‘Can you discuss the author’s choices?’...So he starts the paragraph talking about the author chose, but he never actually mentions the author or any choices or anything with the text for the rest of the paragraph.

R: You wanted him to deliver on that promise.

Dorothy: Yep, so he says, ‘I feel as though this story connects with everyone who reads this. Some people every day interact with one another and may never speak with again because of certain situations going on in some people's lives. It can be difficult to process but believe it or not a lot of readers are able to relate to this type of short story.’ That’s it. So he never actually goes back and uses any other examples from the text besides the quote ‘I see you never.’ He doesn’t discuss the author’s choices so this is where he’s all, he’s at a “7” here: ‘people can relate to this story,’ ‘people say goodbye,’ ‘people leave each other,’ you know, but he never actually takes it back.

Dorothy is looking for authorial empathy to be enacted, but Derek’s delivery is marked by grammatical and conventional errors. Ultimately, Derek’s need for revision and adherence to the conventions of formal writing prioritized by the rubric Dorothy used made it challenging for the teacher and student to collaborate on developing his understanding of the AE approach.

In keeping with the trend of the other quartile students in his class, Derek’s Unit 3 stimulated-recall interview was dominated by the source of the college entrance essay writing genre. Although he references the AE approach and works to enact it in his writing piece, the
analytical codes reveal that his primary goal is to adhere to the expectations of the college entrance essay reader. Although the AE work seems to have been impactful to Derek, particularly in the thought-work that went into his Unit 2 essay, it could not compete against the dominance of the college essay writing genre as a source in the Unit 3 interview.

Derek’s Unit 3 interview scored a “5” on the AES due to his repeated engagement with the AE approach that tended toward empathetic engagement with the character in his essay. What I refer to as Derek’s Dilemma encapsulates several important facets of the AE approach that will be addressed in Chapter 5. First, the AE approach is best supported when enacted along with certain types of texts for certain kinds of writing tasks and with a rubric that invites the writing to be evaluated in terms of the extent to which the writing evidences reading with authorial empathy rather than the particularities of conventions. And, second, the findings suggest the potential insufficiency of written essays as a means for gauging student understanding of the AE approach to responding to literature.

**In their discussions.** As outlined in the preceding teacher and student discussion data protocols, the culminating discussions across the three units were observed, audiorecorded, and transcribed. The discussions were divided into episodes, situated on the AES, and coded for goals, tools, and sources. In instances where a discussion episode was entirely procedural or could not be clearly situated on the AES, the episode was not included in the final analysis.

In the Unit 1 discussion the 11th grade students were invited to express sympathy for characters that appeared in an array of texts including short stories, prose poems, and even paintings. In Unit 2, students used the AE approach to discuss Ray Bradbury’s “Sun and Shadow” in response to the AE prompt that invited students to explain what they thought and felt in reading the story and what the author had done to warrant those thoughts and feelings. In Unit
3, students used the AES as a meta-tool for an evaluative discussion of college essays in preparation for crafting their own college entrance essay. See Appendix E for all of the discussion prompts. To situate the episodes in the Unit 3 discussion on the AES, I considered the extent to which students talked about aesthetic choices of the essay writer as the author and the extent to which they connected to the character in the essay.

Three main findings emerged from the data analysis of the 11th grade students in discussion. First, the students changed their goals from primarily participation and response in Unit 1 to responding with authorial empathy in Unit 2 and 3. The increase of AE as a goal in Unit 2 coincided with an increased likelihood that students would initiate the opening move that began a discussion episode. Second, the increased use of the tool of the AES and the source of AE in Unit 2 coincided with episodes in which students take more collaborative turns and disagreement turns. This is in marked contrast to the lengthy I-feel statements that exist as parallel monologues in Unit 1. As a result of the AE intervention the students shifted from lengthy I-feel parallel monologues in Unit 1 to responsive collaborative balanced discussion across the nearly doubled amount of episodes of Unit 2. By Unit 3 students were drawing on the AES and approach as a meta-tool for their discussion which again has an increase in the number of balanced episodes from Unit 1. See Table 7 for the findings from the 11th grade students’ discussions.

The discussion analysis allowed me to explore the extent to which AE was being enacted by all of the students in the class beyond the specificities of the four quartile students. These findings are drawn from the analysis of discussion across three units that shift from discussion episodes primarily situated a “7” on AES to discussions in Unit 2 and 3 that have the dominant episode type situated at a “4” on the AES. This is a striking shift especially considering data
collection occurred toward the final quarter of the academic year when patterns are well-established and difficult to shift. The students’ discussions show how including the analysis of authors’ choices does not have to result in decreased engagement with the characters. This shift from primarily “7s” on the AES to primarily “4s” provides an opportunity for students to develop understandings that a steady diet of “7-type” episodes does not afford.

**Unit 1.** Of the eight episodes of the Unit 1 discussion five could be clearly situated on the Authorial Empathy Scale. These five episodes were all situated at a “6” or “7” on the scale which indicates a tendency towards immersion in the narrative world of the texts rather than a balance with attending to authors’ aesthetic choices. This is not surprising because of Dorothy’s typical orientation toward literature which tends to focus on empathetic engagement with characters. This is in keeping with research on how teachers’ orientations manifest in students’ class discussions (Nystrand, 2006; Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck, 1993).

The most striking finding of the Unit 1 discussion analysis was the dominance of the I-feel statement as a tool in the students’ discussion contributions. The dominant mode of contributing in the discussion was via lengthy I-feel statements that existed as parallel monologues. Rarely did students interject and respond to the preceding utterance in ways that interpreted it; instead they tended to deliver parallel speeches around similar topics.

Research on first-year college students’ discussions (Goldblatt & Smith, 1995) found that students tend to use the contributions of their peers to spur personal interpretations rather than to collaborate on producing consensual renderings in response to texts. Some of the students in their study saw discussions as an opportunity to showcase prior knowledge rather than as an occasion to develop new knowledge. In a similar way, the series of I-feel statements that
typified the majority of the 11\textsuperscript{th} grade students’ utterances in each Unit 1 discussion episode often existed as a series of parallel monologues.

The I-feel statement as a tool announces that a student is about to present a lengthy statement. And this type of utterance does not invite or readily allow for a disagreement. The student statement following an I-feel statement was never “Really? I saw it this way…” or some such similar utterance that would more readily allow for disagreement, clarification, or collaboration. In Unit 1, there are very few instances where students say something like, “Building on what so and so said…”

An excerpt from episode 4 which scored a “6” on the AES showcases the discourse pattern typical throughout the episodes of the Unit 1 discussion:

Jaleesa: Okay, personally I would feel more sympathy if he chose it out of his own morals because he chose to fight because of that is what he believes to do, but it is conflicting in his brain more so than if he was forced to fight, then he doesn’t want to fight, but he cares about his friend, so it would be easier to let his friend go.

Andy: I feel like it would be harder because if you believe this way and you keep going against your own morals and beliefs, so like you would have to choose love for your friend, more than the morals, so it would be harder decision to turn in your friend because you would know it would most likely lead to his death, so when you put your friend to death, what will you keep him alive or go against beliefs so it would be even more complicated, an internal conflict.

Maeve: I feel like no matter what, it’s saying the amount of sympathy, like seeing a childhood friend and having to pick if he lives or dies if you have to, or because you are truly doing it for your country, no matter what it is an impossible decision and you don’t know the person is young, it is still hard and no matter what the reason is for, so I think he deserves the same amount of sympathy no matter what.

Though students were able to sustain discussion across eight episodes these episodes were unbalanced on the AES and dominated by parallel monologues. In Unit 2 the number and type of episodes shift toward balance in distinctive ways.
Unit 2. Nine of the 15 episodes in the Unit 2 discussion are situated at a balance of either “3,” “4,” or “5” on the Authorial Empathy Scale. The goal of responding with AE is the dominant coded student goal throughout the discussion. Responding to the essential question is the second most prominent student goal. The students invoke the tool of the AES throughout the discussion. The Unit 2 discussion features many more instances when students initiate episodes and respond to each other in consecutive collaborative turns; this is a marked difference from the parallel monologues so prominent in Unit 1. Students sustain balanced discussion to the extent that there are five consecutive episodes without teacher interjection. In Unit 1 Dorothy interjected in all but three of the episodes.

In Unit 1 the student statements are final proclamations insofar as they do not invite disagreement whereas in Unit 2 there is the potential to continue the thought, to collaborate, or even to disagree. The AES by its very nature positions people at different spots on the scale and allows for collaborative dialogue rather than parallel monologues. The scale creates an occasion for collaboration in Unit 2 that had been foreclosed in Unit 1 which was more individual response-centered. In Unit 2, though there may not have been a huge transformation, there were more invitations for the class to collaborate on a point in ways that make Unit 2 more class-focused than self-focused.

The following illuminating excerpt wherein students initiate the episode, build on collaborative points, connect with the characters, and take note of authors’ aesthetic choices reveals the ways in which the utterances are not statements as much as invitations to collaborate on a shared understanding. In Unit 2 the primary coded goal of the students is to respond with authorial empathy and this coincides with a decrease in parallel monologues:
Tim: I think he is mad because these photographers coming in who are rich and they are using this poverty as a prop for their art and he feels like he is just an object in their photos.
Andy: Would anyone else be offended if somebody, a photographer would use their house as a set?
Jacinta: I don't think it was the use of the house as much as he was using it to make the model look more attractive because you know his is disheveled and in, I have it highlighted, but it says, "it fills me with terrible rage when I see you make over these things as if I planned it this way," and it wasn't like a set up stage or whatever, but it was them using his house.
Tim: And adding onto that he’s taking, he is not like cardboard mannies, not just an item.
Maeve: I agree with you guys and I do understand why he is mad, but he even said I'll cut off their heads, but I feel like he’s really a little too mad about the whole thing, I don't think it is that big of a deal.
Andy: So, do you think his anger out of proportion?
Maeve: Yes
Tim: Well, I feel like it's because they brought his son into and I don't know, yeah.
Jaleesa: Also, they kind of tried to bribe, which might have annoyed him.
Vineet: Yeah, it was like a lot of money either, it was like five pesos, which is
Nia: Insulting.
Vineet: Yeah.
Maeve: I also think he could be feeling social pressure because I don't know it was like the top of the third page it says, "you think I’m stupid I have books in my room, do you see the window Maria," and then he talks about how many books he has and I guess in this society he is not considered smart or top class so he is thinking that these people are insulting him.

Of note are the ways in which students are responsive to the utterances that precedes theirs.
They ask questions and respond to them, they complete each other’s thoughts, and they disagree with each other. Rather than a series of preplotted monologues, the students engage in dialogue and consecutive turns of talk. This illuminating excerpt encapsulates the type of discourse that occurred in Unit 2.

Or consider:

Kayla: Like I said for maybe the author thinks that you have control of your actions because he chose to add a character who didn't necessarily react or care about them taking pictures of his house, I guess the author is saying you do have choices in how you act in situations.
Maeve: Also the models themselves they didn't really react at all, they were mentioned twice as actual characters they are just kind of there, so they could have reacted to what
was there but they didn't speak up so they control what they have but they kind of see that they were like at the whim of the photographers.

Hannah: What would you think the cameraman would say, like the EQ?
Kayla: I feel like he wasn't really, given that he was almost the, like the story is focused on him I feel like he was just kind of there.
Hannah: The author chose to not even give him a name, he is just a cameraman, so you really can't identify if he is enough to even fit into it.
Terry: I think they did that because they want you to relate more to the Ricardo than the photographers because you want to go against the photographers, they don't want you to feel sympathy for them.
Ron: Maybe if the photographer had no name do you think that’s possibly because he is a symbol for something in everyday life?
Jaleesa: I think the photographer symbolizes ignorance because he doesn't want to hear Ricardo out, he doesn't want to understand his culture.
Kayla: I agree with how about he could represent ignorance because he wasn't really willing to even listen, I feel like he was kind of rushing, trying to brush Ricardo off the whole time, not really taking what he is saying and doing something about it, he didn't care, so like.
Nolan: I feel like the cameramen feel like they have too much control over their lives because they felt like they could pay off Ricardo and the other people to take pictures anywhere, so they were saying that money can buy you control over things.
Tim: The cameraman says like this has never happened before, like he is trying to justify him being there, so he's thinking that he should have control over things that he doesn't always deserve to have control over.

Although students may use I-feel statements they are not engaging in parallel monologues; rather they are responsive to the preceding utterances and collaborative in their responses to student-generated questions.

In her interview about the lesson, Dorothy talked about how the scale and approach were evident throughout the discussion although the students did not reference it explicitly in their discussion. The students used it to prepare for the discussion. It is interesting that the tool is more likely taken up in small group discussion or tasks within the unit than in discussion in whole-class discussion in this instance.

