

CHARACTER MIRRORS: CREATING IDENTITY – TEXT-TO-SELF, TEXT-TO-TEXT,
TEXT-TO-TECHNOLOGY

A Dissertation

by

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This dissertation meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

The focus of the doctoral research study was to present a qualitative narrative on how curriculum design and the formation of literary awareness within the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom is an embedded process that occurs during reading comprehension, literary analysis, and the narrative construction process. The development of students into critical readers and writers is a complicated process of self-discovery, literary interpretation, and textual renderings that stem from traditional literary explication while merging student connections throughout the reading and writing process.

The design of this study included a balanced curriculum that was in-line with the Scope & Sequence established for English IV instruction and meets the goals and objectives of the Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS) for English IV. The student population for site location consisted of approximately 2,450 students with an ethnic distribution of 54.7% Hispanic, 37.2% White, 5.3% African American, 2.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.5% Native American. The site location was one urban high school in South Texas. Four student participants (2 female/2 male) were randomly selected from English IV course selections. The first female and male students that responded to calendar availability were selected as study participants. Proximity to student participants provided ample opportunity for curriculum design implementation, classroom observations and teacher field notes. The selection of two student participants was purposeful in that the narrative design was structured to present an in-depth look at how the curriculum design of “Character Mirrors” was integrated throughout reading and writing instruction via text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology.

The integration of text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology applications during the process of reading, literary analysis, and narrative construction addressed (1) how curriculum design and content specific lesson design can contribute to literary awareness in both the reading and writing process, (2) how students make meaning during the reading process through the formation of literary awareness, (3) how students bridge literary awareness into the writing process in narrative construction, and (4) how students create narrative stories and literary analysis using a variety of mediums.

Data was collected over the course of one academic year in one ELA English IV classroom in one South Texas High School. Data included teacher observations, student journals, student narrative artifacts, and student interviews. Data collected, reviewed, and interpreted were analyzed within the scope of narrative analysis methods. Analysis illustrated how students used and applied the lesson design of “Character Mirrors” throughout the reading and writing process maneuvering through literary texts in a way that supported individualized reading and writing instruction. After implementation and review of the findings per the research participants and curriculum/lesson design interactions it is clear that there is a need for seamless instruction of content in the ELA classroom while offering diversity and rigor. The most important insights gleaned from this study were based on two principles 1. Curriculum/lesson design that is purposeful and relevant to students can lead students to become active participants throughout ELA instruction. 2. Educators/Practitioners need to embrace the power of content creation that allows intellectual growth for their students and the craft of teaching while incorporating contemporary and technological applications that are relevant to the learning process and the student population.

DEDICATION

The effort, sacrifice, and patience of my loving family has been immeasurable. From sleepless nights, anxiety filled days, deadlines, sick children, work, and home life - the continuation of pursuing this dream has been a sacrifice and a reward. I am grateful that I grew up watching my mother model the importance of education. I am thankful for my father who provided me an excellent educational foundation by sending me to private school. I am blessed with a husband who has championed this endeavor. I am proud that my children have seen my struggles and determination throughout this academic process. I am indebted to my dear mother-in-law, Lydia DeLaGarza, who has supported my work in deeds that could never be repaid in a lifetime. Throughout all these years I have always believed that this academic journey has made me a better educator/practitioner and it is my deepest wish that I continue to search for excellence in all I do.

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I would like to thank Dr. Bryant Griffith whose intellectual and passionate regard for instruction inspires me to be the best educator I can be for my students. Dr. Elisabeth Mermann-Jozwiak who has seen me through my entire academic journey and has always been an inspiration and role model for the love of literature. Dr. Corinne Valadez who in words and action has taught me the importance of self-reliance and the power of female strength.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
ABSTRACT	v
DEDICATION	vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION	1
Rationale	10
Research Purpose	12
Research Questions	12
Operational Definitions	12
Significance of the Problem and Justification for Study	17
Delimitations	19
Assumptions	19
Chapter Summary.	19
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW	20
Literary Criticism	21

Narrative Construction	24
Digital Literacies	26
Instruction and Assessment	29
Differentiated Instruction	29
Product-based/Arts-based/Performance-based assessment(s)	30
Chapter Summary	31
CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	32
Methodology	36
Participants and Site Selection	44
Ethical Considerations	46
Data Collection Procedures	48
Observations	49
Journals	50
Student Artifacts	51
Interviews	52
Data Management and Analysis	55
Data Representation	59

Trustworthiness and Rigor	60
Chapter Summary	62
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS	63
Emma	74
Elliott	110
Chapter Summary	145
CHAPTER 5: OUTCOMES AND IMPLICATIONS	146
SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS	154
REFERENCES	165

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES	PAGE
Table 1: <i>The Iliad</i> – Novel Unit Timeline	38
Table 2: Data Inventory Table	43
Table 3: Participant Criteria	46
Table 4: Research Timeline	54
Table 5: Classroom Observation	58

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES	PAGE
Figure 1.1: Character/Transaction Activity	68
Figure 1.2: “Character Mirrors” Enrichment	70
Figure 1.3: Final Novel Project	72
Figure 2.1: Character/Transaction Activity	80
Figure 2.2: Student Artifact for Figure 2.2	81
Figure 2.3: “Character Mirrors” Poster Activity	83
Figure 2.4: Student Artifact for Figure 2.4	89
Figure 2.5: “Character Mirrors” Enrichment	95
Figure 2.6: Student Artifact for Figure 2.6	98
Figure 2.7: Student Artifact 2 for Figure 2.6	102
Figure 2.8: Student Artifact for Figure 1.3	104
Figure 3.0: Student Artifact for Figure 2.2	112
Figure 3.1: Student Artifact for Figure 2.4	121
Figure 3.2: Student Artifact for Figure 2.6	125
Figure 3.3: Student Artifact for Figure 1.3	135
Figure 3.4: Student Artifact for Figure 1.3	137
Figure 3.5: Student Artifact for Figure 1.3	139

Chapter 1

For each researcher there is a set of ideas and ideals that guides the purpose and passion of their study. As a research practitioner, I know from personal experience how gender, ethnicity, and economics are all part of the social construct of understanding and exploration within the high school setting and how those demographics are inextricably tied to the interactions with self, others, and the curriculum. The myriad of social influences within the constructs of an ELA classroom setting makes manifest the kaleidoscope of happenings and renderings of self and the curriculum. As a reader and English Language Arts (ELA) teacher, I have seen a micro level change in literary reading and writing with students in my ELA classroom. Over time I have witnessed an intrinsic decline in students' desire to read let alone develop literary awareness – an on-going, interactive, and thoughtful process of reading, thinking, and writing about literature as a foundational strategy that helps readers create intellectual and creative connections with texts - that transforms their reading, thinking and writing about literature into an active and intrinsic process. I often preach to students when they enter and leave the classroom that they need to “Read IT like you love IT!” At first, it was just a little mantra to get them started, but as time unfolded it really became a rallying call to invigorate their own reluctance to tackle any type of reading. I often lamented the lack of enthusiasm that many students brought with them about reading and writing and felt a sense of desperation as their ELA instructor to reinvigorate long lost feelings of creativity, imagination, and possibilities that come from reading and writing. So I had to start asking tough questions – “Why did so many students have such a dislike of reading? Why did writing make so many tremble with anxiety? What types of reading did they want to read? What types of literature was I presenting, and how was I presenting the work?”

Ultimately, these questions led me to the realization that as a reader and as a teacher, I wanted them to love reading and writing the way I loved reading and writing in high school. But they are not me, they are not in the same environment, they do not have the same interests as I do, and they do not “Read IT like they love IT!” Philosophically, the belief that great literature naturally calls to readers is as dead as the authors who wrote the works presented in class. The motto, “Read IT like you love IT” suddenly became the impetus behind the creation of “Character Mirrors” as curriculum/lessons that would move students away from being non-readers/writers or, my favorite, faux readers/writers – students who fake their way through reading and writing. The faux reading/writers are often difficult to reach because they are avid readers of all things except classroom texts and are budding authors of song lyrics and catch phrases that fly into cyberspace. The notion of moving all students - the reluctant, aspiring, the non-interested, and advanced readers/writers into students who create meaningful and individual connections throughout the literary process is what the “Read IT like you love IT!” mantra enlivens.

It was clear that the answer to these questions was going to be directly tied to instructional practice and that I had to change my practice to meet their needs, levels, and interests before I could expect them to read Homer or write a narrative filled with critical thinking and literary analysis. From that moment on, the content, instruction, presentation, and action in the classroom became a vehicle for me to make that happen. Ultimately, there is and needs to be a cognitive relationship between the “classic” text and the virtual world of technology in which students live in order to bridge classroom texts to their social context. Pinar suggests, that “[t]o educate the public suggests that we teach popular culture as well, not only as a pedagogical lure to engage students’ interests, but, through the curriculum, to enable students

to connect their lived experience with academic knowledge, to foster student's intellectual development, and students' capacities for critical thinking" (2004, p. 21). As I developed as a teacher I began to see an intrinsic connection between presenting readings as a reflection of self and how in every piece of literature there is a component that we as readers internalize and make real through our own experiences and connections to self, others, and the world. With that idea the creation and implementation of "Character Mirrors" developed into a content driven curriculum/lesson design that I could use to facilitate reading, writing, and thinking about literature in my ELA classroom. "Character Mirrors" is a teacher/researcher created lesson design based on ELA content whereby students read, think, and write about literature via their own subjectivities through the formation of text-to-self, text-to-text (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997), and text-to-technology connections. Throughout the reading, thinking, and writing process students are guided to form personal connections (associations/transactions) with characters and/or themes within the text that "mirror" their experiences (self), prior knowledge (from other text), and during product application (technology). As lessons and understanding develops students move toward transitioning from foundational strategies into application of literary awareness into their writing and product creation. The content design of "Character Mirrors" is an amalgamation and transformation of many types of theories and ELA strategies like Reader Response and Transactional theory to strategies like word association and KWL that ELA teachers use to teach ELA content at the high school level. The use and adaptations of past ELA theories and strategies is essential to build upon activities and lessons that enable readers/writers to actively participate in textual formation of literary understanding that applies their perspectives from text to product. Of course, the idea of personalizing reading is not a new concept nor is the use of characterization upon reading reflections. However, the creation and use

of “Character Mirrors” specifically addresses the challenges of rendering the classics and contemporary pieces of literature relevant to a multitude of high school students, many of whom are at various developmental reading/writing stages, who bring with them all their preconceived notions about literature and reading in general - most of which is due to lack of exposure, motivation, and the influx of a world driven by hypertext and visual media.

David Bleich’s (1975) belief that “[i]f we [teachers] abandon routine . . . and allow ourselves . . . our intuitions . . . conceiving the class as a group of people with different feelings, perceptions, and motives for being . . . then we are forced to take into consideration how feelings and knowledge interact” within the classroom room environment and content presented (p. 2). Therefore, the focus of the study is to explore how two students in one section of English IV give voice to their literary understanding via character exploration throughout the reading and writing process by locating over-arching themes through character identification and situational experiences framed in literary selections presented in their ELA classroom.

As a research practitioner, the curriculum design fit seamlessly with the presentation of literature as a reflection of self and how the student products become a direct reflection of their literary awareness via reading, writing, and technology production. The study of curriculum design upon the formation of literary identity within the ELA classroom via text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology is a daunting task filled with literary portals that wind through the foundation of classical forms of analysis from hermeneutics to modern approaches such as new criticism to reader-response. From the onset students are guided to make connections with text as they are presented during course instruction. The lesson design of “Character Mirrors” focuses on the foundational connections students can and should make to self, past texts and media/technology as crossover links that activate prior knowledge. The multiplicity of

connections text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology helps students make meaningful connections that encourages an intrinsic motivation that leads to active participation with the text and during product development. According to Harvey & Goudvis, “students access and use their prior knowledge and experiences to better understand what they read and [how] it often launches . . . instruction because every student has experiences, knowledge, opinions, or emotions to draw upon” (2000, p. 21). With that in mind the primary focus is the creation and integration of the curriculum design of “Character Mirrors” and how students’ implementation of that design supports their learning as they interact with the works presented and the products they create. In this context, “curriculum theory, then is a form of autobiographical and theoretical truth-telling that articulates the educational experience of teachers and students as [a] lived” (Pinar, 2004, p. 25) practice within the ELA educational setting. Introduced by the works of Aristotle to scholars such as Jean-François Lyotard textual studies have gone through an evolution of author-authority to reader interpretation, the genesis of which can be seen in the happenings of ELA content design and course instruction. This historical and literary genealogy takes into consideration the past, present, and future of literary understanding and plays an important role in establishing a new curriculum that merges traditional literary analysis with modern interpretation. It is within the scope of traditional literary criticism by which readers are reflective and pay attentive consideration to the analysis and understanding of a literary work (Murphin, 2009, p. 78) that I want to explore how two students develop literary awareness by situating (subjectivity) themselves within the text through the implementation of “Character Mirrors.”

The historicity of literary analysis in ELA instruction illustrates that reading texts cannot be substantiated just by the “what” and “how” but must take into consideration the

“why,” “who,” and “when” as a framing model of reader-authorship. For Wolfgang Iser “[t]he manner in which the reader experiences the text will reflect his own disposition, and in this respect the literary text acts as a kind of mirror . . .” (as cited in Richter, 2007). I believe that the use of “mirrored” perspectives as a form of reading, questioning, and understanding can pave the way for students to make personal connections with text thereby developing their own literary awareness that they can apply to the writing process and product creation as a representation of understanding the texts they explore throughout the year.

As part of this personalized reading exploration it is important to build and present curriculum that breaks down the social/group formation that is so prevalent within the high school setting. “Character Mirrors” lesson design offers an individualized way of reading and responding to texts to promote contextual learning by which each student forms distinct and specific literary/character connections based on their personal reading of texts presented in class. Stuart Hall (1998) suggests that a student’s “identity is in a [constant] state of disruption based on environment, ethnicity, gender, peers, self, history, language, and various other conditions that perpetually affect identity” (p. 35). His discussion on “collective” identities is an important factor in education because the high-school construct is built upon group interaction and status. However, in order for students to make learning real they must first explore the “I” within the content, course, and curriculum. Aylesworth (1991) states that the process of reading and literary interpretation is based on the “reader[’s] experiences [and] imaginative variation upon his or her ego by playing the role of subject to the text’s ideal meaning . . . accomplished by the text [which] provides a teleological ground for the process through which the subjects come to know, and to be, self” (p. 72) this is a foundational stage for developing text-to-self connections which establishes student engagement.

The lesson design of “Character Mirrors” looks at the reading, writing, and technology process as an integrative/exploratory journey thereby giving students multiple modes of reacting to and thinking about how the literature presented can inform their reading and writing perspectives by applying text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology throughout the literary process. Like Pinar, “I move to the progressive moment, in which we focus on the futuristic conceptions of education . . . dispersing our subjectivities outward . . . subjectivity itself mutates, and the “self” autobiography purports to identify and express distends into hypertextual personae, [and] ever-changing . . . identities” (2004, p. 8) thereby creating a multiplicity of textual understanding.

The objective of the study is to narrate and present how two students make reading and writing real through the use of “Character Mirrors” as a curriculum and content driven ELA strategy that merges - literary reading, narrative construction, and technology application into meaningful product creations. “Character Mirrors” then becomes a reading and writing tool that merges literary criticism in the form of Reader-response and Transactional Theory to Narrative construction by joining literature to self. “Character Mirrors” embraces a setting where there is no disruption between character and self, there is no other, there is only the moment in which one reads, reacts, and creates. As part of the exploratory process of narrative research the study must strive to capture how students use the curriculum design of “Character Mirrors” throughout their literary journey of interpretation, analysis, and production as a transformative endeavor that builds connections text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology. The use of a screenplay narrative in the construction of the Findings gives the audience a peek into the daily and curricular lives of two students as they navigate both classic and contemporary reading selections. This first-hand look showcases how two students integrate “Character Mirrors”

into their reading, thinking, and writing about literature during ELA instruction. The creation and implementation of “Character Mirrors” is a strategy that supports the need to expand upon current literary learning practices by way of the reader while supporting the “assumption that all people, young and old, think about themselves most of the time and think about the world in terms of themselves” [thereby] creating “understanding and reconceptualizing a work of literature” as an expression of self (Bleich, 1975, p. 4). The hope is to move students away from the notion of “having correct labels” or “substantiating someone else’s experiences with the work” and “distrusting their own responses” while tackling literary selections that too often become works “to be described, manipulated, catalogued, and categorized” rather than experienced, enjoyed, and imagined (Rosenblatt, 1956, p. 68).

Educational research in this framework creates the role of researcher/practitioner, which adds to the narrative research by incorporating how curriculum/lesson design helps students negotiate the complexities of literary awareness through the use of literature, composition, and technology. In developing and implementing practitioner created curriculum it is important to remember that curriculum theory, discourse, understanding, and action are interconnected strands of “. . . academic knowledge, the state of society, the process of self-formation, and the character of the historical moment in which we live” (Pinar, 2004, p. 187). In this sense, curriculum then is not just about what and how but why, who, and when.

Time placement within the educational setting must include technology instruction and implementation within content instruction. With the emergence of fast-paced, consumer ready technology, students need to learn how to navigate and identify self within the social and technological environment of a truly global community. In order to prepare students for changes in curriculum development, technology applications, and social media within the classroom and

beyond, curriculum and learning need to meet the demands and innovations of the 21st century. Critical practitioners have an obligation to explore how emerging types of literacies are shaping curriculum development, learning possibilities, and assessment. The content-based design of “Character Mirrors” grew from the needs of the students to showcase their working development of literary awareness through written and product-based assessment.

So, how does literary awareness transition into literary analysis that establishes an active student-participatory curriculum that leads to formation of understanding and action via reading, writing, and the use of technology? Often, the written process adheres to the structured and traditional conventions of literary analysis, whereby students focus on the explication of a text by analyzing literary connections and stylistic devices within a work. However, the use of product-based assessment allows freedom of creativity and interpretation that highlights student connections of text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology.

The exploration in each of these areas is a comprehensive and exhaustive task that needs to begin with looking at how emerging types of literacies are shaping curriculum and student understanding specifically technology applications whereby students establish connections to self, text, and technology throughout the process of literary discovery. As technology infiltrates every aspect of life it is clear that “digital literacies [and applications] are here to stay – they are at the core of new literacies. It behooves . . . us to seriously consider how to weave together old, new, and future literacies so that [students] leave school literate in the ways of school and in the ways of the world.” (O’Brien & Schaubert, 2008, p. 68). Ultimately, the question of how one defines and establishes literary awareness is an on-going forum of discussion within the field of ELA education and instruction that will continue to offer educators an opportunity of discovery for years to come.

Rationale for the Study

As part of the process of merging traditional literary criticism with student interpretation ELA instruction needs to encourage independent critical-thinking within the classroom environment; whereby, the teacher assumes a participatory role in creating a classroom community that encourages active student participation, interpretation, and development. For Paulo Freire, teacher and students are accountable for self and one another through discourse and practice within the classroom to establish self-authorship and become representations of society through “listening and learning to talk with learners, [whereby] democratic teachers teach the learners to listen,” (Freire, 2005, p. 115) discuss, and create. Following this thought teacher development, classroom instruction, and student learning needs to embrace the empowerment of the “study of the student” in order to resist a systematic and prescribed way of teaching ELA curriculum that perpetuates teacher authority via the “absorption of facts and truths as an [exclusively] individual affair . . . [where] there is no social motive for the acquirement of learning [and] there is no clear gain in success” (Dewey, 1959, p. 65) within the educational setting. This shift in reading and writing about texts and self is a necessary process that encourages students to take ownership of their learning process and fosters “in students . . . attitudes and dispositions which would prepare and inspire them to participate in change” (Pinar, 2004, p. 131) that can occur within ELA instructional practices. Ultimately, the goals and objectives of the study are tied to a deeper purpose of instruction – and that is to create a foundation for each student to become a life-long reader so that the foundation will instill upon them the significance and value of being a life-long learner.

The development of literary awareness through critical reading and writing of self can be a bridge for both individual and social placement that allows students to establish narratives that

build their oral histories and social communities. As researcher, observer, and curriculum designer the set of ideas and ideals that will govern the research process are deeply embedded in my personal academic journey as well as my experiences as a critical practitioner in the ELA classroom. Within the ELA classroom narrative comprehension and construction are vital components in developing voice, mastering the writing process, and tackling literary analysis. However, literary analysis and narrative construction are often taught as two separate modes of learning that are disconnected from one another due to three literary tenets:

1. Tradition: an effort to maintain a rich literary/historical canon
2. Author as Authority: an effort to retain authorship/meaning in text
3. Subjectivity: an effort to restrict reconstruction of textual meaning

(Dean, 2008, p. 33).

Bound by these three tenets it is an undertaking to challenge traditional practice and support student driven instruction. The outcome of allowing educators and students to reconstitute meaning, understanding, and creation can lead to a year of literary discovery/understanding and writing that fills the classroom with anticipation, vigor, and excitement.

The placement of tradition, the values of author, and authorship needs to be reinvigorated and incorporated into classroom instruction and student learning by scaffolding the rich and expansive literary texts with contemporary works and digital literacies/applications that transcend the traditional scope of the ELA curriculum. Instruction needs to attempt to counter yearly statistics and surveys, from the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, that continue to show that “[r]eading scores [have dropped] and voluntary reading rates diminish as children move from childhood to late adolescence . . . and

that young people (ages 15-19) read only six minutes per weekday for pleasure” (Schauber, 2009, p. 433). While “[t]radition may define the expected role that teachers play” the integration of modern, dynamic, and student driven instruction will propel learning away from the rigid “consolidated power [of] authority [and] embrace individual liminal voices” (Griffith, 2008, p. 10) within the classroom setting and beyond.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore how two students in one section of English IV author literary awareness through the presentation of “Character Mirrors” as a way to discover and create contextual meaning and literary connections via discourse, composition, and technology applications within the ELA classroom. This study will present a narrative analysis/arts-based interpretation about how two students utilize “Character Mirrors” as a vehicle for literary awareness through varied reading, narrative composition, and technology integration via text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology.