Unit 3. In Unit 3, six of the 10 episodes are balanced. The primary finding in the Unit 3 analysis is the extent to which the AES cultivated a meta-awareness that was a useful tool for when students evaluated college entrance essays and set out to compose their own.
In Unit 3 Dorothy offered the students the Authorial Empathy Scale as a way to create a meta-understanding of how to approach and evaluate college entrance essays. The 11th grade students used the scale as a principle of evaluation in the essays:

Maeve: I feel like essay four did a good job, she told a lot about herself and then I thought that was a “4” essay.
Sharon: I think in general, to answer that question that an effective college essay should be a “4” on the scale because, like Amy said, you need your essay to stand out and that might be through your word choice and stuff like that for the reviewer to be like insert themselves into the text.

The students directly invoke the AES and recognize authors’ aesthetic choices; Sharon invokes the AE strategy of inserting oneself into text as a means of empathetic engagement with the writer as character in the essay. Quartile 2 student Kayla also invokes the inserting self into text strategy: “It would be hard for the reader to insert themselves into the text because they didn’t really use any word choice or anything like that.” The students take the AES tool and apply it to new texts and tasks.

In addition to using the AES as an evaluative tool, the 11th grade students in Unit 3 draw on the AE approach to make recommendations for how to upgrade essays using AE:

Kyle: He could probably improve this if he was more authorially empathetic. He could probably improve it if he was more balanced in his writing because then the person reading it could connect with the characters more, or the character being the person writing it...
Hannah: I think this really was helpful, I do see a lot, we have pointed out a lot of what not to do and what to do, we have taken a lot of good ideas and I definitely will use them, you have to use authorial empathy that is the best essays.
Greg: You have to use both sides of the scale at the same time because you have to make choices that will make the reader react to your writing.
Nia: You can have a really good and moving story but you cannot communicate it well it is not going to have the full effect of a good essay.

Having experienced the AES as a readerly tool in the prior unit, the students fluently invoke the scale as writerly tool.
In the following excerpt, Lisa theorizes how using flashbacks or other aesthetic choices could invite more empathy for the character and result in a college essay that elicits a balanced response:

Lisa: If the baseball person wants to write about it that would be good, maybe about a big game he had and then flashbacks to how he was not always on Varsity, a really big fight he had one game, and then how he wasn't always on Varsity and he had to work hard to get where he is, I think that would be a more creative, so it is more on the “1” scale and then you could feel for him while on the “7” scale so it would be a nice “4.”

And in this excerpt from the Unit 3 discussion the students demonstrate their awareness that the choices authors make in their writing or that the students make in their writing invite people to read in different ways:

Ron: By the end of it, they just get lost in a whole list about their opinions about songs and artists and stuff like that.
Lou: I feel like the biggest mistake that it is such a “7,” there is nothing, it just goes all the way up the scale, it's an “8”...
Greg: Number two is an “8” and number one is a “0.”
Nia: It is going into the negative numbers.
Ed: Exactly like Nia said.

Further, the students recognize that there are ways of falling off the scale that have costs and affordances. Dorothy could potentially build upon these understandings to teach students how different genres of writing invite different types of responses on the AES.

The excerpt from Dorothy’s interview about the Unit 3 discussion included in the teacher data findings reveals her pleasure that the AE approach has become a mindset in the students and gave them a framework for approaching the task of writing their college entrance essays. Dorothy also noticed the ways in which quartile 2 student Kayla internalized the language of the AE unit particularly in her repeated enactment of the inserting oneself into the text strategy.

Dorothy shares:

Kayla, one of our focus students, said in the one essay it was difficult for inserting self into the text so it was interesting that she was actually using the words, the certain
strategies that were brought up in the authorial empathy unit. So her use of that I really, I was pleased with that. She also brought up word choice.

Dorothy noted both the widespread utility of the approach and the specific ways in which it guided focal students, like Kayla, in their approach to texts.

In sum, the language of authorial empathy and its accompanying scale and strategies supported students in becoming more specific in their evaluation of the college entrance essays in the Unit 3 discussion. The findings reported in the teacher data analysis suggest that the AES gave Dorothy moves she did not enact in her prior approach to the college entrance essay. And the scale also gave students the opportunity, although not fully realized, to develop each other’s thinking through collaborative moves in the Unit 2 and Unit 3 discussions.
CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS

I began this project because of an unnatural divide in my own teaching between wanting students to be able to analyze author’s choices in literature, but also wanting them to be able to engage empathetically with characters in narrative worlds. It seemed that the more I invited students to be attentive to authors’ aesthetic choices the less they engaged with characters. In contrast, when encouraged to engage with characters, students would become so immersed in the narrative world and their responses to it that they failed to appropriately note and honor the author’s choices that invited that engagement. I sought balance in my teaching and in the ways students could approach literature that would prepare them for the analytic work expected in college without losing the distinct joy of being fully engaged with characters in literature.

Drawing on Rabinowitz’s concept of authorial reading, I designed an approach called reading with authorial empathy and a tool called the Authorial Empathy Scale that could make manifest to teachers and students the ways they were approaching and responding to literature. I created a series of lessons that would make clear how to move along the AES in ways that allowed for more balanced responses to texts. In response to research that critiques the divide between theory and practice in secondary education (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003), I wanted the authorial empathy approach to have both a firm grounding in theoretical approaches to literature and an ease of use that would make it practical for teachers and students alike.

The Authorial Empathy Scale afforded me this intersection of theoretical grounding and practicality in ways that were useful in my own teaching and for the students I taught. However, I wondered how my colleagues who had different orientations would take up authorial empathy and if it would shape their students’ approach to reading and responding to literature. The
authorial empathy intervention allowed me to explore my two research questions: (1) In what ways, if any, does the authorial empathy intervention shape the teaching practice of two secondary ELA teachers? (2) In what ways, if any, does the authorial empathy intervention shape secondary English students’ responses to texts?

Nancy’s Teaching

In her Response to Student Writing

For Nancy, AE allowed her to evaluate her higher quartile students’ writing in more readerly ways that were less consumed by grammar corrections and MLA conventions. There is evidence to suggest that the AE approach could work in tandem with her rubric-centric evaluative approach and even lead to evaluations that are more focused on AE. The AE approach also provided Nancy and her students with a shared language for approaching literature.

In her Discussions

In terms of Nancy’s class discussions, AE afforded her a way to curate richer class discussions wherein students responded to texts via consecutive turns across a series of more balanced discussion episodes. However, Nancy’s Unit 3 discussion highlighted the need for more explicit guidance in pairing the AE approach with certain types of texts and tasks that invite AE reading. The findings also made manifest the ways in which the IRE discourse model that dominates classroom discussions (Cazden, 1988) is an impediment to fostering discussions that evidence AE. Lastly, the analysis reveals the difference between owning the tool, as Nancy does with her bookmark in Unit 1, and using the tool, as Nancy did with the AES in Unit 2. The orientation and the tool cannot be separated as they were in Unit 3.
**Written Responses of 9th grade Students in a College Preparatory ELA Course**

For the students Nancy taught, their Unit 1 writing was primarily motivated by the conventional expectations of the academic writing task or, as in the case of the Q2, Q3, and Q4 students, largely driven by a utilitarian desire to finish the task. However, all of the focal students across the four quartiles evidence more balanced AE scores in their Unit 2 stimulated-recall interviews. Further, the analysis suggests that these students developed their empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative against the backdrop of a teacher whose typical orientation toward literary responses prioritized more analytical interpretations of authors’ aesthetic choices.

However, the AE gains made in Unit 2 were not sustained in Unit 3 due largely to the text selection and task assignment which highlights the need for the AE approach to be supported by text and task selections that invite and allow for AE responses. The findings from the 9th grade student data analysis embody a tension that inspired this study: how to empathetically engage with characters in the narrative world while also attending to authors’ aesthetic choices in ways favored by the expectations of formal academic writing.

**Spoken Responses of 9th grade Students in a College Preparatory ELA Course**

During the AE intervention 9th grade students were more inclined to generate interpretive questions and share their own responses to literature using the AES. By facilitating consecutive turns of talk and opportunities to collaborate or disagree about an interpretation, the AES functioned as a tool that could allow students to resist the dominant classroom discourse pattern of IRE. In keeping with a key theme of the study the 9th grade student discussion data analysis reveals the necessity of pairing the AE approach with texts and tasks that support the goals of the approach. Texts that do not allow for responses that attend to both authors’ aesthetic choices and
empathetic engagement with characters limit the potential of AE to be enacted. Similarly, tasks that privilege responses at a certain pole of the AES or diminish the likelihood of a balanced response limit the potential of the AE approach to be enacted by students. It is important to note that the text, task, and tool selections are a product of the institutional instructional setting, particularly in terms of the curriculum, rubric, and IRE approach evident in Nancy’s classroom.

Dorothy’s Teaching

In her Response to Student Writing

For Dorothy, the findings suggest the tension between an articulated goal of having students empathetically engage with characters in literature and the types of analytical and conventional writing moves favored by the Common Core rubric. This finding is illuminating for all teachers who find themselves faced with using an institutional rubric as their primary source of evaluation when the rubric may not prioritize the specific conceptual developments or approaches the teachers strive to foster in students. Dorothy embraced the utility of the authorial empathy approach by creating a whole new unit that drew on the AES as a more writerly tool for crafting college entrance essays. While the AE approach gave Dorothy and her students a shared approach to reading and writing, the expectations of the college essay genre dominated student goals in Unit 3 again revealing the impact that text and task have on the enactment of the AE approach.

In her Discussions

For Dorothy, who was already quite astute at helming classroom discussions in Unit 1, the AE approach allowed her to curate an increased number of balanced discussion episodes in Unit 2. Further, there is evidence to suggest that her interjections into discussions were guided by a goal of fostering more authorially empathetic balanced discussion. For example, when her
students veered into the types of utterances that would be situated toward the “7” end of the AES. Dorothy would interject and redirect them toward balance. Even as Dorothy drew on texts and tasks outside the designed scope of the authorial empathy approach, her Unit 3 discussions sustained a balance not seen in Unit 1.

**Written Responses of 11th grade Students in an Honors ELA Course**

For the students Dorothy taught, the AE approach allowed them to write with greater balance in Unit 2 in ways that did not decrease their essay scores. The findings suggest that those students who have mastered the writing conventions of academic arguments are best positioned to enact the AE approach. Further, AE is best supported by texts, tasks, and tools that allow for students to attend to authors’ aesthetic choices and engage empathetically with characters. Lastly, the 11th grade quartile students found ways to enact AE as a writerly tool whether in their own conception of the tool or via their teacher’s guidance in Unit 3. However, the emerging shared AE approach faced obstacles in the form of the Common Core rubric used to evaluate their essays in Unit 2 as well as the prominence of the expectations of the college entrance essay as a source in Unit 3.

**Spoken Responses of 11th grade Students in an Honors ELA Course**

In their discussions the 11th grade students in the study were able to initiate and sustain a greater number of balanced discussion episodes during Unit 2. Whereas the discussion in Unit 1 features episodes consisting of a series of parallel monologues in the form of I-feel statements, the episodes in Unit 2 evidence a greater number of collaborative consecutive turns among students. By Unit 3 the AES appears as a meta-tool for students’ engagement with and response to texts. Again, the expectations of the institutional instructional setting shaped the teacher’s
selection of texts, tasks, and tools, particularly in terms of the texts determined by the curriculum and the use of the Common Core rubric.

My work in the authorial empathy study has implications for theory, research, and practice.

**Implications for Theory**

Research shows that secondary ELA teachers need an articulated conceptual approach to literature that combines theory and practice (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Taylor, 2003). The findings of the current study suggest that the authorial empathy approach is an effective tool for guiding teachers and students in their approach to texts in the ELA classroom. Teachers seeking to develop shared approaches to literature may wish to draw on the AE approach. Further, teacher educator programs tasked with introducing preservice teachers into a variety of approaches could do well to introduce future ELA teachers to the AE approach.

More broadly, the current study suggests the utility of scales, like the Authorial Empathy Scale, as tools for teachers and students in their approaches to texts. In this way, the current study enters into the conversation surrounding the utility of semantic differential scales (Imbrenda, 2016; Smith & Imbrenda, 2018) and affect-driven interpretive heuristics (Levine, 2014; Levine & Horton, 2015).

The current study illuminates the ways in which the rubrics ELA teachers use that prioritize writing as a product may be at odds with teacher conceptions of writing as process or learning tool. Findings such as these suggest the continued need for more research on ways of developing ELA pedagogical theories that bridge the gap between concepts of writing as a product and writing as a process. This current study raises important questions about the privileged place that writing tasks occupy in secondary ELA classrooms. Are there other more
effective ways of gauging students’ conceptual understandings using tools like small-group discussion or stimulated-recall interviews?