Research Questions

1. How do students utilize “Character Mirrors” to describe themselves and present rich personal narratives based on their interactions with the curriculum and lesson design of “Character Mirrors” – text-to-self and text-to-text?
2. How do students make connections to the literature in the ELA classroom while developing personal narrative connections with the use of text-to-technology applications?

Operational Definitions

The following terms will be used throughout the research process and presentation of findings.

- Arts-based research/inquiry: “[a]rts-based research can be defined as the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different

forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies" (Knowles and Cole, 2008, p. 29).

- Canon: term used to refer to the body of works attributed by scholars to a particular author (for example, the Shakespearean canon). Canon may also refer more generally to those literary works that are privileged, or given special status, by a culture. Works we tend to think of as classics or as "Great Books." (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 46-47).
- Character Mirrors: Teacher/Researcher created lesson design based on ELA content whereby students read, analyze, and write literary analysis via their own subjectivity through the formation of text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology connections. Lesson development took "into account the great wealth of literature" available for ELA content instruction and offers a balanced presentation of classical to contemporary reading selections with the idea that this helps facilitate student literary awareness via writing and technology by integrating student experiences during their textual interactions without assuming "that reader's contributions will be taken care of [by] simple exposure to a sequence of works" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 106). Each set of lessons is based on the concept that students must read with all their senses and process text in a meaningful manner that fits their reading needs and style. The creation of the lesson design of "Character Mirrors" is a way of offering and serving all students by creating a set of multimodal/individualized literacy instructional tools. As they read, students are guided to form a personal connection with characters and/or themes that "mirror" their own experiences. Lessons start with students using "Character Mirrors" as a lens for understanding plot and thematic devices from the perspective of characters presented in

the text. As lessons and understanding develop students move toward transitioning from character perspective to associative interactions with the characters presented working toward narrative construction and literary awareness. This interactive strategy supports Bleich's (1975) idea that "[the] associative response . . . is the most complex but the most useful form of expressing feelings about literature." The personal connection/formation of understanding reveals that each individual "reworks" the text which they are reading "to the demands of his personality at the time of the reading" (p. 48).

- cognitive mapping: the detailed visual representation and presentation, most often in a flowchart format, of a cognitive process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- digital literacies: the ability to read, write, and review online digital text (news, media, social forums, educational sites, etc.; the use and production of digital applications for digital storytelling, social networking, and webpage creation using applications/platforms like PowerPoint, Publisher, blogs, podcasts, etc. to create new narrative structures and discourse communities (O'Brien & Scharber, 2008, p. 66).
- digital technology applications: refers specifically to technology applications/platforms (PowerPoint, Facebook pages, online blogs, Microsoft Publisher, iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, etc.) of student generated narrative products.
- elmo: a document camera designed to display AV presentations and images in the classroom.
- English IV: E97 ENGLISH 4 Grade Level: 12 Provides opportunities for the capable and highly motivated student. Emphasizes critical-thinking and sophisticated writing skills. Focuses on in-depth reading and analysis of literature. Includes research and writing as major activities. High school credit in English 4 will be contingent upon the successful

completion of four 9 weeks.

- Hermeneutics: The term covers both the first order art and the second order theory of understanding and interpretation of linguistic and non-linguistic expressions. As a theory of interpretation, the hermeneutic tradition stretches all the way back to ancient Greek philosophy. With the emergence of German romanticism and idealism the status of hermeneutics changes. Hermeneutics turns philosophical. It is no longer conceived as a methodological or didactic aid for other disciplines, but turns to the conditions of possibility for symbolic communication as such. (Ramberg & Gjesdal, 2013).
- KWL (Know, Will/Want to know, Learned): A content comprehension guide created by Donna Ogle in 1986. It is a three columned sheet that students use for pre-reading and post-reading instruction answering –What they **K**now about the topic, what the **W**ill or **W**ant to know about topic, and what they **L**earned. (Ogle, 1986)
- literary analysis: a method by which a literary work is separated into parts and is given rigorous and logical scrutiny in a consistent and complete account of literary elements (Harmon & Holman, 2000, pp. 22-23).
- literary awareness: an on-going, interactive, and thoughtful process of reading, thinking, and writing about literature as a foundational strategy that helps readers create intellectual and creative connections with texts.
- literary criticism: refers to a balanced analysis whereby one may critique merits and faults in a deliberate assessment of the work and may refer to the establishment of a general set of principles applicable to any number of works (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 78).
- narrative research: an approach to qualitative research that is both a product and a method. It is a study of stories or narrative or descriptions of a series of events that

accounts for human experience (Creswell, 2007, p. 234).

- Product-based assessment: a non-traditional type of assessment that focuses on the process via the creation of a product that illustrates mastery and understanding of topic/lesson/objective. The product creation supports individualized learning and encourages creative possibilities to showcase depth of understanding.
- Reader-Response: a kind of criticism that suggests that a piece of writing scarcely exists except as a text designed to be read; indeed, scarcely exists until somebody reads it. The *reader-response* approach does not so much analyze a reader's responding apparatus as scrutinize those features of the text that shape and guide a reader's reading. (Harmon & Holman, 2000, pp. 523).
- restorying: an approach in narrative data analysis in which the researchers retell the stories of individual experiences, and the new story typically has a beginning, middle, and ending (Creswell, 2007, p. 234).
- TEKS: The English Language Arts and Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are organized into the following strands: Reading, where students read and understand a wide variety of literary and informational texts; Writing, where students compose a variety of written texts with a clear controlling idea, coherent organization, and sufficient detail; Research, where students are expected to know how to locate a range of relevant sources and evaluate, synthesize, and present ideas and information; Listening and Speaking, where students listen and respond to the ideas of others while contributing their own ideas in conversations and in groups; and Oral and Written Conventions, where students learn how to use the oral and written conventions of the English language in speaking and writing. The standards are cumulative—students will

continue to address earlier standards as needed while they attend to standards for their grade. In English IV, students will engage in activities that build on their prior knowledge and skills in order to strengthen their reading, writing, and oral language skills. Students should read and write on a daily basis (TEA, 2011).

- thematic analysis: summary and analysis of qualitative data through the use of extended phrases and or sentences rather than shorter codes (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).
- Transactional theory: Louise M. Rosenblatt began developing a theory of reading that blurs the boundary between reader and text , subject and object – whereby the reader lives through under the guidance of the text and experiences as relevant to the text (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 392).

Throughout the research process other topics that informed curriculum design and implementation included: identity, narration, curriculum development, characterization, Discourse, writing purpose, technology applications, individualized instruction, product-based assessment and inter-textuality. The process of exploration and discussion of literary perspectives in the canon of high-school literature looks at how the classical tradition of textual analysis and the implementation of “Character Mirrors” as an ELA strategy that can help students form literary awareness and narrative construction through the use of lessons that focus on individualized reading and writing instruction.

Significance of the Problem and the Justification for Study

In educational practice and setting, time is a critical factor in determining pedagogy and curriculum. As social/educational mores change, students too evolve and bring with them the differences and uniqueness of the world they are living into the classroom environment. Unfortunately, teaching and content can get lost in a time that is held rigid by the past and

governed by testing mandates upon instruction and student achievement. Practitioners must then rise to the challenge of reassessing, reevaluating, and restructuring pedagogy and practice. I argue that teacher created curriculum is one way that teachers can bring their expertise of content into alignment with the academic and social needs of students. Lesson design then becomes purposeful and individualized as teachers adapt curriculum/lessons to meet the varied personalities and levels of the students. Now more than ever teachers must find ways to infuse the love and passion of their content into the lives of their students and into the mired educational context of high-stakes testing that rules and governs educational practice. ELA educators must break the current model that accepts that within “secondary classrooms English-as-literature has disappeared . . . partly as a result of the wholesale adoption of the national strategies . . . and partly to the distorting and reductive testing system” (Dean, 2008, 33).

The ELA instructional paradox lies in the need to retain traditional values of literature, composition and the humanities while infusing these ideals with modern texts, writing modes, and evolving social/academic values and practices. I believe that curriculum must be a reflection of the rich and textured literature of both past and present and not conform to rigid formulaic out of the box pre-packaged curriculum/testing models of instruction and that all educators must create curriculum/lessons that speak directly to their students’ needs and are creations of their content expertise. For all teachers, “[t]he old concerns are there. . . [but] there is good reason to challenge the many fixed cultural practices that have traditionally defined and currently guide a large portion of lesson in this subject” (Dean, 2008, 33). In creating and researching the use of “Character Mirrors” the intent was to bring the past and present together by merging traditional literature and contemporary text in a manner that can establish individualized instruction in the areas of reading for literary awareness, writing for self, and the incorporation of technology as a

reading and writing medium of expression.

Delimitations

The following delimitations to the study are:

1. Only students in English IV at the onset of the study will participate.
2. Sample size/selection is purposeful and convenient to narrative analysis presentation/research.
3. Collected data includes purposeful student product samples, student product evaluations, interview/open-ended questions to provide curriculum/lesson design process evaluation and narrative research construction of study.

Assumptions

1. It is assumed that participants will answer questions and evaluation rubric honestly and to the best of their ability to reflect their own learning process.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the importance of integrated reading, writing, and technology based learning in the ELA classroom. In particular the use of content specific curriculum that meets the needs of diverse groups of high school students with varying degrees of reading and writing needs. Much of the ongoing research provides insight to the topic of curriculum design upon ELA instruction and the development of reading, writing, and technology applications.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In the English Language Arts classroom telling one's story is a vital component to developing voice, literary understanding, and mastering the writing process. The importance of self-narration is often a difficult task for any reader/writer; however, this is a key element in the ELA classroom. At every grade level students are expected to analyze, discuss, and compose. If students are to make sense of the world they live in they must have a sense of self. Everything we read, participate in, and create is an extension of self; it is our "myth" and our "identity." Even according to Harold Bloom (2000), a literary traditionalist, "reading a novel in 2000 is a very changed act from what it was back in 1944" and readers must ask themselves "Why read?" (p. 193-194). With the implementation of "Character Mirrors" reading becomes an interactive multimodal/individualized model/mini-lesson by establishing reader identity and narrative voice. The process of discovery is made real by becoming an individualized reading and writing experience that uses the lesson design as an interactive instructional tool that combines, text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology that illustrates how "understanding is not a passive act of decoding but a creative act of imagining a scene" (Tannen, 1994, p.7) by identifying the reader/writer as listener, speaker, and creator.

In the canon of western literature and contemporary literature in ELA instruction there are many opportunities to explore and form literary awareness within the construct of reading comprehension and throughout the writing process. By developing reading and writing activities that embraced active self-identification students were given an opportunity to take "control of [their] world and how it is constructed through language" (Yagleski, 2000, p.47). As the research process unfolded I used reading and writing opportunities within each literary unit to model literary analysis, interpretation and narrative construction that supported the research

purpose and questions.

The review of the literature in the field of ELA instruction focuses on the impact of curriculum and instruction in three specific areas as they are integral to the foundation used to model and merge the lesson design of “Character Mirrors” as a critical reading and writing strategy that focuses on depth of understanding text from reading experiences, the writing process, and technology applications. The three areas for the literature review are as follows:

1. Literary criticism/analysis – a blend of traditional modes of critique and understanding/analysis of literary elements used throughout structure while incorporating self into the reading/understanding/explication of the text.
2. Narrative construction – the creation of a narrative or analysis that is based on the influence and application of literary development of characterization, setting, theme, tone, etc. upon the reader/writer.
3. Digital Literacies – the use of technology/technology applications for the production of varied student narratives/projects.

Literary Criticism

As noted, “tradition” in the canon of “Western” literature is a highly praised and untouchable group of literary ideals and selections that continue to terrify and stump many high school students. Traditionally, texts are read and explicated in a complex and rigid tradition that stems from high-stakes testing models for advanced placement and an effort to preserve the canonical tradition (Dean, 2008). This is evident in most ELA classrooms where the formation of interpretation is tied specifically to classical modes of thinking that remove the students from the formation of “meaning [whereby] the whole of Western tradition and the traditional notions of canon formation, evaluation, and responsible criticism” (Raval, 1998, p. 24) are rendered bare

and without meaning for so many readers. Bleich (1975) suggests that interaction between the text and the reader demands emotional understanding of self and that “[t]he discipline of literary criticism is not simply the accumulation of knowledge about what was written, but the study of how, why, and what happens when people write and read” (p. 3). Developing and studying curriculum implementation and application can transform traditional criticism into a reflective and interpretive process that enables students to focus on personal connection and author presentation. The reading and understanding of literary texts can honor tradition as well as incorporate a contemporary twist that will enliven the text and ELA instruction. It has always been and is every ELA teachers desire to stir the imagination of young readers and to help guide and create “transactions between readers and books” that will inspire the development of “personally satisfying and personally meaningful transactions with literature” that will in turn become part of the critical tradition that moves readers to learners, critics to writers, to researchers of knowledge in every aspect of life (Rosenblatt, 1956, p. 67). In this sense, traditional and contemporary reading, analysis, and interpretation can work conjointly in the process of “rethinking the standards of criticism, the canon of literature, and what is and what is not valuable in the literature of the past and the present” (Raval, 1998, p. 58).

Before critical interpretation and cross connections between text and self can occur the research must incorporate and acknowledge the use of traditional hermeneutics as a precursor to literary analysis acknowledging “that there are canonical works . . . that still speak of a nostalgia for the author” (Silverman, 1991, pp. 274-275). As student’s move through the process of tackling rigorous and complex literary texts they can begin to separate author authority as they apply self-interpretation to the process of critical reading and narrative construction. The application of self-interpretation is not used to deny author authority but rather to frame

individualized literary awareness with personal connections thereby enlivening the text by making text-to-self connections that mirror real-life experiences that inform the reading and narrative process. As the students navigate each new text they do so by connecting with [t]he structure of the work” via the “experience while under its spell [because] the quality of the [the] literary experience depends not only on the text, on what the author offers, but on the relevance of past and present interests that the reader brings to it” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 97). This study supports the notion that “literary reading has the capacity to implicate the self and deepen self-understanding,” (Kuiken, Miall, and Sikora, 2004, p. 171) throughout ELA instruction.

The movement through textual analysis and interpretation allows students to become acquainted with self through the text in a slow progression that is meaningful and purposeful. The process of developing their own subjectivities throughout the reading and writing process is grounded in the development and implementation of “Character Mirrors” as a literary and narrative construction strategy. It is not enough to present literary masterpieces in the hopes students will find purpose and meaning and make the literary and historical jump from page to life. “If the language, setting, the theme, the central situation, are all too alien, even a ‘great work’ will fail. The literary work must hold some link with the young reader’s own present preoccupations, emotions, anxieties, and ambitions” (Rosenblatt, 1956, p. 70). Throughout the process of “Character Mirrors” integration students were reminded that thoughtful and meaningful reading is a journey of discovery that supports why we continue to read the classics from Homer, Shakespeare, Dickens, and their contemporaries. As Rosenblatt (1956) suggests, “If the high school student reads the *Odyssey* or *Romeo & Juliet*, it should be because at this point in his life this work offers a significant and enjoyable experience that involves him personally and that he can assimilate into his ongoing intellectual and emotional development”

(307). Harold Bloom (2000) further suggests that “ultimately we read in order to strengthen the self . . . [because] we need to know ourselves better” (p. 22). The importance of exploring the process of text-to-self connections through reading, the literary process, and narrative construction directly informs the research purpose and questions set forth in the introduction of the study. In this context, the reader becomes the authority for textual interpretation bringing with them the possibility that “. . . the reading process [is] a dynamic interaction between text and reader” (Iser, 1978, p. 107).

Narrative Construction

The impact of self-interpretive literary understanding upon reading is a subject that has long been established ranging from aesthetic response to reader response. However, the reading of the text is predominately done in isolation from narrative construction and is incorporated into written form most often in explication/analysis of texts or free-response journals. The separation from text and narrative production is a misstep in the process of reading and writing with a purpose. In merging these two components of ELA instruction the emphasis on reading is not merely a way for students to imagine life as a form of characterization embedded within the literary plot but as a way of remembering life experiences that lead to narrative construction whereby students can capture memories in narrative form. Jerome Bruner (2008) believes that “narrative construction” is a process in which reading and writing merge in the creation of “individual identity [in the form] of autobiographical narrative by which we ‘tell about’ our lives” (p.152). The emphasis then transitions away from traditional explication of author as authority to a form of reader-response, thereby giving students an opportunity to explore the possibilities that a text can render in the process of reading and interpretation. With this freedom comes a new way of interpretation and expression that transforms the process of reading, writing,

and exploration. Students become the center of the text and can present interpretations in a variety of multimodal forms of expression, particularly in the experience and memory of “human happenings in the form of narrative” (Bruner, 1991, p. 4). In this sense, literary reading and analysis gives the reader ownership about how one interprets and frames understanding based on their lived experiences. The establishment of self-credibility gives way to individual expression by means of writing and technology as a forum to discuss and explore individualized interpretation and connections. The narrative process, therefore gives one the “opportunity to draw conclusions about who one is . . . as the author communicates the premises and conclusions of a life” but at the same time gives the reader an intrinsic motivation to “reflect on one’s own life . . . to question himself or herself that may [garner a] greater self-insight” (Skilleas, 2006, p. 270) as they read and write about literature.

The establishment of narrative production starts with the reading of varied texts including both fiction and non-fiction selections that “develops students’ thinking . . . as they examine concepts from narrative and expository texts” (Boulware and Crow, 2008, p. 491). Throughout the study ELA instruction will include reading multiple texts and will focus on developing narratives that highlight literary analysis, interpretation, and imagination. The reading process then paves the way for writing construction that allows students to share “insights and connections in the very process of the writing itself” (Ellis, 1998, p. 6). In turn, reading and writing become reciprocal forms of understanding and interpretation that encourages students to become active participants “in which the text is made to speak again . . . and the text takes on a multidimensional space [that] is no longer the expression of one meaning . . . intended by the author but [an] active collaboration” (Risser, 1991, pp. 96-97) between text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology.

Digital Literacies

Twenty-first century education is in flux, as are the teachers and students who inhabit the spaces within academia. Educators must explore how emerging types of literacies are shaping curriculum, assessment, and learning. In order for students to explore the impact of text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology they must be willing to explore and identify how the impact of the past is a vehicle for the formation of the present and how situating one's self within a historical perspective leads to critical awareness throughout the learning process. With global access to technology applications student narratives can showcase a "life story [that] can assume a variety of forms, each of them calling for a different kind of intellectual and imaginative response . . . through what are essentially strategies of narrative elaboration" (Lucking, 2008, p. 153).

The use of multiple platforms for reading and writing is establishing itself in classrooms around the country. In educational institutions and organizations it is clear that we are embarking upon " . . . a time when the forms and outlet of expression available to people are multiplying [and] our children have more ways of learning and expressing themselves through technology" (Kist, 2000, p. 711). Critical practitioners must seek to find ways to propel instruction and learning toward a future of possibilities. According to Kist (2000), "a classroom that teaches for a new literacy would be one that honors all forms of representation . . . In such a classroom, students would be free to read and write using a variety of media (pp. 711-12).

It is within these possibilities that educators need to become "leaders" in the field of education to encourage, support, and establish a new foundation of teaching and learning that incorporates technology applications in reading and writing instruction. Teachers and the curriculum need to embrace how " . . . the development of new technologies has produced a

complex new literacy context or space featuring widely varying types of literacy (e.g., e-mailing, text messages, and reading Internet novels) as opposed to the more restricted circumstances of the print era. (Yi, 2008, p. 672).

However, the implementation of technology applications is often a challenge on campuses that have limited access to technology. While district and state mandates support the integration of technology, there is often a disconnect between instruction and availability to technology in the classroom. Many campuses have labs that are shared by 200+ teachers and the incorporation of technology in daily lessons is limited to technology that can only be checked-out for a specific time frame or project. With that in mind, teaching students how to navigate text in a variety of formats becomes a challenge but must be supported in curriculum design and the instructional calendar. According to O'Brien and Scharber (2008) the integration and development of multiple literacies in instruction is contemporarily relevant because "digital literacies enable the bridging and contemplating of traditional print literacies with other media" (p. 67) that are at the forefront of global communication and communities.

The emergence of global communication and fingertip technology has created an on-going philosophical debate about the integration of technology in the classroom. According to Gee, "many of the tools young people have access to today are 'smart tools' that have knowledge built in." In most cases, access does not require a computer lab rather just teacher permission to use the technology whereby opening a limitless educational learning space of discourse and composition with their pocket technology (Knobel & Leakshear, 2008, 30). While districts/educators support integration, there is a continued conversation as to what types of technology to use, how to use them, how much time should be given with technology and who should be using the technology.

Ultimately, with or without debate or collegial conversations, technology is infiltrating every aspect of social communication and will continue to challenge educators and students in all areas of meaning, understanding, and creation. Therefore it is critically important that educators meet the challenge of technology and try to incorporate the changes currently taking place in literacy by integrating new literacies and instructional practices within the content curriculum. The ongoing process of integration needs to accommodate, accept, and value how this generation of students brings with them “a rich and different set of literary practices and background” (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009) in technology “that is often unacknowledged or underused by educators. . . [while] for Millennials, technology and media are intricately interwoven in their lives” (p. 479). Through integration and content application the educational setting can create and establish technology skills that will allow students to be critical readers and viewers of textual images beyond the traditional page. Instead of debating usage and access, instruction should develop and address these new digital literacies in a productive and dynamic approach in a collaborative work environment that becomes a multi-modal forum of understanding and creation.