The findings from both of the classes in the current study reveal the need to support approaches to literature with deliberately chosen texts, specifically assigned tasks, and thoughtfully enacted tools. Research is needed to develop theoretical frameworks for the types of texts, tasks, and tools that are best suited to certain types of approaches to literature. This research can ensure that approaches like authorial empathy are effectively enacted.

Implications for Research

Reflecting on What Worked

The authorial empathy unit was the highlight of the study design because I was able to take the time to thoughtfully align the AE approach with the sorts of texts that invite and allow for balanced responses, the sorts of tasks that invite and allow for balanced responses, and a tool designed explicitly in accordance with the tenets of the teaching approach. The careful design of the AE prompt enacted in each teacher’s Unit 2 worked because it invited students to share what the author did that made them think and feel certain ways in response to the text. This language allows for a consideration of authors’ aesthetic choices, but also allows for the opportunity to feel and connect with characters in the narrative world of the text. In short, the AE prompt does not preclude or privilege a response that would be situated at one end of the AES; it allows for, but does not mandate an authorially empathetic response.

The teacher training meetings allowed me to support each teacher in enacting the AE unit with fidelity. This allowed teachers and students to effectively enact and experience the approach. The ways in which teachers and students took up the approach indicate that such an approach is needed and useful. The authorial empathy approach gave teachers and students a
shared language for their approach to literature in the ELA classroom. Consider Jenny’s Journey which illuminates how a student’s emerging conceptual understanding of authorial empathy allows for her teacher to draw on a shared language in considering responses to texts. Table 10 contains a list of the eight principles derived from the eight focal students in the study.

The research design included a teacher-generated Unit 3 for me to observe and study the teacher practice and student responses after the authorial empathy unit. Teachers were not informed that the analysis of Unit 3 would be exploring their practice in response to the AE intervention. In this way, the choices teachers made when the unit was not prefabricated in alignment with the tenets of the AE approach allowed for such rich and generative findings. The Unit 3 analysis revealed the complex interplay of goals, tools, and sources that teachers and students draw on and respond to in the daily work of the ELA classroom. The analysis of Unit 3 resulted in important findings about the necessity of text selection, task creation, and tool use when implementing and enacting the AE approach.

In addition to its effectiveness as a tool for teachers and students, the Authorial Empathy Scale proved to be very useful to me as a researcher. I used the AES to situate stimulated-recall interviews in terms of the extent to which they embodied authorial empathy. Further, I situated episodes of classroom talk on the AES to illuminate the extent to which they embodied an authorially empathetic response. Researchers can use the AES to typify the approaches of teachers and students in ELA classrooms. Teachers engaged in reflective research can use the AES as a tool to understand their own teaching. Indeed, for those teachers who invite students to be thoughtful evaluators of their own contributions in English class the AES has the potential to be used as a tool for students to evaluate their own responses, written or spoken, by situating those responses on the scale.
Reflecting on What Did Not Work

In the teacher training sessions, I did not make clear enough that the AE approach and the AES necessitate certain types of texts, tasks, and tools. There were no portions of the training module that taught the teachers how to select types of texts that would allow for or invite readings of authorial empathy. That work was already done for them to support fidelity of instruction in Unit 2. Similarly, there were no elements of the colleague training that emphasized the importance of the types of writing tasks a teacher looking to enact AE should craft. Instead, I did all the work of text selection and task creation. Further, I provided teachers with the AES tool, but without discussing or teaching them the ways in which its use would be enhanced or diminished based on the tools that accompanied it. I missed an opportunity by not conveying how essential it is that the tool accompany and support the orientation. In short, many of the texts, tasks, and tools were implicitly suggested rather than explicitly recommended.

I would revise the colleague training to include extensive training on the types of texts, tasks, and tools that work best in enacting authorial empathy. I would shift from an implicit approach to the training that puts the bulk of the cognitive work on teachers to recognize that certain types of texts, tasks, and tools work well with AE to a more explicit approach and recommendations.

In terms of text selection, I would create a module inviting teachers to consider the types of invitations different texts put forth. A dense, canonical literary text may require students to be reading more toward the “1” end of the AES whereas a more accessible work of popular fiction may invite responses that would be situated toward the “7” end of the AES. However, I would guide teachers to recognize that with thoughtful task and tool selection they could find ways to support students in finding ways to empathetically engage with the narrative world in the former
scenario and attend to authorial choices in the latter scenario. Yet, I would still emphasize that
the choice of text is a vital factor in eliciting authorially empathetic responses. The selection of a
text that allows for an AE response is necessary, but not sufficient for supporting AE. The tasks
and tools teachers draw on are also important factors to consider.

With this interplay in mind, I would create learning experiences that invite the teachers to
recognize how certain tasks and tools limit the potential of AE to be enacted. I would engage
teachers in discussions about the impact that the genre of a writing task has on a student’s ability
to enact authorial empathy. For example, a writing prompt that requires a technical analysis of
an author’s use of imagery is likely to result in responses clustered around the “1” pole of the
AES in the same way that a diary entry task about a personal reaction to the text would like skew
toward the “7” end of the AES. The text matters as does the task; but teachers must also be very
attentive to the tools they use, specifically the ways in which IRE may prevent authorially
empathetic responses.

In recognizing the dominance of IRE in the institutional context of schools, I would also
guide teachers to consider the best types of discussion tools that support AE, specifically how to
use the AES during discussion. Teachers would have benefitted from explicit recommendations
of the types of small-group discussions or Socratic circles that would invite the type of
collaborative discourse required by the AE approach and facilitated by the AES. I would have
done well to invite the teachers in the study to think about the sort of classroom changes that
would need to occur to disrupt the default IRE pattern of classroom discourse. In the time that
the teachers had for teacher meetings I prioritized understanding the AE approach and how to
teach it to students, but I did not carve out the time to invite teachers to consider the changes that
would need to enter into their teacher practice that could best support AE. Future colleague
training sessions would do well to create the time to engage in a series of modules that invite teachers to better understand the sorts of texts, tasks, and tools that are imperative for sustaining AE.

Another area where teachers were potentially unprepared was in the types of rubrics that teachers should develop as tools in support of AE. The findings reveal the ways in which students can be reading and responding with AE, but their writing pieces tend to be evaluated by a product-centric rubric that focuses on conventions more than ways of responding to a text. In future enactments of the study, I would collaborate with teachers to discuss what alterations would need to be made to a rubric to properly assess the extent to which students are responding with authorial empathy.

I would also engage teachers in a discussion of the way students like Ayan see the expectations of formal academic writing as incongruous with writing in ways that share empathetic engagement with characters in texts. My weakness in preparing the teachers was a symptom of time constraints. Further, it actually set the occasion for the Unit 3 findings to be so generative. However, it was a weakness in the research design that I want to explicitly acknowledge because had I trained the teachers more extensively, I theorize they would have enacted Unit 3 with a greater awareness of the texts, tasks, and tools that work in support of AE.

What I and Other Researchers Can Do in the Future

In future permutations of this study, it might be useful to study more teachers enacting AE with students in different grades and course levels over a greater length of time across different educational settings. Though the current study is bound by the context of the institutional school setting and its accompanying impact on texts, tasks, and tools, the utility of the authorial empathy approach could be explored in other settings such as book clubs, university
literature courses, educator reading groups, or middle-school literature circles. Further, components of the authorial empathy intervention as well as the methods of data analysis could continue to be refined.

In the same way that the teachers in this study were selected for deliberate reasons, future studies could invite teachers with orientations spanning every point on the AES to participate. Or a study could be designed to explore the teaching practice of teachers with approaches that tend to cluster at a particular end of the AES. Studying teachers of students at different grade levels would allow for conclusions to be drawn about the extent to which developmental factors play a role in the way teachers can enact AE with students. Continued research into the ways in which students in different grades, ability groupings, and courses take up the approach could help refine the implementation of AE.

Enacting the AE intervention for a longer unit of time via a series of units in a semester or via a year-long curriculum could allow for a greater determination of the impact of AE on teacher practice and student responses. Would a longer AE intervention allow teachers the time to draw on texts, tasks, and tools that better support AE? Would a longer AE intervention enable students to generate more balanced responses despite the impact of factors like genre or task? The findings of the current study are limited to two teachers and two groups of students in a suburban district. How would the findings shift if the study was set in a different type of district?

Researchers seeking to build on the current study would do well to consider the extent to which an AE rubric for writing and discussion can be developed in ways that work alongside other preexisting rubrics that teachers may be required to use. Lastly, in terms of data analysis, researchers could bring a different data collection instrument or analytic to this data set to further
corroborate or question the findings. For example, by videorecording the discussions and using different analytics to measure things like eye contact and the spoken length of each student utterance in discussion, researchers could make the distinctions between the discussions across the three units of the study more clear.

**Implications for Practice**

Of vital importance is the practical utility of the current study in my current role as a teacher, my commitment to being a teacher leader, and the further work I intend to do as a teacher educator.

**As a Teacher**

The findings across both the teacher and student data analysis reveal the importance of synchronizing text selection, task assignment, and tool enactment in ways that increase the effectiveness of the AE approach and the utility of the AES. One of the benefits of the AE tool is it guides students in responding to literature without all of the additional accoutrements of specialized or technical language. This is a value of the tool because teachers and students can apply it to such a wide array of texts. However, it bears repeating that the approach and tool are most effective when enacted in with certain types of texts and tasks. For example, in Unit 3 when Nancy had particular goals like teaching students elements of Romantic period writing the AE tool is less useful as it clashes with a curricular requirement of a certain text and goal. Similarly, when Dorothy uses the AE tool to guide students in their analysis of college entrance essays the task and expectations of crafting the college entrance essay at times overshadow the presence of the authorial empathy approach as a source.

Despite these challenges, a notable strength of the authorial empathy approach is that it offers a *technique*, but not an overwhelming amount of technical terminology. The Authorial
Empathy Scale can be used to teach an orientation to texts, not an extensive cognitively draining technical vocabulary. For these reasons, the approach and scale embody both a soundness of theoretical foundation and an ease of use for teachers and students. In this way the authorial empathy approach to teaching literature is one contribution toward bridging the divide between theory and practice often seen in secondary teacher education (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003).

In reading with authorial empathy, students and teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their reasons for reading literature. If the purpose of reading literature is to be aware of literature as a crafted piece of art arising from an author’s deliberate choices, then the authorial empathy approach supports that theoretical belief. If the purpose of reading literature is to enter into narrative worlds and reflect on our own life choices through our ethical treatment of literary characters, then the authorial empathy approach supports that theoretical belief. Each point on the Authorial Empathy Scale helps readers stake their claim as to the purpose of reading literature. For teachers and students who have not had the opportunity to deeply consider what it means to have a literary experience, the AES could potentially foster an awareness of how they are responding to texts and what that reveals about their broader conceptions of the purpose of literature.

On a pedagogical level, for teachers who are committed to fostering dialogue with and among the students they teach, the Authorial Empathy Scale functions as a tool that can promote dialogue in response to texts. Through its design as a response-generating tool, the AES has the potential to disrupt the sort of monologic, IRE talk that dominates institutional settings such as classrooms. As students become more aware of how to use the AES as a conceptual tool to mediate their responses to texts, they can enter into dialogue with each other about what a
response would look like if it shifted along the points of the scale. For example, a student could identify that a response is decidedly “1-ish” and invite a peer to consider what addition to the response could shift the thinking along the scale. The discussion findings presented in Chapter 4 evidence the powerful ways in which the authorial empathy intervention can foster a more dialogic classroom in which students are respected and empowered to respond to texts in theoretically informed ways.

I want the students I teach to be able to draw on guiding theoretical principles and useful tools in their response to texts in the ELA classroom and beyond. The AE approach gives students a way to engage with texts in ways that are theoretically informed and the AES gives them a portable tool for doing so. I want the students I teach to have portable tools that they can use in their future transactions with texts. In the ways they taught students how to read with authorial empathy, the teachers in this study revealed new ways of understanding the approach and the tool. Nancy taught me the importance of selecting texts, tasks, and tools that work in concert with the AE approach. Dorothy taught me to consider the ways in which the AES can be used as a writerly tool and a framework for evaluating student essays.

But it is the students in this study that emerged as the true teachers in this study. As teachers we often talk about our practice in terms of the students we teach. For this reason, I will frame my teaching recommendations in terms of the students in this study. The 9th grade students in this study evidenced such tenacity in taking up the AE approach. Consider the *Ayan Effect* which holds that students are able to enact the AE approach, particularly strengthening their ability to empathetically engage with characters in the narrative world, without cost to their ability to evaluate authors’ choices. This is also known as the *Ayan Antidote* for teachers worried that enacting the AE approach will diminish their students’ skills and scores. Teachers
would do well to adhere to the Kevin Corollary which holds that students with strictly utilitarian approaches to written responses in ELA classes need to be supported with useful tools that they can draw on in their approach to texts. Eve’s Evolution provides hope that with further support and thoughtful combinations of AE appropriate texts, tasks, and tools a student like Eve could grow ever more proficient in her enactment of AE. Teachers can learn from Jenny’s Journey which illuminates how even students who are uncertain about the “2” and “3” and “5” and “6” points on the AES can draw on their clear understanding of the differences between a “1” and a “7” and how to combine them at a “4” to enact AE.

And the 11th grade students offer such sophisticated ways of understanding the potential ways of enacting the AE approach. Tim’s Tenet invites teachers and students to consider the utility of the AE approach across disciplines and mediums as a tool for generating responses to a variety of texts, including visual texts like films. Kayla’s Connection showcases how students can use the inserting oneself into the text strategy to make connections by empathetically immersing themselves in the narrative world of the text. Margy’s Message highlights the increased awareness of one’s typical reading approach that may arise from the AE approach; Margy knows the reasons why she currently reads at a “7” and that there are other ways of responding to texts at different points on the AES. Lastly, Derek’s Dilemma embodies the ways in which students may have a strong understanding of a concept in their ELA class, but a weak mastery of writing conventions. Such students illuminate a dilemma in a discipline that prioritizes writing as the primary avenue for assessing student learning. Derek calls educators to think of stimulated-recall interviews as a supplementary way of accessing and assessing student conceptual development. See Table 10 for a summary of what each student can teach English educators.
Table 10

*Authorial empathy implementation principles derived from focal student data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayan Effect</td>
<td>Students are able to enact the AE approach, particularly strengthening their ability to empathetically engage with characters in the narrative world, without cost to their ability to evaluate authors’ choices. Also known as the Ayan Antidote for teachers worried that enacting the authorial empathy approach will diminish their students’ skills and scores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Corollary</td>
<td>Students with strictly utilitarian approaches to written responses in ELA classes need to be supported with useful tools that they can draw on in their approach to texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eve’s Evolution</td>
<td>With further support and thoughtful combinations of AE appropriate texts, tasks, and tools a student like Eve could grow ever more proficient in her enactment of AE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny’s Journey</td>
<td>Even if students are uncertain about the “2” and “3” and “5” and “6” points on the AES their clear understanding of the differences between a “1” and a “7” and how to combine them at a “4” evidences their journey through conceptual understanding of authorial empathy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim’s Tenet</td>
<td>Teachers and students should consider the utility of the AE approach across disciplines and mediums as a tool for generating responses to a variety of texts, including visual texts like films.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla’s Connection</td>
<td>By using the inserting oneself into the text strategy students can make connections by empathetically immersing themselves in the narrative world of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margy’s Message</td>
<td>Know Thyself. Margy knows she’s a “7;” Margy reads at a “7” because that is the primary reason she currently cares to engage with texts. This awareness is important; she is now more fully aware that there are other ways of responding to texts and that her strength is reading and responding toward the “7” end of the AES.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek’s Dilemma</td>
<td>Students may have a strong understanding of a concept in their ELA class, but a weak mastery of writing conventions. Such students illuminate a dilemma in a discipline that prioritizes writing as the primary avenue for assessing student learning. Derek calls educators to think of stimulated-recall interviews as a supplementary way of accessing and assessing student conceptual development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a Teacher Leader

The authorial empathy research process affirmed my role as a collaborative teacher leader within the secondary English language arts department in the high school where I teach. In my twelve years as a member of the department I have always valued the conversations among colleagues. I have learned a tremendous amount from these conversations over the years and I am grateful to be able to contribute to the conversation through this project. Having the opportunity to collaborate with Nancy and Dorothy throughout this project has been incredibly affirming. To get to lead and learn from two teachers with such talent and care for what they do was inspiring. I am grateful to have helmed a research study that afforded me such close collaboration with colleagues as I believe that is the truest and most effective way of enacting and sustaining conceptual changes in our pedagogical approaches to teaching English.

This research study has strengthened my resolve to contribute to the conversation that shapes how we as teachers teach and how students learn. A brief anecdote perhaps best captures my thinking on the impact of the research within my own department. Both Nancy and Dorothy continue to enact the AE approach and we continue to discuss the best ways of doing so. The students I currently teach who have been taught by Dorothy have independently enacted the AE approach in the work they do in the classes I teach. But perhaps most affirming is that a veteran teacher who I admire very much recently stopped by my room to explain how excited she was about authorial empathy. She had been having a conversation with Nancy and noted the Authorial Empathy Scales on her classroom walls. Nancy shared her excitement about their utility and this esteemed colleague of mine sought me out for more information. And so the conversation continues - not via top-down initiatives, but from rich conversations among colleagues.
There are many more conversations I am looking forward to as a teacher leader within the department where I teach. For example, the conversation about what an essay gives teachers access to in terms of student thinking in contrast to what a conference or stimulated-recall interview affords teachers and students. Or the difficult conversation about the tension between wanting to foster a love and understanding of literature in students and the types of tasks that may be part of our practice that preclude that possibility. Or as our school district potentially shifts to colleague evaluations how our department can embrace that opportunity to continue discussions about our practice with those who best understand it.

**As a Future Teacher Educator**

If the opportunity presents itself for me to contribute to the teacher education conversation at the university level, I want to remedy the gap that exists in teacher training that does not provide preservice teachers with clearly enactable subject-specific approaches to teaching within their content area. Because I value the implementation of useful tools that are informed by theory, I want to guide teachers in developing rationalized articulations of their approach to teaching literature that will stipulate certain types of practices and tools.

It would be useful to research the extent to which teachers, both experienced and new to the field, have clearly theorized rationales for the way they approach the teaching of literature. And, more importantly, I would want to be part of providing teachers with access to resources that can help them develop their approaches in substantive ways that can withstand the ebb and flow of institutional initiatives and political pressures that impact how teachers enact their approaches to literature.

As a final note, I want to share an expression of gratitude for the immense impact this study has had on me as an educator, an educational researcher, a colleague, and a person
dedicated to engaging with teachers and students in ethical responses to texts. I began the Literacies and Learners doctoral program because I was committed to figuring out how to best teach students; I am even more committed now. This study has convinced me of the power of the authorial empathy approach and the utility of the Authorial Empathy Scale as a tool for guiding teachers and students in responding to literature in balanced ways that attend both to the aesthetic brilliance of authors’ choices and to the empathetic ways we can ethically engage with characters in literary worlds. I would even humbly submit that in some small way there is value in the authorial empathy approach as a way of engaging in the larger text of life, in seeking a balance of thoughtfully attending to the choices of our fellow humans as well as our own while empathetically engaging with the characters we encounter along the way.
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Dorfman, M. H. (1996). Evaluating the interpretive community: Evidence from expert and


Imbrenda, J.P. (2016). The blackbird whistling or just after? Vygotsky’s tool and sign as an
analytic for writing. *Written Communication, 33*(1), 68-91.


Literature referenced in AE unit


**APPENDIX A**

**INTERVENTION SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1-2: Pre-intervention unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 3: Teacher training on authorial empathy unit (<em>JAAL</em> article and AE unit lesson plans); schedule stimulated-recall interviews on writing piece from pre-intervention unit with low-performing and high-performing student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4-5: Authorial Empathy Intervention unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6-7: Post-intervention unit; schedule stimulated-recall interviews on writing piece from post-intervention unit with low-performing and high-performing student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8: Remaining data collection; schedule stimulated-recall interviews on writing piece from post-intervention unit with low-performing and high-performing student</td>
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<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Period 1 Teacher Prep</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Teacher 1: Stimulated-recall interview (Instructional artifact)</td>
<td>Teacher 2: Stimulated-recall interview (Instructional artifact)</td>
<td>Teacher 1: Stimulated-recall interview (Low-performing student writing evaluation)</td>
<td>Teacher 2: Stimulated-recall interview (Low-performing student writing evaluation)</td>
<td>Teacher 1: Stimulated-recall interview (High-performing student writing evaluation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 4 Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher 1 Observations and field notes</td>
<td>Teacher 2 Observations and field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 1 Teacher Prep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher 2: Stimulated-recall interview (High-performing student writing evaluation)</td>
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<td>Teacher 2: Stimulated-recall class observation</td>
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<tr>
<th>Period 4 Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1 observation and audio-recorded class discussion</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period 1 Teacher Prep</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative colleague-to-colleague meetings to prepare to teach AE unit</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Period 4 Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1 classroom observations and field notes.</td>
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<tr>
<th>After School Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>267</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 4 Class</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2 classroom observations and field notes.</td>
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<td>Teacher 1 classroom observations and field notes.</td>
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<td>Teacher 2 classroom observations and field notes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher 1 classroom observations and field notes.</td>
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<td>Teacher 2 classroom observations and field notes. (Audio-recorded culminating class discussion for teachers 1 and 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher 1 semi-structured interview on day’s lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher 2 semi-structured interview on day’s lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher 1 semi-structured interview on day’s lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher 2 semi-structured interview on day’s lesson.</td>
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<td>Teacher 2 semi-structured interview on day’s lesson.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period 1 Teacher Prep</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1: Stimulated recall interview (Low-performing student writing evaluation from AE unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2: Stimulated recall interview (Low-performing student writing evaluation from AE unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1: Stimulated recall interview (High-performing student writing evaluation from AE unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2: Stimulated recall interview (High-performing student writing evaluation from AE unit)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Period 4 Class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher 1 classroom observations and field notes.</td>
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<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>Teacher 1: Stimulated-recall interview (Instructional artifact from post-intervention unit)</th>
<th>Teacher 2: Stimulated-recall interview (Instructional artifact from post-intervention unit)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Period 4 Class</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1 observation and audio-recorded class discussion</td>
<td>Teacher 2 observation and audio-recorded class discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teacher 1: Stimulated recall interview (Low-performing student writing evaluation from post-intervention unit)</td>
<td>Teacher 2: Stimulated recall interview (Low-performing student writing evaluation from post-intervention unit)</td>
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# APPENDIX B

## SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

### Teacher Data and Analysis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data type</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stimulated-recall interviews on instructional artifact</td>
<td>Content units (Smith &amp; Strickland, 2001); Pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986, 1987); Goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999; Johnson, Thompson, Smagorinsky, &amp; Fry, 2003; Newell, Tallman, &amp; Letcher, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulated-recall interviews on students’ writing pieces</td>
<td>Content units (Smith &amp; Strickland, 2001); Pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986, 1987); Goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999; Johnson, Thompson, Smagorinsky, &amp; Fry, 2003; Newell, Tallman, &amp; Letcher, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational field notes</td>
<td>Goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcript analysis of culminating discussions</td>
<td>Episodes (Marshall, Smagorinsky, &amp; Smith, 1995); Goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999); Authorial Empathy Scale (Brett, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Goals, tools, and sources (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999)</td>
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### Student Data and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Data type</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stimulated-recall interviews on students’ writing pieces</td>
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APPENDIX C

AUTHORIAL EMPATHY STUDENT MATERIALS

Authorial Empathy Day 1 Student Handout

Day 1 Task 1: In your small-group discuss the possible responses to literature and whether they seem more like a 1 (analyzing authors’ aesthetic choices) or a 7 (engaging with characters in the narrative world of the story). Then, jot down the types of responses on the provided post-it notes and sort them into a 1 or a 7. You and your group will be putting the notes on the AES on the board. Be prepared to explain the reason for your choices.

Task 2: Listen to the opening of Kurt Vonnegut’s short story “Harrison Bergeron.” At each pause in the story you and your group will be asked to identify at which end of the scale each possible response would be located. (You can use two different color highlighters to indicate a 1 and a 7 type response.)
The year was 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.

Why does the author set the story in 2081?

- Imagining what it is like to live in a world where everyone is exactly the same.
- When Vonnegut writes that everyone is "finally equal" his tone is ironic.
- The author’s choice to have a 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments.
- I’m wondering what the agents of the Handicapper General do

Some things about living still weren't quite right, though. April for instance, still drove people crazy by not being springtime. And it was in that clammy month that the H-G men took George and Hazel Bergeron's fourteen-year-old son, Harrison, away.

It was tragic, all right, but George and Hazel couldn't think about it very hard. Hazel had a perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn't think about anything except in short bursts. And George, while his intelligence was way above normal, had a little mental handicap radio in his ear. He was required by law to wear it at all times. It was tuned to a government transmitter. Every twenty seconds or so, the transmitter would send out some sharp noise to keep people like George from taking unfair advantage of their brains.