The implications of technology integration within the curriculum, leads instruction and learning to embrace “the evolving possibilities of online literacy practices [that] may change a great deal about how we perceive and teach reading and writing. What will not change, however, is the importance of identity in terms of literacy practices” (Williams, 2008, p. 686). Instruction and practice needs to be responsible to the current needs and environment that students participate in on a daily basis. Teaching and the curriculum must embrace the distinctive quality that “millennials” bring to our classroom setting and that is the distinction of being “the first generation to be immersed in ICT (Information Communication Technology) . . . this generation

lives in an environment where reading and writing, through digital media as well as traditional texts, are pervasive” (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009, p. 474) and it is our responsibility beyond the confines of the classroom to provide them opportunities to explore, research, and evaluate text and media while guiding them toward making critical decisions about the texts they read and the writing they contribute to in-class instruction.

Instruction and Assessment(s)

Throughout the process of literary criticism, narrative construction, and technology integration the balanced curriculum utilized a variety differentiated instruction and assessments that ranged from traditional objective type quizzes, essay as assessment, and arts-based/product-based assessments to support multimodal instruction and learning occurring within English IV course instruction. For this study the curriculum/lesson design implementation of “Character Mirrors” upon student learning focuses on student artifacts/products that showcase process, content comprehension, and originality of depth of understanding and critical thinking.

Differentiated instruction. The integration of text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology applications during the process of reading, literary analysis, and narrative construction addresses four areas of instruction (1) how curriculum design and content specific lesson design contributes to literary awareness in both the reading and writing process, (2) how students make meaning during the reading process through the formation of literary awareness, (3) how students bridge literary awareness into the writing process in narrative construction, and (4) how students create narrative stories and develop literary analysis using a variety of mediums. The development, integration, and student implementation of “Character Mirrors” allows for differentiated instruction at the foundational level through literary analysis and product creation.

The creation and implementation of “Character Mirrors” meets the definition and requirements of differentiated instruction as established by Tomlinson & et. Al (2003) in that “differentiation as an approach to teaching [is when] teachers proactively modify curricula, teaching methods, resources, learning activities, and student products to address the diverse needs of individual students” within the learning environment.

In an effort to meet the demands of student academic levels, interest, and motivation – “Character Mirrors” is a curriculum/lesson design that stems from practitioner “reflection and extension of educational best practice . . . and is [an] adaptation to curriculum and instruction . . . to address a wide range of readiness levels, interests, and learning modes” (Tomlinson, 2003, pg. 131). The curriculum/lesson design includes a three-step process that moves from the foundational stage to critical thinking, literary analysis, and production creation. The three phases of instruction per “Character Mirrors” includes – I. Association/Transaction, II. Literary Analysis, and III. Production – each of these three phases adheres to the “hallmarks of effective differentiation” as presented via Tomlinson et al. (2003, pgs. 131-133) and is in-line with the following characteristics:

1. Effective differentiation of curriculum and instruction is proactive, rather than reactive.
2. Effective differentiation varies materials used by individuals.
3. Effective differentiation uses variable pacing as a means of addressing learner needs.
4. Effective differentiation is knowledge centered.
5. Effective differentiation is learner centered.

Product-based/Arts-based/Performance-based assessment(s). As students move

through each phase of “Character Mirrors” the expectation is that all students are active and creative participants with the text throughout the learning process. Student implementation is directly tied to student creation and artifact production. Assessment is then directly linked to student application, comprehension, understanding, and knowledge production.

Curriculum/lesson design and student assessment moves away from test-based instruction and provides students with the opportunity of assessment formation via text options and product creation. The use of product-based/arts-based/performance-based assessments “offer[s] a variety of ways for students to demonstrate what they know about content, as well as elucidate students’ additional skills sets within the classroom” (Oberg, 2009, pg. 2). As such, “Character Mirrors” as lesson design adds to the development of student production and the need for assessments to “help refine teachers’ knowledge of their students so they can create robust, motivating lessons attuned to their students’ strengths and needs” (pg. 2).

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a look at the three specific ELA areas that are inline with the research purpose and research questions used to explore how the curriculum design of “Character Mirrors” works as a literary, composition, and technology strategy within the English IV course. Instruction and assessment focused on student process and artifact creation as products that showcased content instruction and learning. The review offered support for the research purpose and showed areas of instructional gaps that encourage ongoing practitioner/research exploration with curriculum design and implementation within the field of English Language Arts.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The research study was grounded in the notion that students were capable of application and creation in the formation of literary analysis and understanding the presence of intertextuality as it applied to a multiplicity of textual connections, especially those text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology as a form of self-identification upon literary awareness. As practitioner/researcher, I believe that in the setting of the ELA classroom students' voice identity through the literature presented throughout the year via traditional and non-traditional reading and writing strategies. In the development and implementation of "Character Mirrors" I explored how two students utilized the curriculum/lesson design as a tool for self to text to technology interaction that is interconnected to their "... academic knowledge ... the process of self-formation, and the character of the historical moment in which [they] live" (Pinar, 2004, p. 187). As part of the research process the implementation of "Character Mirrors" upon student learning became the academic center of ELA reading and writing instruction. In order to interpret and present how the impact of "Character Mirrors" was perceived as a vehicle for literary development and narrative formation the theoretical framework for this study was grounded in hermeneutics. The selection of hermeneutics as the theoretical framework supported the process and application design of the ELA curriculum created throughout the study and showcased how "... hermeneutic inquiry is not only an object of investigation, but a type of inquiry that ... introduced the teacher/[researcher] to the possibility that there may be more than one interpretation of the way in which his or her lessons are being understood" (Griffith, 2007, p. 27).

The use of hermeneutics created a focus within the study that allowed for the development of student understanding and interpretation, as students interacted with text via the

implementation of “Character Mirrors” throughout the literary and composition process.

Hermeneutics as defined by Palmer (1969) is the “study of understanding, especially the task of understanding texts . . . and the interacting forces of attention to the event of understanding the text and the more encompassing question of what understanding and interpretation” (p. 8) is in the context of textual understanding and interpretation. Furthermore, hermeneutics, as conceived by Heidegger and further developed by Paul Ricoeur, is seen as a method by which the reader can lay bare “[t]he functioning of consciousness as transcendental subjectivity . . . of man’s historical being-in-the-world” (Palmer, 1969, p. 125). The tenets of this approach fit with the research purpose and questions whereby students assumed authority over their reading, interpretation, understanding, analysis, and writing process via “Character Mirrors.”

Hermeneutics applied to the study because it allowed student interaction to focus on –

1. Interpreting the meaning of texts.
2. Inner life as we understand ourselves and others. Hermeneutics is then the study and method of understanding human expression.
3. How texts can transmit meaning (link between interpretation and text).

(Bhattacharya, 2007, pg. 25)

In applying a hermeneutic lens upon ELA instruction students had the opportunity to create identity by establishing contextual connections to literary characters that shared attributes to self. For this study it was important that there were no disruptions between character and self, there was no “other,” there were only moments in which students explored, interpreted, and created meaning. The reading, analysis, and writing became forms of interpretation based on the “reader[s] experiences [and] imaginative variation upon his or her ego by playing the role of subject to the text’s ideal meaning” (Aylesworth, 1991, p. 73).

With the emergence of technology and the social implications of possibilities within global communities it was important to create an environment and a curriculum that guided students through the process of textual connections that moved them toward literary awareness. Throughout the process it was imperative that the curriculum and learning environment encouraged and excited student possibilities of performance that elucidated the research questions so that observations and findings could be presented in a reflective narrative that looked at the partnership between reading and understanding and the reader and the text. The research then became a presentation and model of “both the teaching and learning [thus supporting] the hermeneutic approach [and how it] is constructed as a negotiated conversation [and phenomenon] that results in a variety of possible outcomes not a single textbook style response. Thus the hermeneutic position is transformative and the goal is self-actualization for both the teachers and learners (Griffith, 2007, p. 27). The use of “Character Mirrors” as a vehicle of text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology discovery supported the literary happenings of interpretation, analysis, and production.

The implementation of “Character Mirrors” within the classroom environment was presented in three distinct phases –

- I. Association/Transaction: lesson design focused on character, theme, or key word associations whereby students pulled from personal experiences and began a reflective transaction between association and self as presented within the reading selections.
- II. Analysis: lesson design focused on developing critical literary understanding of purpose, audience, and tone by evaluating/judging characterization development via a self-reflective lens (see appendix); lesson design incorporated “countertransfere[n]tial”

elements that encouraged students to “negotiate a text [by] assuming or resisting the roles inscribed in the text” according to their own experiences” (Bouson, 1989, 128).

III. Production: lesson design focused on synthesizing literary understanding and creating narratives that utilize a variety of writing/presentation mediums.

TEKS: Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are responsible for at least two forms of literary writing. Students are expected to:

(A) write an engaging story with a well-developed conflict and resolution, a clear theme, complex and non-stereotypical characters, a range of literary strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense), devices to enhance the plot, and sensory details that define the mood or tone;

(B) write a poem that reflects an awareness of poetic conventions and traditions within different forms (e.g., sonnets, ballads, free verse); and

(C) write a script with an explicit or implicit theme, using a variety of literary techniques.

The textual learning experience needed to be a guided process of self-discovery and understanding that moved students through the layered elements of literary tradition while incorporating contemporary strategies of development. “Character Mirrors” focused on guided text-to-self instruction at the onset of each novel unit presented throughout the academic semester as a foundational strategy that would encourage an intrinsic motivation to read and think about the literature presented that would lead to thoughtful and critical writing. Throughout the implementation of each phase of “Character Mirrors” the active exploration, observation, and documentation of student interaction with the text and curriculum design became the backdrop in establishing researcher/practitioner placement within the research process and findings.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the research questions that sought to understand how two students described and developed their literary awareness and how they used “Character Mirrors” to help create narratives and literary analysis through the process of text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology applications. The research questions lend themselves to the use of narrative research as a form of rendering their classroom stories. The use of narrative/thematic analysis/inquiry fits with the purpose of exploring how students used and perceived the curriculum design of “Character Mirrors,” thereby establishing literary awareness upon self-identification through the dynamics of reading, the narrative process, and technology integration. The narrative research structure of the findings created “the narrator’s story [which] is flexible, variable, and shaped in part by the interaction with the audience . . . researchers develop meaning out of the material they studied; they develop their own voice as they construct others’ voices and realities; they narrate the “results” in ways that are both enabled and constrained by the social resources and circumstances embedded in their discipline” (Chase, 2008, pp. 65-66). Throughout the research process the narrative telling of the participants’ stories became the lens through which the research was explored and interpreted. Narrative research as a method “begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals . . . [and] is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals” (Creswell, 2007, pgs. 53-55). “Character Mirrors” is the foundation for those lived moments with the curriculum, self, text, and technology. The implementation of “Character Mirrors” was a strategy employed as a vehicle to encourage students to actively participate with the texts. The three step process of association/transaction, analysis, and production guided students from the introductory phase of reading development through the final

narrative and product creation process. See Table 1 below for a Novel Unit timeline that illustrates a skeleton view of unit/course instruction and TEKS alignment of goals and objectives.