- I go crazy waiting for spring and warm weather.
- The author chose to have Harrison taken from his home in April for a reason.
- What’s the significance of Vonnegut making Harrison 14 years old?
- It is so unfair that George has to wear a mental handicap radio.
- It would be horrible having a noise go off in your ear every 20 seconds.

George and Hazel were watching television. There were tears on Hazel's cheeks, but she'd forgotten for the moment what they were about.

On the television screen were ballerinas.

A buzzer sounded in George's head. His thoughts fled in panic, like bandits from a burglar alarm.
"That was a real pretty dance, that dance they just did," said Hazel.

"Huh" said George.

"That dance—it was nice," said Hazel.

Why can’t Hazel remember what she’s crying about? Vonnegut gives the character the name Hazel for a reason. Of all the things for the author to have them watching on television he chooses ballerinas. Ballerinas dance in beautiful ways. “Like bandits from a burglar alarm” is a simile.

"Yup," said George. He tried to think a little about the ballerinas. They weren't really very good—no better than anybody else would have been, anyway. They were burdened with sashweights and bags of birdshot, and their faces were masked, so that no one, seeing a free and graceful gesture or a pretty face, would feel like something the cat drug in. George was toying with the vague notion that maybe dancers shouldn't be handicapped. But he didn't get very far with it before another noise in his ear radio scattered his thoughts.

George winced. So did two out of the eight ballerinas.

Hazel saw him wince. Having no mental handicap herself, she had to ask George what the latest sound had been.

"Sounded like somebody hitting a milk bottle with a ball peen hammer," said George.

"I'd think it would be real interesting, hearing all the different sounds," said Hazel a little envious. "All the things they think up."

Why does Vonnegut choose to have the ear radio noise disrupt George’s thinking right when he is questioning why the government handicaps the ballerinas? I’m picturing how absurd and not graceful all the ballerinas look. Hazel actually wishes she could hear the sounds. The author uses dialogue between Hazel and George.

Discuss: What key words or ideas would indicate that a response is a 1 or a 7?

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Key Concept: The most balanced responses to literature combine awareness of authors’ aesthetic choices with empathetic engagement with characters in the narrative world. Let’s see how we can combine some of the thinking at the 1 end of the scale with the 7 end of the scale to meet in the middle at a 4.

**Task 3: Highlight the part of the response that seems more like a 1 and the part that seems more like a 7 to see how they meet in the middle as a more balanced response (4).**

4 - I’m used to reading stories set in the past so it is interesting to imagine a story in the future. The author could have set the story in any time but since it is set in 2081 it makes me think it will be some sort of perfect world.

4 - Vonnegut’s choice in starting with “everybody was finally equal” makes me think that a world where everyone is equal would be a good thing.

4 - I’m wondering why the government took Harrison away? If Vonnegut had made him an adult, then maybe he would have been able to fight back, but he is only 14 years old.

4 - I felt a sense of disconnect between George and Hazel because of the author’s choice to have George respond with “Huh.”

4- The author says Hazel can’t remember her thoughts and that because of the buzzer George’s thoughts fled “like bandits from a burglar alarm.” This is making me wonder what is wrong with these people – do they even remember their son has been taken?

4- Ok so Vonnegut could have had George and Hazel watching anything on tv but he chose ballerinas because they are supposed to be incredibly graceful and talented. But in this future world they are masked and weighed down and ruined so they don’t make anyone else feel bad. What happened that led to this future?

Key concept: Through being aware of the types of responses we have to literature, we can combine the two poles to create more balanced responses that attend to authors’ aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with the characters in the literary world.

**Task 4: Concluding Quick Write:**

What is reading with authorial empathy? How can you move a 1 response toward the middle of the scale? How can you move a 7 response toward the middle of the scale? Why is it important to read with authorial empathy?
Authorial Empathy Day 2 Student Handout

**Task 1: Quick Write:** what is missing from overly author-focused dissection of authors’ aesthetic and technical choices? What is missing from overly empathetic reactions to the story? Why is balance better? How can you tell the difference between 1, 4, and 7 responses? Is it difficult to do both at once? Then, turn and talk with a partner about the responses.


**Task 2: Students will read Mark Turner’s “Rites of Passage” and work in small-groups to craft responses at different parts of the AES.**

Mark Turner’s “Rites of Passage”:

He’d known her since she was very young. She was the most beautiful girl in the world, and he loved her deeply. At one time he had been her idol. Now he was losing her to another man. Eyes glistening, he kissed her cheek softly, then smiled as he gave her away to the groom.

With your small group, please craft a 1 response, a 7 response, and a 4 response on a post-it note. The response can be a statement or a question that you think is a 1, 4, or 7. (5 minutes)

**Task 3: Now it is time to start thinking about the subtle differences between a 2 and a 3 and a 5 and a 6. Students will use the following sample responses to “Rites of Passage” and work to arrange them on the scale.**

___I can’t wait to get married.

___The author’s choice of the word ‘idol’ represents religion.

___The glistening eyes of the main character make me sad for what he is going through.
___This whole story seems patriarchal to me.

___The author’s choice to have the man kiss her cheek let me know it was not a romantic kiss.

___I like how the author waits until the very end of the short story to reveal that the man who loves the woman is actually her father and that the story is about a wedding. The author’s choice made me shift from feeling bad about the scenario to feeling good about it.

___The title gives a clue to the occurrence of the short story.

**Task 4: Exit ticket (or hw):** Which end of the scale do you think you usually read literature at? What can you do to move toward balance? What makes sense to you about reading with authorial empathy? What questions do you have about this approach?

Authorial Empathy Day 3 Student Handout

**Task 1: Responding to Marilee Swircszek’s “Solitaire.”** Read the brief story. Then, meet with a small-group to create 1, 4, and 7 responses.

Marilee Swircszek’s “Solitaire”

Encased by the laundry room walls, she stuffed load after load into the insatiable washer, begrudging every minute lost. Sodden diapers, mismatched booties, Batman pajamas, pink leotards, grass-stained soccer shirts, knee-socks, pinafores, jeans, sweaters, skirts, trousers. Now, finally, she washes one small load a week, and wonders why the days are so long.

Please work with you small group to craft a 1 response, a 7 response, and a 4 response on a post-it note. The response can be a statement or a question that you think is a 1, 4, or 7. (5 minutes)

**Task 2: Working in small-groups, engage in a quick sort of responses to Marilee Swircszek’s “Solitaire.”** Sort the responses to the story on the AES. Choose two that you had difficulty discerning between and write about the principle of selection or determining factor you used to situate it on the scale.

___The author’s title of the short story gives a sense of loneliness.

___Sometimes the things we complain about that take up our time we later come to look back on with nostalgia.

___The word “encased” makes the laundry room like a prison.

___The author’s way of listing all of the items the mother is washing contrasted with the one small load she now washes makes me feel sad because it seems like she misses the childhood of her children.
Task 3: Please read Liliana Heker’s “The Stolen Party.” You may jot down your responses and consider where the responses fall on the AES. You will meet in small-groups to discuss Liliana Heker’s “The Stolen Party.” As you discuss you will use the AES to think about the type of discussion you are having. Each group will need to write down and report out a response that you think exemplifies reading with authorial empathy. You should also be prepared to explain how the response fits the balance of authorial empathy.

Liliana Heker’s ”The Stolen Party”

As soon as she arrived she went straight to the kitchen to see if the monkey was there. It was: what a relief. She wouldn’t have liked to admit that her mother had been right. Monkeys at a birthday? her mother had sneered. Get away with you, believing any nonsense you're told! She was cross, but not because of the monkey, the girl thought; it's just because of the party.

"I don't like you going," she told her. "It's a rich people's party."

"Rich people go to Heaven too," said the girl, who studied religion at school.

"Get away with Heaven," said the mother. "The problem with you, young lady, is that you like to fart higher than your ass."

The girl didn't approve of the way her mother spoke. She was barely nine, and one of the best in her class.

"I'm going because I've been invited," she said. "And I've been invited because Luciana is my friend. So there."

"Ah yes, your friend," her mother grumbled. She paused. "Listen, Rosaura," she said at last. "That one's not your friend. You know what you are to them? The maid's daughter, that's what." Rosaura blinked hard: she wasn't going to cry. Then she yelled:

"Shut up! You know nothing about being friends!"

Every afternoon she used to go to Luciana's house and they would both finish their homework while Rosaura's mother did the cleaning. They had their tea in the kitchen and they told each other secrets. Rosaura loved everything in the big house, and she also loved the people who lived there.

"I'm going because it will be the most lovely party in the whole world, Luciana told me it would. There will be a magician, and he will bring a monkey and everything."
The mother swung around to take a good look at her child, and pompously put her hands on her hips. "Monkeys at a birthday?" she said. "Get away with you, believing any nonsense you're told!"

Rosaura was deeply offended. She thought it unfair of her mother to accuse other people of being liars simply because they were rich. Rosaura too wanted to be rich, of course. If one day she managed to live in a beautiful palace, would her mother stop loving her? She felt very sad. She wanted to go to that party more than anything else in the world.

"I'll die if I don't go," she whispered, almost without moving her lips.

And she wasn't sure whether she had been heard, but on the morning of the party she discovered that her mother had starched her Christmas dress. And in the afternoon, after washing her hair, her mother rinsed it in apple vinegar so that it would be all nice and shiny. Before going out, Rosaura admired herself in the mirror, with her white dress and glossy hair, and thought she looked terribly pretty.

Senora Ines also seemed to notice. As soon as she saw her, she said: "How lovely you look today, Rosaura."

Rosaura gave her starched skirt a slight toss with her hands and walked into the party with a firm step. She said hello to Luciana and asked about the monkey. Luciana put on a secretive look and whispered into Rosaura's ear: "He's in the kitchen. But don't tell anyone, because it's a surprise."

Rosaura wanted to make sure. Carefully she entered the kitchen and there she saw it: deep in thought, inside its cage. It looked so funny that the girl stood there for a while, watching it, and later, every so often, she would slip out of the party unseen and go and admire it. Rosaura was the only one allowed into the kitchen. Senora Ines had said: "You yes, but not the others, they're much too boisterous, they might break something." Rosaura had never broken anything. She even managed the jug of orange juice, carrying it from the kitchen into the dining room. She held it carefully and didn't spill a single drop. And Senora Ines had said: "Are you sure you can manage a jug as big as that?" Of course she could manage. She wasn't a butterfingers, like the others. Like that blonde girl with the bow in her hair. As soon as she saw Rosaura, the girl with the bow had said:

"And you? Who are you?"

"I'm a friend of Luciana," said Rosaura.

"No," said the girl with the bow, "you are not a friend of Luciana because I'm her cousin and I know all her friends. And I don't know you."

"So what," said Rosaura. "I come here every afternoon with my mother and we do our homework together."

"You and your mother do your homework together?" asked the girl, laughing.

"I and Luciana do our homework together," said Rosaura, very seriously. The girl with the bow shrugged her shoulders.
"That's not being friends," she said. "Do you go to school together?"

"No."

"So where do you know her from?" said the girl, getting impatient. Rosaura remembered her mother's words perfectly. She took a deep breath.

"I'm the daughter of the employee," she said.

Her mother had said very clearly: "If someone asks, you say you're the daughter of the employee; that's all." She also told her to add: "And proud of it." But Rosaura thought that never in her life would she dare say something of the sort.

"What employee?" said the girl with the bow. "Employee in a shop?"

"No," said Rosaura angrily. "My mother doesn't sell anything in any shop, so there."

"So how come she's an employee?" said the girl with the bow. Just then Senora Ines arrived saying shh shh, and asked Rosaura if she wouldn't mind helping serve out the hot dogs, as she knew the house so much better than the others.

"See?" said Rosaura to the girl with the bow, and when no one was looking she kicked her in the shin.

Apart from the girl with the bow, all the others were delightful. The one she liked best was Luciana, with her golden birthday crown; and then the boys. Rosaura won the sack race, and nobody managed to catch her when they played tag. When they split into two teams to play charades, all the boys wanted her for their side. Rosaura felt she had never been so happy in all her life.

But the best was still to come. The best came after Luciana blew out the candies. First the cake. Senora Ines had asked her to help pass the cake around, and Rosaura had enjoyed the task immensely, because everyone called out to her, shouting "Me, me!" Rosaura remembered a story in which there was a queen who had the power of life or death over her subjects. She had always loved that, having the power of life or death. To Luciana and the boys she gave the largest pieces, and to the girl with the bow she gave a slice so thin one could see through it.

After the cake came the magician, tall and bony, with a fine red cape. A true magician: he could untie handkerchiefs by blowing on them and make a chain with links that had no openings. He could guess what cards were pulled out from a pack, and the monkey was his assistant. He called the monkey "partner." "Let's see here, partner," he would say, "turn over a card." And, "Don't run away, partner: time to work now."