The Iliad – Novel Unit Timeline

January /February –

Week One:

Introduction to Greek Literature – Students will take notes over Introductory PPT; define greek terms (hubris, anagnorisis, hamartia, catharsis, aresteia); create an annotated character list of Gods/Goddesses, Greeks/Trojans; research and evaluate 5 Classical Art pieces that have Greek allusions as the focal point; read and summarize 5 selections from Edith Hamilton’s Mythology. **TEKS: Reading/Vocabulary Development.** Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. **Students are expected to:** (A) determine the meaning of technical academic English words in multiple content areas (e.g., science, mathematics, social studies, the arts) derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes; (B) analyze textual context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to draw conclusions about the nuance in word meanings; (E) use general and specialized dictionaries, thesauri, histories of language, books of quotations, and other related references (printed or electronic) as needed. Research/Gathering Sources. Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather. **Students are expected to:** (A) follow the research plan to gather evidence from experts on the topic and texts written for informed audiences in the field, distinguishing between reliable and unreliable sources and avoiding over-reliance on one source; (B) systematically organize relevant and accurate information to support central ideas, concepts, and themes, outline ideas into conceptual maps/timelines, and separate factual data from complex inferences; and(C) paraphrase, summarize, quote, and accurately cite all researched information according to a standard format (e.g., author, title, page number), differentiating among primary, secondary, and other sources.

Week Two:

Students will summarize Books 2-3 and read Book 4; participate in a Whiteboard activity “What do you know about . . . ?”; Read Books 5-6 and create a character word map that is an association/transaction activity – Students will select a character that they most identify with and create a character map with words that describe/best illustrate character traits of their selected character and self. Students will also provide an explanation for the character selection and how they are like their character. Film viewing of opening battle sequence – What and how does this sequence portray the Greeks/Trojans and the characters of Agamemnon/Priam and Achilles/Hector? Are there character traits you see in the film depiction that support your original character association or are the traits that you did not see from text-to-film? Continue reading Books 7-12 for HW. **TEKS: Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Sensory Language.** Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze how the author's patterns of imagery, literary allusions, and conceits reveal theme, set tone, and create meaning in metaphors, passages, and literary works.

Week Three:

Students will take QUIZ of Books 1-12; Students will move from drafted Character Transaction activity into the Character Mirror Poster assignment; Students will read Books 13-16 and “Tweet” about it (students must @ _____ /Tweet comment/# _____); Students will summarize Book 17-20 and present information in groups of 5; Students will Rd – “Hector Fights and Dies” and watch film clip (students will analyze how the Hollywood depiction b/w Achilles and Hector differs from the textual representation and focus on the stylistic devices used in the fight sequence versus the stylistic devices used in the poem. **TEKS:** Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate productively in teams, offering ideas or judgments that are purposeful in moving the team towards goals, asking relevant and insightful questions, tolerating a range of positions and ambiguity in decision-making, and evaluating the work of the group based on agreed-upon criteria.

Week Four:

Students will read “The Death of Hector” in-class; Summarize Book 22; Read Book 24 “Achilles and Priam” and will begin a writing workshop in support/defense of “Who is the epic hero in Homer’s The Iliad?” (students will have one day to gather textual evidence from book annotations that they will integrate into their essay); students will have one class day to write a draft of their essay; students will prepare a typed essay for peer/self-review/editing; students will have access to computer lab to type final written product. **TEKS:** Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Culture and History. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about the author's purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the consistency and clarity of the expression of the controlling idea and the ways in which the organizational and rhetorical patterns of text support or confound the author's meaning or purpose. Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (**planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing**) to compose text. **Students are expected to:** (A) plan a first draft by selecting the correct genre for conveying the intended meaning to multiple audiences, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea; (B) structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive way (e.g., using outlines, note taking, graphic organizers, lists) and develop drafts in timed and open-ended situations that include transitions and the rhetorical devices to convey meaning; (C) revise drafts to clarify meaning and achieve specific rhetorical purposes, consistency of tone, and logical organization by rearranging the words, sentences, and paragraphs to employ tropes (e.g., metaphors, similes, analogies, hyperbole, understatement, rhetorical questions, irony), schemes (e.g., parallelism, antithesis, inverted word order, repetition, reversed structures), and by adding transitional words and phrases; (D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling; and (E) revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.

The integration of “Character Mirrors” fit seamlessly into the academic instructional calendar and was an embedded lesson design created to support student development in the areas of reading, writing, and technology applications. Narrative/thematic analysis provided an opportunity for the participant’s stories to showcase how the research purpose informed student interpretation, creation, and navigation of the curriculum design of “Character Mirrors” text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-technology within the ELA classroom course instruction.

Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou (2008) explain that “narrative research is a multilevel, interdisciplinary field” (p. 12) that provides a platform of discovery that informs the research and the lives of the participants. The exploration of how the formation of literary understanding was cultivated via literary awareness was at the forefront throughout the research and documentation process. Throughout the reading of literature and the writing process the use of “Character Mirrors” was used as a lens to interpret and develop narrative construction and product creation via technology applications. For example, the unit timeline in Table 1 highlights how the content curriculum/lesson design of “Character Mirrors” became a key component in supporting how student interpretation of texts lead to literary-identity construction through literary texts and characters, the narrative process, and technology applications and was the research foundation of exploring how curriculum shaped student learning and production. Narrative/thematic analysis and arts-based inquiry helped to create a story that was rich in descriptive details that informed the research questions and highlighted the experiences of the participants within the study. Corrine Squire (2008), further explains that “how we study narratives as stories of experience . . . [and how] the work rests on a phenomenological assumption that experience can, through stories, become part of consciousness . . . [and can] also

take a hermeneutic approach to analyzing stories” supports the tenets of qualitative narrative analysis (p. 41). It is the very nature of qualitative research to become a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world . . . in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand . . . allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered” (Creswell, 2007, 37-40). In the study, the use of narrative/thematic analysis as a research design provided the opportunity to retell the stories of two students enrolled in one section of English IV by careful ongoing observation, reading of interactive journals, and evaluation of student products that lead to the formation of the research narrative presented. Through the interview sessions of artifact review the inquiry process showcased how two students in the context of their ELA instruction formed personal connections through literary readings, the writing process, and technology integration supported the methodology that “storytelling . . . is what we do when we describe research and clinical materials, and what informants do with us when they convey the details and courses of their experiences” and how “narrative analysis takes as its object of investigation the story itself” (Riessman, 1993, p. 696).

While narrative analysis can encompass varied definitions and categories the underlying purpose of narrative analysis framed the research objective in terms of creating “stories [that] express[ed] a kind of knowledge that uniquely describes human experience in which actions and happenings contribute positively . . . to attaining goals and fulfilling purposes” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 8). Throughout the process of the study I analyzed four types of data – classroom observations/field notes, journal responses, digital artifacts, and interview sessions. The data collected was the foundation for the research narrative presented based on researcher/practitioner field notes, participant experiences, and artifact review that utilized arts-based inquiry during the interview process as a means of “unlock[ing] possibilities for deeper understanding . . . opening

up possibilities of ‘performative’ presentations . . . through publication, on stage, in film or by some other means . . . for meaningful communication” (Jones, 2006, p. 80). The following is an inventory table of the data that was collected throughout the study - see Table 2 below.

Table 2

Data Inventory Table

Data Source	Number of pages per event	Total number of pages
1 two-hour interviews per participant (2 participants)	5 pages of transcription per interview	$5 \times 2 = 10$ $10 \times 2 = 20$ 10-20 pages
6 Classroom observations documentation for Spring semester	5 pages per observation	$5 \times 6 = \mathbf{30 \text{ pages}}$
Composition: Journal reflections per participants	6 one page journal entries per Spring semester covering four literary pieces	$6 \times 2 = 12$ $12 \times 4 = 24$ 24 pages
Digital product	2 PPTs (or other digital representation) with 4 character selections for text to visual autobiographical connection/analysis	$2 \times 2 = 4$ digital products $4 \times 4 = 8$ literary connection $4 \times 8 = 36$ digital representations 36 digital representations

Each data source was sorted according to themes generated during the coding process as presented in their experiences with “Character Mirrors” to depict “how and why a particular outcome came about” (Polkinghorne, 1995) and to illustrate how “the storied production that is the outcome is the retrospective or narrative explanation of the happening” (p. 11) that occurred during the research process. Throughout the academic semester the goals/objectives of moving students through reading, thinking, writing, and production was governed by the TEKS for English IV instruction as seen in the Table 1 – Novel Unit timeline.

Participant(s) and Site Selection

For this study I employed both purposeful and convenience sampling by randomly selecting two students from the participating classroom. The participants and site “can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem . . .” and “best represent sites or individuals from which the researcher can access and easily collect data” (Creswell, 2007, pp.125-126). The site for the research occurred at one South Texas Urban High School located in Corpus Christi, Texas. The student population consisted of approximately 2,450 students with an ethnic distribution of 54.7% Hispanic, 37.2% White, 5.3% African American, 2.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.5% Native American. This site was used due to factors of accessibility to student participants. Student participants were randomly selected from 3 course sections of English IV. The initial selection began with random course selection. Once the class was determined there was a random selection of male and female students within that course. Initially, two male and two female participants were randomly pulled from the class roster. Each of the four students was then notified via email that they were randomly selected to participate. The first male and female student that responded based on email and summer availability became the participants for the research/study. To safe-guard the random selection

process, a colleague within the English department randomly selected the course and the initial four students named. Proximity to student participants provided ample opportunity for curriculum design implementation, classroom observations and teacher field notes. The selection of two student participants was purposeful in that the narrative design was structured to present an in-depth look at how the curriculum design of “Character Mirrors” was integrated throughout reading and writing instruction. By focusing on two students the storied interactions with “Character Mirrors” became the focal point throughout the research process. The study then remained focused upon content curriculum and how the student’s interaction and lived instructional moments give voice to the design and success of implementation upon their ELA course achievement in response to text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology connections. In the presentation of findings student identification has been subsumed through the use of pseudonyms to ensure student confidentiality. The female student participant will be referred to as Emma and the male student participant will be referred to as Elliot. Student participants had to be enrolled in the randomly selected English IV course during the 2012-2013 academic year. Practitioner/Researcher classroom use ensured lesson implementation and eliminated differing teaching methods and delivery of literary content via “Character Mirrors” curriculum/lesson design. The students selected needed to meet two criteria (1) be enrolled at King H.S. in an English IV course and (2) be willing to participate, post-course instruction and grade determination, to interview sessions and artifact review – see Table 3 below.

Table 3

Participant Criteria

Criteria	Participant 1	Participant 2
King H.S. Senior enrolled in English IV 2012-13	√	√
Post course instruction agreement to interview sessions and artifact review	√	√

After campus and student consent was received, I reviewed classroom observation notes/teacher field notes, participant digital artifacts, and scheduled post- “Character Mirrors” implementation and perception interviews. By implementing both purposeful and convenience sampling I was able to develop a rich descriptive narrative about participants’ experiences with “Character Mirrors” throughout the reading, writing, and technology integration process by focusing on the lived experiences and student stories that stemmed from curricula application of “Character Mirrors” in the ELA classroom. It was the lived stories of two students that became a reflection of the curriculum used within the ELA setting among that student population.

Ethical Considerations

Due to the creation of practitioner/researcher created curriculum and participation in lesson implementation of “Character Mirrors,” it was my responsibility “to systematically identify [my] subjectivity throughout the course of the research” (Peshkin, 1988. p. 17) in order to establish trustworthiness and integrity throughout the research process. All classroom observations and field notes were part of teacher/lesson journaling that served as a reflective

process employed throughout the year as a way to capture the lived moments of instruction and participation. Since I served as instructor and researcher the journaling process included lesson notes and classroom observations that were “grounded in the empirical world under study” (Woods, 1992) which meant that field notes reflected “the minute-by-minute, day-to-day social life of the individuals as they interact[ed] together, as they develop[ed] understandings and meanings, as they engage[d] in “joint action” and responded to each other” (p. 348) throughout the process of research exploration and discovery. Student interviews, journals, and artifact review occurred only after end-of-course instruction, grade entry, and after student consent forms had been signed to ensure that the consideration of power would not be a factor during the research process. All course instruction occurred in its natural setting and there were no internal solicitations of possible student participants during the course of English IV content instruction. Practitioner/Researcher notes were a daily reflection based on observation and use for further application and interpretation during participant review sessions that occurred at the end-of-course instruction. An excerpt from early field notes captured the daily events, mood, and success/failure of instruction, discourse, and class participation –

October 13, 2012: Selected a particularly challenging reading selection for student analysis using “Character Mirrors.” As a class we read Grant vs. Lee a non-fiction selection a compare and contrast piece about Civil War Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. After reading I took a modeling moment as a re-teach strategy before students worked on creating their “Character Mirrors” self-attribute list. On the elmo I wrote an example of one positive and one negative characteristic that I shared with Grant and reminded them that the characteristics would become the foundation for a personal narrative. Even though the reading selection is a dry commentary about the two generals

students seemed engaged as they highlighted character traits, behaviors, and situational outcomes that they could use the following day to develop their narrative in during the 50-minute class period. After identifying similar/dissimilar characters traits they shared with Grant or Lee we discussed and wrote many quality traits on the whiteboard. For example, strong-willed, arrogant, harsh, well-spoken, sarcastic, etc. As a class students began to share, incorporate, and reflect on these character traits and began thinking about how those traits are mirrored in their own lives and how this can translate into their reading and writing. During class discussion, Elliot was eager to share that he couldn't believe he was more like Lee than Grant but Bill H., Elliot's best friend, was quick to shout out, "Why is that hard to believe? You're both losers!" Class broke into fits of uncontrolled laughter. Despite their razzing each other the first modeling component of "Character Mirrors" seemed to go well despite the dry non-fiction reading selection. I hope the writing process will be as successful.

As noted, the maintaining of a work journal through field notes/observations illustrated the daily class happenings and how the selection of student participants after grade entry ensured that the ethical considerations of power were addressed by chronicling events as they occurred and by situating time placement of student participation.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collected, reviewed, and interpreted was in-line with narrative/thematic analysis methods. All data collected was subject to the analytical lens of narrative research. Chase (2008) identifies five analytical lenses by which narrative inquiry is explored by the narrative researcher, which included "first, narrative as a distinct form of discourse . . . second, narratives as verbal action . . . third, narrative stories as both enabled and constrained by social resources

and circumstances . . . fourth, narratives as socially situated interactive performances . . . fifth, narrative researchers view *themselves* as narrators as they develop interpretations” (pp. 64-66). I used four types of data for this study, which included classroom observations, student journals, interviews and digital artifacts. Table 2 outlined specific information about data collection and a data calendar organized the research timeframe.

Observations. Data collection began with classroom observations in the form of a teacher/lesson journal. Field notes on classroom observations of lesson implementation, student participation, and setting served as the foundation by which naturalistic observation occurred and was the standard of reporting in an objective manner; thereby, removing researcher bias during the interpretation and reporting process (Angrosino, 2008, p. 162). The primary goal for classroom observations was to reflect upon course instruction, specifically in relationship to the implementation of “Character Mirrors” in the interpretation of literary awareness and the development of personal narratives to recreate a “vision . . . [that] ensures that a wide a portion of activity as possible is covered . . . by logging in the mind for a commitment to written record as soon as possible” (Woods, 1992, p. 371) for rigorous consistency throughout the research process. To ensure that class participation and content delivery continued in the least restrictive environment, observations were part of *in situ* journaling. Note taking occurred during and immediately after class instruction/participation to provide notes from the field as they occurred.

There was a total of six observations that corresponded to classroom instruction, lesson implementation of “Character Mirrors” and student participation with lesson design in the process of literary analysis, narrative construction, and technology application process. Each observation/journaling response included ten pages of field notes that chronicled class events, such as dialogue, lesson design/implementation, student activities, group discourse, content

discovery, etc. The field notes journal included bulleted notes taken throughout each of the six 50 minute classroom observations. As an observer in the research process this form of documentation supported and buoyed the standard for accuracy and rigor during the interpretation and representation of research findings and supported how narrative analysis contributed to the social sciences by demonstrating how qualitative research can incorporate “creativity, complexity, and variability of individuals’ (or groups’) self and reality construction” (Chase, 2008, p. 65).

In an effort to maintain objectivity during the observational process, I implemented the use of Spradley’s matrix to the teacher journal/field notes to ensure that an observational protocol was in place for each of the six observations and that field notes reflected a precise format throughout the process. The use of the descriptive matrix provided me an observational lens that allowed me to organize field notes into specific categories that included both objective reporting and subjective reflection by incorporating observational components, such as, setting, action, time, and mood (Spradley, 1980). Observational field notes were used to present what was occurring in the classroom environment via teacher instruction, lesson implementation, and student participation.

Journals. Throughout the course of the semester students participated in content instruction without interruption for research analysis. Over the course of eighteen weeks classes participated in both reflective and academic reading, writing, and technology application via literary comprehension, interpretation, and analysis. At the end of the semester student participants for the research study were approached to participate in post-instruction document review and interview sessions. After participant(s) agreed and consent forms had been signed I pulled student artifacts from two novel units, *The Iliad* and a student selected contemporary

selection, that corresponded to their reading comprehension, interpretation, and analysis and how they moved from understanding and analysis into narrative construction and technology applications using “Character Mirrors.”

Student journals served as a data source that allowed me to construct a research narrative that reflected the experiences observed and showcased student application as documented in student work presented. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) support Peräkylä’s treatment that “texts are social facts” and that document analysis is “produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways and that text-based documents of experience are complex” (p. 35) forms of data. In addition to observations, the journals also provided validity of research findings by adding “substantive validation [by] understandings derived from other sources” (Creswell, 2007, p. 206).

Student Artifacts. The same process of data source collection and review for participant journals was used in the review of student artifacts/products. At the end of the course semester I reviewed artifacts with student participants and working together we created a textual representation of their literary, reading, writing and creative process in developing their digital narratives. The artifact review interview questions focused on three artifacts –

(1) “Character Mirrors” Poster

- Was the “Character Mirrors lesson clear in purpose and objectives?
- Did the on-going character selection/reflection work to develop a more meaningful connection with the text or did it hinder the reading/creating process?
- What part of lesson design was most enjoyable?
- Did the guided structure of the lesson help you to establish a deeper connection with the text and self?

(2) “Character Mirrors” Enrichment Activity

- Describe the role you selected to establish your analysis of the literature?
- How did the use of multiple forms of graphic note taking help you develop your analysis?
- Discuss working with multiple mediums, platforms, or software applications?

(3) “Character Mirrors” Final Novel Project

- How did you select the novel of choice for your novel project?
- Walk me through the process of moving from your ideas to your final product.
- Can you pick one element/component from your final product that you liked most or are most proud of?

The questions were in line with the research questions established in Chapter 1. The questions were used as a form of triangulation that served “as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, and depth to inquiry” (Flick, 2002, p. 229) to the research/documentation process. The digital artifacts that were reviewed and analyzed are products that were tied to the research purpose of how students author literary awareness through “Character Mirrors” using digital technology in the context of the literature presented in the ELA classroom. In addition, the analysis of student journals and digital products fits the notion established by Cerulo (1997) that “the study of objects proves key to research on identification . . . anchored in the study of discourse and symbolization” (p. 396).

Interviews. Data collection finished with the interview sessions that combined artifact review per the “Character Mirrors” integration during course instruction. The interview process “. . . is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow humans . . . It can be used for the purpose of measurement, or its scope can be the understanding

of an individual[s]” (Fontana & Frey, 2008, pp. 118-119) within the research/study. The post-instruction and artifact review interviews occurred after grading determination and student selection. Research study details were explained to participants and each participant received a copy of the research purpose and questions prior to interview sessions.

Each interview lasted two hours. Interview questions were based on the research topic posited at the beginning of the study. Interviews occurred in a one-to-one session at campus site in the ELA classroom. There were nine open-ended questions per the three artifacts reviewed allowing a minimum of one page for each artifact arts-based inquiry. Interview documentation and development of participant responses, pauses and expressions captured the lived experiences of the participants. The use of the unstructured interview gave participants more flexibility in responding and provided “greater breadth . . . by attempting to understand the complex behavior of members without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry” (Fontana & Frey, 2008, p. 129). Interview sessions were informal due to teacher/participant relationship rapport and time placement. Participants were encouraged to speak freely and as long as needed to fully answer open-ended questions. Throughout the process, notes of any prompts for further elaboration from participants was documented on the interview sheet and can be seen in the screenplay depiction during the interview/artifact inquiry session.

For this study the primary data sources collected included observational/field notes, student journals, digital artifacts, and two post-instruction interviews. Data collection focused on materials created during the 2012-2013 school year and were reviewed after course instruction in June. See Table 4 below for the research/data collection timeline -

Table 4

Research Timeline

Time (in months)	Product	Role
August-December 2012	English IV Practitioner - lesson design/implementation; modeling of narrative structure and text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-technology connections which include character/thematic attributes and identity/subjectivity development through Participants - journal prompts and digital applications	Researcher/Practitioner curriculum implementation teacher journal/field notes Participants writing journal responses
January– April 2013	Practitioner – all of the above and transition from journaling into digital applications Participants – creation of autobiographical digital narrative	Researcher/Practitioner same as above with modeling technology applications Participants creating digital product
May-June 2013	Practitioner – review and code Teacher journal/field notes Participants – journal and digital review and interview sessions.	Researcher/Practitioner code and interpret observational notes Participants document review and interview session
June-July 2013	Notes	Researcher debrief with Committee Chair and colleagues
July-September 2013	Drafts of research	Researcher data analysis and writing of findings

Data Management and Analysis

The essence of qualitative research provided a flexible and open-ended approach throughout the exploratory process of research discovery. The use of narrative/thematic analysis as the design formation of construction and interpretation was the key to developing the research narrative. According to Schwandt (1998),

The constructivist or interpretivist believes that to understand the world of meaning one must interpret it . . . following a line of argument advanced by Heidegger, Gadamer, and Taylor that the activity of interpretation is not simply a methodological option open to the social scientist, but rather the very condition of human inquiry itself (pp. 223-224).