The final trick was wonderful. One of the children had to hold the monkey in his arms and the magician said he would make him disappear.

"What, the boy?" they all shouted.

"No, the monkey!" shouted back the magician.
Rosaura thought that this was truly the most amusing parry in the whole world.

The magician asked a small fat boy to come and help, but the small fat boy got frightened almost at once and dropped the monkey on the floor. The magician picked him up carefully, whispered something in his ear, and the monkey nodded almost as if he understood.

"You mustn't be so unmanly, my friend," the magician said to the fat boy.

"What's unmanly?" said the fat boy.

The magician turned around as if to look for spies.

"A sissy," said the magician. "Go sit down."

Then he stared at all the faces, one by one. Rosaura felt her heart tremble.

"You with the Spanish eyes," said the magician. And everyone saw that he was pointing at her.

She wasn't afraid. Neither holding the monkey, nor when the magician made him vanish; not even when, at the end, the magician flung his red cape over Rosaura's head and uttered a few magic words ... and the monkey reappeared, chattering happily, in her arms. The children clapped furiously. And before Rosaura returned to her seat, the magician said:

"Thank you very much, my little countess."

She was so pleased with the compliment that a while later, when her mother came to fetch her, that was the first thing she told her. "I helped the magician and he said to me, 'Thank you very much, my little countess.'"

It was strange because up to then Rosaura had thought that she was angry with her mother. All along Rosaura had imagined that she would say to her: "See that the monkey wasn't a lie?" But instead she was so thrilled that she told her mother all about the wonderful magician.

Her mother tapped her on the head and said: "So now we're a countess!"

But one could see that she was beaming. And now they both stood in the entrance, because a moment ago Senora Ines, smiling, had said: "Please wait here a second." Her mother suddenly seemed worried.

"What is it?" she asked Rosaura.

"What is what?" said Rosaura. "It's nothing; she just wants to get the presents for those who are leaving, see?"

She pointed at the fat boy and at a girl with pigtails who were also waiting there, next to their mothers. And she explained about the presents. She knew, because she had been watching those who left before her. When one of the girls was about to leave, Senora Ines would give her a bracelet. When a boy left, Senora Ines gave him a yo-yo. Rosaura preferred the yo-yo because it sparkled, but she didn't mention that to her mother. Her mother might have said: "So why don't you ask for one, you blockhead?" That's what her mother was like. Rosaura didn't feel like explaining that she'd be horribly
ashamed to be the odd one out. Instead she said:

"I was the best-behaved at the party."

And she said no more because Senora Ines came out into the hall with two bags, one pink and one blue.

First she went up to the fat boy, gave him a yo-yo out of the blue bag, and the fat boy left with his mother. Then she went up to the girl and gave her a bracelet out of the pink bag, and the girl with the pigtails left as well.

Finally she came up to Rosaura and her mother. She had a big smile on her face and Rosaura liked that. Senora Ines looked down at her, then looked up at her mother, and then said something that made Rosaura proud:

"What a marvelous daughter you have, Herminia."

For an instant, Rosaura thought that she'd give her two presents: the bracelet and the yo-yo. Senora Ines bent down as if about to look for something. Rosaura also leaned forward, stretching out her arm. But she never completed the movement.

Senora Ines didn't look in the pink bag. Nor did she look in the blue bag. Instead she rummaged in her purse. In her hand appeared two bills.

"You really and truly, earned this," she said handing them over.

"Thank you for all your help, my pet."

Rosaura felt her arms stiffen, stick close to her body, and then she noticed her mother's hand on her shoulder. Instinctively she pressed herself against her mother's body. That was all. Except her eyes. Rosaura's eyes had a cold, clear look that fixed itself on Senora Ines's face.

Senora Ines, motionless, stood there with her hand outstretched. As if she didn't dare draw it back. As if the slightest change might shatter an infinitely delicate balance.

Authorial Empathy Day 4 Student Handout

Task 1: A quick sort of responses to Jeffrey Whitmore’s “Bedtime Story”  Read the brief story. Then, sort the responses to the story on the AES. Choose two that you had difficulty discerning between and write about the principle of selection or determining factor you used to situate it on the scale. (5 minutes)

Jeffrey Whitmore’s “Bedtime Story”

“Careful, honey, it’s loaded,” he said, re-entering the bedroom. Her back rested against the headboard. “This for your wife?” “No. Too chancy. I’m hiring a professional.” “How about me?” He smirked. “Cute. But who’d be dumb enough to hire a female hit
She wet her lips, sighting along the barrel. “Your wife.”

___The title “Bedtime Story” lets us know the theme will be about parents and children.
___Because the author chooses to have her wet her lips it shows she is enjoying what she’s about to say and do to the man.
___This reminds me of a scene from a James Bond movie.
___The way the author has the man talk to the woman shows he deserves what happens.
___It’s not right that this couple is cheating.
___By having the man ‘smirk’ and ask his question, the author shows that he’s critiquing the man for being the dumb one for not realizing his wife hired a female assassin.
___I imagine the man’s jaw drops and he looks so shocked when he realizes what’s happening.

Task 2: Please read John Cheever’s “Reunion” You may jot down their responses and consider where the responses fall on the AES. The teacher will then explicitly teach how pairing strategies like Noting Author’s Craft and Inserting Self into the Text can be useful to develop a balanced response. For example, you can notice a specific author’s choice and think about how it functions in the story world. Or you can imagine yourself as a character in the story and think about the feeling it elicits. With this strategy in mind you will meet in small groups to discuss the story.

The last time I saw my father was in Grand Central Station. I was going from my grandmother's in the Adirondacks to a cottage on the Cape that my mother had rented, and I wrote my father that I would be in New York between trains for an hour and a half, and asked if we could have lunch together. His secretary wrote to say that he would meet me at the information booth at noon, and at twelve o'clock sharp I saw him coming through the crowd. He was a stranger to me - my mother divorced him three years ago and I hadn't seen him since - but as soon as I saw him I felt that he was my father, my flesh and blood, my future and my doom. I knew that when I was grown I would be something like him; I would have to plan my campaigns within his limitations. He was a big, good-looking man, and I was terribly happy to see him again. He struck me on the back and shook my hand. “Hi, Charlie,” he said. “Hi, boy. I'd like to take you up to my club, but it's in the Sixties, and if you have to catch an early train I guess we'd better get something to eat around here.” He put his arm around me, and I smelled my father the way my mother sniffs a rose. It was a rich compound of whiskey, after-shave lotion, shoe polish, woolens, and the rankness of the mature male. I hoped that someone
would see us together. I wished that we could be photographed. I wanted some record of our having been together.

We went out of the station and up a side street to a restaurant. It was still early, and the place was empty. The bartender was quarrelling with a delivery boy, and there was one very old waiter in a red coat down by the kitchen door. We sat down, and my father hailed the waiter in a loud voice. "Kellner!" he shouted. "Carbon! Cameriere! You!" His boisterousness in the empty restaurant seemed out of place. "Could we have a little service here!" he shouted. "Chop-chop." Then he clapped his hands. This caught the waiter's attention, and he shuffled over to our table.

"Were you clapping your hands at me?" he asked.

"Calm down, calm down, sommelier," my father said. "If it isn't too much to ask of you—if it wouldn't be above and beyond the call of duty—we would like a couple of Beefeater Gibsons."

"I don't like to be clapped at," the waiter said.

"I should have brought my whistle," my father said. "I have a whistle that is audible only to the ears of old waiters. Now, take out your little pad and your little pencil and see if you can get this straight: two Beefeater Gibsons. Repeat after me: two Beefeater Gibsons."

"I think you'd better go somewhere else," the waiter said quietly.

"That," said my father, "is one of the most brilliant suggestions I have ever heard. Come on, Charlie, let's get the hell out of here."

I followed my father out of that restaurant into another. He was not so boisterous this time. Our drinks came, and he cross-questioned me about the baseball season. He then struck the edge of his empty glass with his knife and began shouting again. "Garcon! Kellner! Cameriere! You! Could we trouble you to bring us two more of the same."

"How old is the boy?" the waiter asked.

"That," my father said, "is none of your God-damned business."

"I'm sorry, sir," the waiter said, "but I won't serve the boy another drink."

"Well, I have some news for you," my father said. "I have some very interesting news for you. This doesn't happen to be the only restaurant in New York. They've opened another on the corner. Come on, Charlie."

He paid the bill, and I followed him out of the restaurant into another. Here the waiters wore pink jackets like hunting coats, and there was a lot of horse tack on the walls. We sat down, and my father began to shout again. "Master of the hounds! Tallyhoo and all that sort of thing. We'd like a little something in the way of a stirrup cup. Namely, two Bibson Geefeaters."

"Two Bibson Geefeaters?" the waiter asked, smiling.
“You know damned well what I want,” my father said angrily. “I want two Beefeater Gibsons, and make it snappy. Things have changed in jolly old England. So my friend the duke tells me. Let's see what England can produce in the way of a cocktail.”

“This isn't England,” the waiter said.

“Don't argue with me,” my father said. “Just do as you're told.”

“I just thought you might like to know where you are,” the waiter said.

“If there is one thing I cannot tolerate,” my father said, “it is an impudent domestic. Come on, Charlie.”

The fourth place we went to was Italian. “Buon giorno,” my father said. “Per favore, possiamo avere due cocktail americani, forti, forti. Molto gin, poco vermut.”

“I don't understand Italian,” the waiter said.

“Oh, come off it,” my father said. “You understand Italian, and you know damned well you do. Vogliamo due cocktail Americani. Subito.”

The waiter left us and spoke with the captain, who came over to our table and said, “I'm sorry, sir, but this table is reserved.”

“All right,” my father said. “Get us another table.”

“All the tables are reserved,” the captain said.

“I get it,” my father said. “You don't desire our patronage. Is that it? Well, the hell with you. Vada all'inferno. Let's go, Charlie.”

“I have to get my train,” I said.

“I sorry, sonny,” my father said. “I'm terribly sorry,” He put his arm around me and pressed me against him. “I'll walk you back to the station. If there had only been time to go up to my club.”

“That's all right, Daddy,” I said.

“I'll get you a paper,” he said. “I'll get you a paper to read on the train.”

Then he went up to a news stand and said, “Kind sir, will you be good enough to favour me with one of your God-damned, no-good, ten-cent afternoon papers?” The clerk turned away from him and stared at a magazine cover. “Is it asking too much, kind sir,” my father said, “is it asking too much for you to sell me one of your disgusting specimens of yellow journalism?”

“I have to go, Daddy,” I said. “It's late.”

“Now, just wait a second, sonny,” he said. “Just wait a second. I want to get a rise out of this chap.”
“Goodbye, Daddy,” I said, and I went down the stairs and got my train, and that was the last time I saw my father.

Authorial Empathy Day 5 Student Handout

Task 1: Read the brief story. Then, sort the responses to the story on the AES. Choose two that you had difficulty discerning between and write about the principle of selection or determining factor you used to situate it on the scale. (5 minutes)

David Congalton’s “December 8, 1980”
She closed the history book and sighed.
“That General Custer. He should never have left the safety of the Dakota territory.” He was in too much of a hurry to listen. He picked up his guitar and headed for the door.
“Bloody hell, Yoko. Let’s go. We’re going to be late.”

___The author’s choice to title the story as the date of John Lennon’s assassination makes me understand the irony of John’s response to Yoko in the story. I think the author wants us to feel bad for John because he’s making the same mistake as General Custer when he doesn’t listen to Yoko. Congalton’s use of the history book is ironic because the situation she reads about parallels to that of her husband’s untimely demise.

___I don’t like any Beatles’ songs. I think history is boring. 1980 was a long time ago. I have never been to Dakota territory.

___The word ‘bloody’ used as an adjective to describe hell highlights is a strong word choice. The narrator is omniscient.

___General Custer is used as a symbol to represent John Lennon. The guitar is an archetypal symbol the author uses to represent music.

___The author’s choice to italicize the word ‘never’ foreshadows that emphasis on the word will be important later in the story. The use of the phrase ‘bloody hell’ suggests the story is taking place in England. Using the word Yoko in the dialogue allows readers to infer this is about John Lennon’s death.

___Yoko is sympathetic of the world around her and the misfortunes of others. I think we learned about General Custer in history class. He picks up his guitar because he is a musician. The female character really likes General Custer.

___When John rushes Yoko about being late it makes me sad that this is their last interaction. I wonder if she was having a premonition.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

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Task 2: Students will read Shirley Jackson’s “Charles.” You may jot down their responses and consider where the responses fall on the AES. The teacher will then explicitly teach how pairing strategies like Noting Author’s Craft and Inserting Self into the Text can be useful to develop a balanced response. For example, you can notice a specific author’s choice and think about how it functions in the story world. Or you can imagine themselves as a character in the story and think about the feeling it elicits. With this strategy in mind please meet in small groups to discuss the story.

The day my son Laurie started kindergarten he renounced corduroy overalls with bibs and began wearing blue jeans with a belt; I watched him go off the first morning with the older girl next door, seeing clearly that an era of my life was ended, my sweet voiced nursery-school tot replaced by a long-trousered, swaggering character who forgot to stop at the corner and wave good-bye to me.

He came running home the same way, the front door slamming open, his cap on the floor, and the voice suddenly become raucous shouting, “Isn’t anybody here?”

At lunch he spoke insolently to his father, spilled his baby sister’s milk, and remarked that his teacher said we were not to take the name of the Lord in vain.

“How was school today?” I asked, elaborately casual.

“All right,” he said.

“Did you learn anything?” his father asked.

Laurie regarded his father coldly. “I didn’t learn nothing,” he said.

“Anything,” I said. “Didn’t lean anything.”

“The teacher spanked a boy, though,” Laurie said, addressing his bread and butter.

“For being fresh,” he added, with his mouth full.

“What did he do?” I asked. “Who was it?”

Laurie thought. “It was Charles,” he said. “He was fresh. The teacher spanked him and made him stand in the corner. He was awfully fresh.”

“What did he do?” I asked again, but Laurie slid off his chair, took a cookie, and left, while his father was still saying, “See here, young man.”

The next day Laurie remarked at lunch, as soon as he sat down, “Well, Charles was bad again today.” He grinned enormously and said, “Today Charles hit the teacher.”

“Good heavens,” I said, mindful of the Lord’s name, “I suppose he got spanked again?”

“He sure did,” Laurie said. “Look up,” he said to his father.

“What?” his father said, looking up.
“Look down,” Laurie said. “Look at my thumb. Gee, you’re
dumb.” He began to laugh insanely.

“Why did Charles hit the teacher?” I asked quickly.

“Because she tried to make him color with red crayons,”
Laurie said. “Charles wanted to color with green crayons so he
hit the teacher and she spanked him and said nobody play with
Charles but everybody did.”

The third day—it was a Wednesday of the first week—Charles
bounced a see-saw on to the head of a little girl and made her
bleed, and the teacher made him stay inside all during recess.
Thursday Charles had to stand in a corner during story-time
because he kept pounding his feet on the floor. Friday Charles
was deprived of black-board privileges because he threw chalk.

On Saturday I remarked to my husband, “Do you think
kindergarten is too unsettling for Laurie? All this toughness
and bad grammar, and this Charles boy sounds like such a bad
influence.”

“It’ll be alright,” my husband said reassuringly. “Bound to
be people like Charles in the world. Might as well meet them now
as later.”

On Monday Laurie came home late, full of news. “Charles,”
he shouted as he came up the hill; I was waiting anxiously on
the front steps. “Charles,” Laurie yelled all the way up the
hill, “Charles was bad again.”

“Come right in,” I said, as soon as he came close enough.
“Lunch is waiting.”

“You know what Charles did?” he demanded following me
through the door.

“Charles yelled so in school they sent a boy in from first
grade to tell the teacher she had to make Charles keep quiet,
and so Charles had to stay after school. And so all the
children stayed to watch him.

“What did he do?” I asked.

“He just sat there,” Laurie said, climbing into his chair
at the table. “Hi, Pop, y’old dust mop.”

“Charles had to stay after school today,” I told my
husband. “Everyone stayed with him.”

“What does this Charles look like?” my husband asked
Laurie. “What’s his other name?”

“He’s bigger than me,” Laurie said. “And he doesn’t have
any rubbers and he doesn’t wear a jacket.”

Monday night was the first Parent-Teachers meeting, and
only the fact that the baby had a cold kept me from going; I
wanted passionately to meet Charles’s mother. On Tuesday Laurie
remarked suddenly, “Our teacher had a friend come to see her in
school today.”

“Charles’s mother?” my husband and I asked simultaneously.
“Naaah,” Laurie said scornfully. “It was a man who came and made us do exercises, we had to touch our toes. Look.” He climbed down from his chair and squatted down and touched his toes. “Like this,” he said. He got solemnly back into his chair and said, picking up his fork, “Charles didn’t even do exercises.”

“That’s fine,” I said heartily. “Didn’t Charles want to do exercises?”

“Naaah,” Laurie said. “Charles was so fresh to the teacher’s friend he wasn’t let do exercises.”

“Fresh again?” I said.

“He kicked the teacher’s friend,” Laurie said. “The teacher’s friend just told Charles to touch his toes like I just did and Charles kicked him.

“What are they going to do about Charles, do you suppose?” Laurie’s father asked him.

Laurie shrugged elaborately. “Throw him out of school, I guess,” he said.

Wednesday and Thursday were routine; Charles yelled during story hour and hit a boy in the stomach and made him cry. On Friday Charles stayed after school again and so did all the other children.

With the third week of kindergarten Charles was an institution in our family; the baby was being a Charles when she cried all afternoon; Laurie did a Charles when he filled his wagon full of mud and pulled it through the kitchen; even my husband, when he caught his elbow in the telephone cord and pulled the telephone and a bowl of flowers off the table, said, after the first minute, “Looks like Charles.”

During the third and fourth weeks it looked like a reformation in Charles; Laurie reported grimly at lunch on Thursday of the third week, “Charles was so good today the teacher gave him an apple.”

“What?” I said, and my husband added warily, “You mean Charles?”

“Charles,” Laurie said. “He gave the crayons around and he picked up the books afterward and the teacher said he was her helper.”

“What happened?” I asked incredulously.

“He was her helper, that’s all,” Laurie said, and shrugged.

“Can this be true about Charles?” I asked my husband that night. “Can something like this happen?”

“Wait and see,” my husband said cynically. “When you’ve got a Charles to deal with, this may mean he’s only plotting.” He seemed to be wrong. For over a week Charles was the teacher’s helper; each day he handed things out and he picked things up; no one had to stay after school.
“The PTA meeting’s next week again,” I told my husband one evening. “I’m going to find Charles’s mother there.”

“Ask her what happened to Charles,” my husband said. “I’d like to know.”

“I’d like to know myself,” I said.

On Friday of that week things were back to normal. “You know what Charles did today?” Laurie demanded at the lunch table, in a voice slightly awed. “He told a little girl to say a word and she said it and the teacher washed her mouth out with soap and Charles laughed.”

“What word?” his father asked unwisely, and Laurie said, “I’ll have to whisper it to you, it’s so bad.” He got down off his chair and went around to his father. His father bent his head down and Laurie whispered joyfully. His father’s eyes widened.

“Did Charles tell the little girls to say that?” he asked respectfully.

“She said it twice,” Laurie said. “Charles told her to say it twice.”

“What happened to Charles?” my husband asked.

“Nothing,” Laurie said. “He was passing out the crayons.”

Monday morning Charles abandoned the little girl and said the evil word himself three or four times, getting his mouth washed out with soap each time. He also threw chalk.

My husband came to the door with me that evening as I set out for the PTA meeting. “Invite her over for a cup of tea after the meeting,” he said. “I want to get a look at her.”

“If only she’s there.” I said prayerfully.

“She’ll be there,” my husband said. “I don’t see how they could hold a PTA meeting without Charles’s mother.”

At the meeting I sat restlessly, scanning each comfortable matronly face, trying to determine which one hid the secret of Charles. None of them looked to me haggard enough. No one stood up in the meeting and apologized for the way her son had been acting. No one mentioned Charles.

After the meeting I identified and sought out Laurie’s kindergarten teacher. She had a plate with a cup of tea and a piece of chocolate cake; I had a plate with a cup of tea and a piece of marshmallow cake. We maneuvered up to one another cautiously, and smiled.

“I’ve been so anxious to meet you,” I said. “I’m Laurie’s mother.”

“We’re all so interested in Laurie,” she said.

“Well, he certainly likes kindergarten,” I said. “He talks about it all the time.”
“We had a little trouble adjusting, the first week or so,” she said primly, “but now he’s a fine helper. With occasional lapses, of course.”

“Laurie usually adjusts very quickly,” I said. “I suppose this time it’s Charles’s influence.”

“Charles?”

“Yes,” I said, laughing, “you must have your hands full in that kindergarten, with Charles.”

“Charles?” she said. “We don’t have any Charles in the kindergarten.”

Task 3: Exit ticket. Where did your group’s discussion fall on the scale? Are there specific moments from the discussion that you can identify as balanced? Can you explain why they were balanced?

Authorial Empathy Day 6 Student Handout

Task 1: Students will begin by reading Raymond Carver’s “Popular Mechanics” in small-groups. Jot down your responses and use paired reading strategies to craft 3-4-5 questions and assertions. Reference the EQ Chart.

Early that day the weather turned and the snow was melting into dirty water. Streaks of it ran down from the little shoulder-high window that faced the backyard. Cars slushed by on the street outside, where it was getting dark. But it was getting dark on the inside too.

He was in the bedroom pushing clothes into a suitcase when she came to the door.

I’m glad you’re leaving! I’m glad you’re leaving! she said. Do you hear?

He kept on putting his things into the suitcase.

Son of a bitch! I’m so glad you’re leaving! She began to cry. You can’t even look me in the face, can you?

Then she noticed the baby’s picture on the bed and picked it up.

He looked at her and she wiped her eyes and stared at him before turning and going back to the living room.

Bring that back, he said.

Just get your things and get out, she said.
He did not answer. He fastened the suitcase, put on his coat, looked around the bedroom before turning off the light. Then he went out to the living room.

She stood in the doorway of the little kitchen, holding the baby.

I want the baby, he said.

Are you crazy?

No, but I want the baby. I’ll get someone to come for his things.

You’re not touching this baby, she said. The baby had begun to cry and she uncovered the blanket from around his head.

Oh, oh, she said, looking at the baby.

He moved toward her.

For God’s sake! she said. She took a step back into the kitchen.

I want the baby.

Get out of here!

She turned and tried to hold the baby over in a corner behind the stove.

But he came up. He reached across the stove and tightened his hands on the baby.

Let go of him, he said.

Get away, get away! she cried.

The baby was red-faced and screaming. In the scuffle they knocked down a flowerpot that hung behind the stove. He crowded her into the wall then, trying to break her grip. He held onto the baby and pushed with all his weight.

Let go of him, he said.

Don’t, she said. You’re hurting the baby, she said.

I’m not hurting the baby, he said.

The kitchen window gave no light. In the near dark he worked on her fisted fingers with one hand and with the other hand he gripped the screaming baby up under an arm near the shoulder.

She felt her fingers being forced open. She felt the baby going from her.
No! she screamed just as her hands came loose.

She would have it, this baby. She grabbed for the baby’s other arm. She caught the baby around the wrist and leaned back.

But he would not let go. He felt the baby slipping out of his hands and he pulled back very hard.

In this manner, the issue was decided.

Task 2: Small-group discussions with the goal of crafting responses with authorial empathy. Share out the resulting assertion or question on the provided sentence strip. Be prepared to explain how it evidences reading with authorial empathy.

Task 3: In-class writing piece. You will type a response to the following prompt. “We’ve been talking about ways of responding to literary texts with a balance of being aware of author’s aesthetic choices and empathetically engaging with the characters in the narrative world. Explain what you thought and felt in reading this story. What did the author do to make you think and feel this? Feel free to reference specific excerpts from the text in your response. Think about how to use strategies to craft balanced responses in your essay.”

Authorial Empathy Day 7 Student Handout

Task 1: Teacher will read “Alice Walker’s “The Flowers” aloud to the class once. Each sentence in the text will be numbered. Students will be assigned numbered sentences from the text that they will be particularly attentive to during the reading. The teacher will read the story a second time and as she does so students will craft an assertion or question in response to the sentences they are assigned. For the third and final read-aloud after each sentence is read the student will share their response and name where it falls on the AES.

[1] It seemed to Myop as she skipped lightly from hen house to pigpen to smokehouse that the days had never been as beautiful as these. [2] The air held a keenness that made her nose twitch. [3] The harvesting of the corn and cotton, peanuts and squash, made each day a golden surprise that caused excited little tremors to run up her jaws.

[4] Myop carried a short, knobby stick. She struck out at random at chickens she liked, and worked out the beat of a song on the fence around the pigpen. [5] She felt light and good in the warm sun. [6] She was ten, and nothing existed for her but her song, the stick clenched in her dark brown hand, and the tat-de-ta-tata of accompaniment.

[7] Turning her back on the rusty boards of her family’s sharecropper cabin, Myop walked along the fence till it ran into
the stream made by the spring. Around the spring, where the family got drinking water, silver ferns and wildflowers grew.

Along the shallow banks pigs rooted. Myop watched the tiny white bubbles disrupt the thin black scale of soil and the water that silently rose and slid away down the stream.

She had explored the woods behind the house many times. Often, in late autumn, her mother took her to gather nuts among the fallen leaves. Today she made her own path, bouncing this way and that way, vaguely keeping an eye out for snakes. She found, in addition to various common but pretty ferns and leaves, an armful of strange blue flowers with velvety ridges and a sweet suds bush full of the brown, fragrant buds.

By twelve o'clock, her arms laden with sprigs of her findings, she was a mile or more from home. She had often been as far before, but the strangeness of the land made it not as pleasant as her usual haunts. It seemed gloomy in the little cove in which she found herself. The air was damp, the silence close and deep.

Myop began to circle back to the house, back to the peacefulness of the morning. It was then she stepped smack into his eyes. Her heel became lodged in the broken ridge between brow and nose, and she reached down quickly, unafraid, to free herself. It was only when she saw his naked grin that she gave a little yelp of surprise.

He had been a tall man. From feet to neck covered a long space. His head lay beside him. When she pushed back the leaves and layers of earth and debris Myop saw that he'd had large white teeth, all of them cracked or broken, long fingers, and very big bones. All his clothes had rotted away except some threads of blue denim from his overalls. The buckles of the overall had turned green.

Myop gazed around the spot with interest. Very near where she'd stepped into the head was a wild pink rose. As she picked it to add to her bundle she noticed a raised mound, a ring, around the rose's root. It was the rotted remains of a noose, a bit of shredding plowline, now blending benignly into
the soil. [33] Around an overhanging limb of a great spreading oak clung another piece. [34] Frayed, rotted, bleached, and frazzled—barely there—but spinning restlessly in the breeze. [35] Myop laid down her flowers.

[36] And the summer was over.

1:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Task 2: Whole class discussion on AE and the story. Did you response change with repeated readings of the story? Did it shift in a meaningful way? Why do you think that is? Discussion will be driven by an awareness of authorial empathy and the essential question. Who does Walker think is in control of our lives? Who does Myop think is in control of her life? Who do you think is in control?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Task 3: Reflective exit ticket that uses an authorially empathetic response to grapple with the essential question. Maybe use a writing model to provide a framework if needed. For example, In her short story “The Flowers”, Alice Walker…(Balanced AE response but focus on author, then connect to EQ) And/Or, In the short story “The Flowers” Myop…(Balanced AE response but focused on character’s world, then connect to EQ). Can
students thoughtfully build a paragraph response to the story that evidences reading with AE and offers thoughts on the EQ?
Authorial Empathy Day 8 Student Handout

Task 1: Students will read individually, in pairs, or small groups. Class time to read the stories for the culminating writing piece and discussion on two Ray Bradbury stories: “I See You Never” and “Sun and Shadow.” This reading is an opportunity to use AE to craft responses and questions, use the AES to self-evaluate responses for discussion, pair strategies to craft balanced responses, and consider the unit’s essential question. Teacher will circulate and guide students in their readings of authorial empathy.

Authorial Empathy Day 9 Student Handout

Task 1: In-class essay writing. The writing prompt:

We’ve been talking about ways of interpreting text with authorial empathy to balance an awareness of author’s aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters. Explain what you thought and felt in reading “I See You Never.” What did the author do to make you think and feel this? Feel free to reference specific excerpts from the text in your response. To what extent does the story challenge or support what you think about the extent to which we have control over our own lives?

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

Authorial Empathy Day 10 Student Handout

Task 1: Whole-class discussion. The discussion prompt:

We’ve been talking about ways of interpreting text with authorial empathy to balance an awareness of author’s aesthetic choices and empathetic engagement with characters. Explain what you thought and felt in reading “Sun and Shadow.” What did the author do to make you think and feel this? Feel free to reference specific excerpts from the text in your response. To what extent does the story challenge or support what you think about the extent to which we have control over our own lives?

_________________________________________

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Task 2: Final reflection Exit ticket: What did you like about reading with authorial empathy? What didn’t you like about reading with authorial empathy? What works? What doesn’t?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Class 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 9</td>
<td>“Sun and Shadow” Discussion</td>
<td>“I See You Never” Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 10</td>
<td>“I See You Never” Essay</td>
<td>“Sun and Shadow” Discussion</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX D

## EXAMPLES OF ESSAY EXCERPTS AT EACH POINT ON THE AES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AES Placement</th>
<th>Representative Excerpt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Solely technical analysis; no engagement with characters in narrative world</td>
<td>“Clair delineates an idea of repetitious rituals in the narrator’s life through repetition and asyndeton.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Primarily technical analysis; minimal engagement with narrative world</td>
<td>“The juxtaposition between Clair’s elevated diction choices and infrequent youthful diction choices show clear separation between the adult narrator’s perspective and her 5th grade memories told from the 5th grader’s perspective.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Significant portions of both technical analysis and empathetic engagement, but skewing towards technical analysis</td>
<td>“Cheever’s choice to have the speaker continually reference his father by ‘Daddy’ when the speaker is grown up now highlights the longing he has to feel just like a little kid loved by his father.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Equal balance of technical analysis and empathetic engagement with characters</td>
<td>“This feeling was amplified by Cheever’s allowing us insight into the narrator’s thoughts, as knowledge that he ‘wished we could be photographed’ and ‘wanted some record of our having been together’ made me relate to my own life and so I empathetically hoped that they would be sure and successful in their quest.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Significant portions of both emotional engagement and technical analysis, but skewing towards emotional engagement</td>
<td>“I felt sorrow for the narrator because of the negatively connotated descriptions she used when reflecting on her childhood.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – Primarily emotional engagement with characters; minimal technical analysis</td>
<td>“Because she treasures these objects the narrator makes me, as the reader, think the narrator feels a sense of wonder in these childish objects.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 – Solely emotional engagement with characters; no technical analysis</td>
<td>“At first, I felt happy for the son because he was finally getting a chance to reconnect with his father, but by the end I felt horrible for the young boy for what his father was putting him through.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nancy Unit 1 Writing Assignment

Name __________________________  Period: _________  Date: __________

Lord of the Flies
Analytical Essay

Task: You will write a well-developed, fully-supported essay addressing one of the following topics in Lord of the Flies. In creating your response, you will formulate a thesis statement, which narrows the topic and provides direction for your writing. Remember that you must take a stand in your thesis statement. Do not merely summarize events from the work. If you have an alternate topic of interest, please propose it. Do not merely recap class discussion in your essay, and do not rely on SparkNotes—think independently and creatively.

Topics:
--Perception of Evil
--Acquisition or Role of Power
  --Characteristics of Civilization (vs. Savagery)
--The Creation/Role of Identity
--The end of innocence
  --Island as Microcosm (requires outside research)
--Rationalization for Violence
--Layered meaning of the text
--Function of the little ones
In order to support your thesis, you will need to provide direct evidence from the novel, including at least two properly formatted quotations from the text.

**Style:** This piece must be a formal essay in MLA format. In other words, use only third person and appropriate word choice. Do not use contractions. Do NOT write a five paragraph essay—follow the structure of the text.

**Length:** The essay must be at least 2-3 pages (do not exceed 3!) in MLA format.

**Checklist Prior to Turning In:**
- MLA format
- 2-3 pages
- Specific and clear thesis that takes a stand
- Essay is not a plot summary
- Stays in third person
- No contractions
- Two quotes that are properly formatted

***When you submit your paper you MUST include the following rubric as the FRONT PAGE followed by your essay***
**Lord of the Flies**

Analytical Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>5 points</th>
<th>4 points</th>
<th>3 points</th>
<th>2 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Develops clear, purposeful thesis; relates all content directly to thesis</td>
<td>Develops clear thesis; relates most content directly to thesis</td>
<td>Develops fuzzy thesis; relates some content directly or indirectly to thesis</td>
<td>Fails to develop a thesis or fails to relate content to thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Provides sufficient evidence to support thesis; all content is correct; reflects originality of thought</td>
<td>Provides sufficient evidence to support thesis; all content is correct</td>
<td>Provides less than sufficient evidence to support thesis; content may contain misinformation</td>
<td>Provides less than sufficient evidence to support thesis; content contains misinformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Formulates a clear, logical organizational structure; provides transitions</td>
<td>Formulates a clear organizational structure; provides some transitions</td>
<td>Attempts to formulate a clear organizational structure; provides minimal transitions</td>
<td>Fails to formulate an organizational structure; fails to include transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style</strong></td>
<td>Writes in a formal style with varied word choice and sentences</td>
<td>Writes in a formal style with some varied word choice and sentences</td>
<td>Writes in informal style or fails to vary word choice and sentences</td>
<td>Writes in an informal style and fails to vary word choice and sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>Contains no errors in conventions</td>
<td>Contains no major errors in conventions</td>
<td>Contains few major errors in conventions</td>
<td>Contains multiple errors in conventions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Score:** __________________________  x4: __________________________/100
Nancy Unit 1 Discussion Prompt

*Lord of the Flies*
Chapter 12

1. Why is the chapter called “Cry of the Hunters”?
2. What condition is Ralph in at the beginning of the chapter?
3. What does he hope as a best case scenario? What is the reality of the situation?
4. On page 185 what does Ralph find? What does he do to it?
5. What does he think about this discovery?
6. Where does he go next?
7. Who does he see first?
8. Who does Ralph end up talking to?
9. What does he tell them? What do they tell him?
10. What do they say Roger has done? (to them, and to prepare for the hunt)
11. How is Roger behaving now?
12. What is Ralph’s plan for the hunt? Does it work?
13. Describe the hunt.
14. What do the savages do to drive Ralph to a point where they can kill him?
15. Where does Ralph end up? What does he find?
16. How is this a sharp contrast to what lead up to it?
17. What does this person say? Look like? Travel on? Think about the boys?
18. How many dead do they say they have? Is this true?

Nancy Unit 3 Writing Assignment

**Romantic Era In-Class Writing Prompt**

**Prompt:**
Using the excerpt from *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, reflect on the following question: How does this piece exemplify Romantic Period writing? I suggest that you consider the Authorial Empathy Scale (What connections can you make? What moves did the author make?)

Nancy Unit 3 Discussion Prompt

Read and annotate "The Lady of Shalott." Be prepared to discuss the following prompt: What Romantic era themes are present in the poem and how did the author craft them?

Dorothy Unit 1 Writing Assignment

**Modern World Literature Unit**

“By Any Other Name” by Santha Rama Rau- personal essay
“A Journey Along the Oka” by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn- prose poem
“Cranes” by Hwang Sun-won- short story
“And We Shall Be Steeped” by Leopold Sedar Senghor- poem
*Self-Portrait on the Borderline of Mexico and the United States* by Frida Kahlo- painting
“The Guest” by Albert Camus- short story

**Essential Questions:** To what extent does multicultural literature reflect the universality of the human experience? How do cultural elements in a text depict how cultural identity is central to the meaning of a work?

**Essay prompt:** In answering the EQs, analyze how at least three works from this unit delineate universal human experiences.

**Minimum:** five paragraphs

**Focus:** examples from the text, drawing clear conclusions through close examination of texts to distinguish patterns or themes

The Unit 1 Essay Assignment was evaluated using the Grade 11-12 Common Core Argumentative Writing Rubric

**Dorothy Unit 1 Discussion Prompt**

Opening question: Which character is worthy of the most sympathy from our class and why?

Preparation for **Socratic circle discussion:**

You will be graded on the quality of your responses and utterances. Everyone must participate in the discussion in order to receive credit, but participation that is limited to “I agree” or simplistic answers as such will not yield any credit. You should come prepared with notes and ideas.

Potential questions:

To what extent does identity play a role in the works studied in this unit?
Which character is worthy of the most sympathy from our class? Why?
What is the connection between an author’s purpose and the genre they choose for self-expression?
Which genre was most effective for conveying ideas?
To what extent is it necessary for the reader to understand the background of the artist in the process of encountering his or her work?

Self-generated questions are encouraged.

**Dorothy Unit 3 Writing Assignment**

Use the authorial empathy approach to write a college entrance essay in response to a Common Application prompt. Then, write an authorial empathy reflection piece in which you elaborate on
the choices you made as an author and what type of emotional engagement you intended to elicit from your audience.

**Dorothy Unit 3 Discussion Prompt**

To what extent does an effective college essay elicit an authorially empathetic response from readers? What did the writers make you think and feel when reading the essays, and how did they do this? How would you rank the essays in terms of engagement, author skill and/or overall effectiveness? How does the concept of authorial empathy help a student, yourself, compose a college essay?