Data sources ultimately provided the foundation by which I recreated and told the participants' stories.

The data collection system was directly linked to the management of data and eventually all data analysis. Fitting with the model of qualitative research design - data collection, management, and analysis moved in a recursive manner that was fluid and on-going throughout the research process. However, there were systems of collection, management, and analysis that provided structure to the process. According to Pitman and Maxwell (1992), in the early stages of data collection there were five components that were in place:

1. Field notes reviewed for detail, relevance, and evaluation
2. Procedures established for labeling and indexing field data
3. Process for tracking and noting researcher bias
4. Conduct preliminary analyses early and often
5. Multiple sources of evidence (pp.762-763).

Data management, included an approach that fit my organizational needs that shaped the narrative research structure. All data sources were textual/visual documents. Even classroom observations stemmed from the visual setting and performance of the classroom happenings transformed into textual representations of the lesson/activity. The data collected was organized into file folders and containment bins that were source labeled (i.e. teacher journals/field notes, student journals, digital artifacts, and interview sessions). All textual documentation was scanned/photographed and secured in filing cabinets and USB drives to preserve authenticity and to ensure that an electronic backup was in place for all data sources. With these measures in place, data management “beg[an] the process” (Creswell, 2007) of analysis by “following the organization of the data” which lead to the “process of moving from reading and memoing into describing, classifying, and interpreting” which leads to “codes and coding” (pp.151-152).

For this study the use of narrative research and analysis as outlined by Creswell (2007) was implemented as a way to tell the story of the participants experiences as they “unfold[ed], have turning points or epiphanies” (p. 155) that became the agent of plot development in telling their curricular stories. In a non-traditional writing style the narrative construction incorporated in the findings used screenplay action to give a window-framed view of events that showed an outside-in perspective. The review and analysis of first course data (teacher journal/field notes of classroom observations) included descriptive coding “to assist the reader to see what [I] saw and to hear what [I] heard” (Saldana, 2009, p. 72), *in vivo* coding of classroom dialogue was detailed in observations/field notes because it “help[ed] preserve participants’ meanings of their views and actions (Charmaz, 2006, p. 55), and narrative coding of open-end interviews and student journals because it framed the use of coding as it “applie[d] to the conventions of literary elements and analysis onto qualitative texts in the form of stories” (Creswell, 2007, p. 109). By

applying these three coding techniques in the process of data analysis the development of a richer and more descriptive account of participant experiences enabled me to produce “writing as a method of data analysis by using writing to think” and to acknowledge that “data collection and data analysis cannot be separated when writing is a method of inquiry” (Richardson & St.Pierre, 2008, pp. 488-489).

The process of analyzing data collected was done in a systematic and consistent manner starting with the coding of teacher journal/field notes. The process of writing and reading was a natural component in the ELA classroom environment and the continued process of notations and margin memos throughout the process of observation and field notes. As with any text presented, a thematic strand provided a centralized perspective throughout the coding process that looked for symbolic and metaphorical language that established codes and themes that were part of the analysis and interpretation of findings within the study. Throughout the analysis process the coded themes remained fixed and included the following words/phrases - love to read, represent(s), qualities, character(s), linked, taking notes, guided, structure, feelings, reaction(s), nervous, helped, thinking about ideas, process, emotions, and technology. Each word or phrase became a focal point in the process of curriculum integration per each participant and in narrative analysis. The following is an example taken from an early teacher journal that illustrates **in vivo coding** and **narrative coding**. See excerpt below in Table 5:

October 13, 2012: Selected a particularly **challenging reading selection** for student **analysis** using “Character Mirrors.” As a class we read “Grant vs. Lee” a **non-fiction** selection a **compare and contrast** piece about Civil War Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. After reading I took a **modeling** moment as a **re-teach strategy** before students worked on creating their “Character Mirrors” **self-attribute** list. On the elmo I wrote an example of **one positive and one negative characteristic** that I shared with Grant and reminded them that the **characteristics** would become the foundation for a **personal narrative**. Even though the reading selection is a dry commentary about the two generals students seemed engaged as they **highlighted character traits, behaviors, and situational outcomes** that they could use the following day to develop their **narrative** in during the 50-minute class period. After identifying similar/dissimilar characters traits they shared with Grant or Lee we discussed and wrote many quality traits on the whiteboard. For example, **strong-willed, arrogant, harsh, well-spoken, sarcastic**, etc. As a class students began to share, incorporate, and reflect on these character traits and began thinking about how those **traits are mirrored in their own lives** and how this can translate into their reading and writing. During class discussion, John Q was eager to share that **he couldn’t believe that he was more like Lee than Grant** but Bill H., John Q’s best friend, was quick to shout out, **“Why is that hard to believe? You’re both losers!”** Class broke into fits of uncontrolled laughter. Despite their razing each other the first **modeling** component of “Character Mirrors” seemed to go well despite the dry non-fiction reading selection. Hope the writing process will be as successful.

Coding Legend

In Vivo: Communication and Application
Narrative and Thematic Indicators

Analysis of each observation began with the color-coding of each type of coding method. The color coding method provided me visual cues for codes and themes presented in the observational notes and created a visual color-coded memory that lead to reflective memos post-observation that were applied to interview analysis and artifact review. After color-coding, each coded method prompted further research journaling in an attempt to identify overarching codes and themes as presented from the four data sources. Continued journaling provided richer details presented in the coding process that informed the research purpose and questions (Descombes, 1991, p. 253)

The study occurred during the 2012-2013 school year which provided ample time for classroom observations, student participation with journal entries and digital narrative production. Gathering data at the end of the semester supported purposeful sampling. I worked collaboratively with student participants in pulling and reviewing journal responses and digital creations which was critical in developing the narrative study because I needed “one or more individuals who [were] accessible [and] willing to provide information on the phenomenon or issue being explored” (Creswell, 2007, p.119).

Data Representation

Throughout the process of data collection, review, and interpretation I worked collaboratively with student participants throughout the process of document review as a form of debriefing and to verify student perception upon classroom instructional experiences with the curriculum/lesson design of “Character Mirrors.” The goal of the study was to explore and discover how “qualitative interpretations are constructed . . . and re-created as a working interpretive document that contains the writer’s attempts to make sense out of what he or she has learned” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 30) throughout the research process. I compiled working

drafts of classroom happenings that incorporated data analysis of observations, journals, digital artifacts, and interviews that present a picture of day-to-day happenings via student narratives of experience. Using codes and themes established during data analysis I used these codes and themes as a focal point throughout the narrative construction process to develop a narrative that “configure[d] the data elements into a story that unite[d] and g[ave] meaning to the data as contributors to a goal or purpose that develop[ed] a plot that display[ed] the linkage among the data elements as parts of an unfolding temporal development culminating in the denouement” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15). Throughout data collection and analysis the findings addressed and spoke to the following ideas via text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology –

1. How curriculum design and content specific lesson design can contribute to literary awareness in both the reading and writing process.
2. How students make meaning during the reading process through the formation of literary awareness.
3. How students bridge literary awareness into the writing process in narrative construction.
4. How students create narratives and literary analysis using a variety of mediums.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

Throughout the study I followed a series of checks and balances to ensure the maintenance and organization of data collection throughout the research process. Teacher journal/field notes were dated and coded and each teacher observation included a reflective memo that highlighted themes embedded within the field notes. All journals, field notes, and memos were scanned/photographed saved to USB drives and filed in a file folder labeled “Teacher Observations” on personal laptop and external hard drive to ensure that all data was

backed-up in two locations. In addition, these same measures were applied to student journals and digital artifacts after student consent had been given at the end of course instruction and grade distribution. Participants were part of the document selection process and review of journals and digital artifacts as a form of member checking that ensured that the stories presented were an accurate reflection of participants' experiences. Throughout the discovery process I "solicit[ed] participants' views . . . taking data, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they [could] judge the accuracy and credibility of the account" (Creswell, 2007, p. 208).

I continually addressed my subjectivities as researcher/practitioner throughout the interpretive process and worked with peers and participants to ensure that the students' experiences informed the research purpose and questions and that their stories were the foundation upon which I presented the research findings. According to Polkinghorne, "narrative configuration in qualitative analysis" has seven steps in the analysis phase –

1. Describe the situational self – "we" are always situated in time and place and are products of that environment
2. Data needs to be a reflection of the protagonist's story
3. Highlight the importance of other people affecting the actions and goals of the protagonist(s)
4. Researcher must recognize how interactions between the protagonist(s) and setting create meaning
5. Researcher needs to take into account that participants are a product of the world in which they live – historical positionality
6. Narrative organization must have a storied outcome with a beginning, middle

and end

7. The narrative must be a reflection of human experiences as it unfolds (1995, p. 5-23).

Through meticulous note taking, careful listening, the elicitation of descriptive responses, and student participant collaboration my role as researcher/narrator was to “discern the intent or meaning behind another’s expression and to uncover how research understanding has been transformed not to write the end of a story but to write a more hopeful beginning for new stories” (Ellis, 1998, pp. 10, 30).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I detailed how the use of hermeneutics and narrative analysis were central to the research purpose and questions and were vital in the retelling of the students journey in their ELA classroom specifically focusing on their academic journey of discovery via literary reading/analysis, narrative construction, and technology integrations – text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology.

tired?

STUDENTS MURMURING LAZILY. HALF REPLIES OF “YES” AND “NO.”

TEACHER

Well, wake up! We are starting today with an Introduction to *The Iliad*. I’m going to start with a PPT that showcases the historical placement of the epic poem and illustrates how the Greek elements of drama propel the plot forward. As we uncover the origins of Greek history/civilization, I challenge you to question the perceived notions of the epic hero. Okay?

STUDENTS – SOME GRUMBLING, SOME WAITING TO BEGIN TAKING NOTES, SOME GAZING UP AT THE SCREEN DISPLAY ON THE WHITEBOARD.

INT. CLASSROOM

AFTERNOON

3:55 PM

10 MINS. TILL CLOSING BELL OF 7th PERIOD

TEACHER FINISHES INTRODUCTORY PPT AND CHECKS FOR UNDERSTANDING AND CALLS FOR QUESTIONS FROM CLASS.

TEACHER

So, according to the title of Book 1 the story is about which epic hero?

STUDENTS – SOME SHOUTING OUT KNOWN ANSWER, OTHERS LOOKING AT BOOK.

STUDENTS

Achilles.

TEACHER

That's right. This is a story about Achilles BUT I want you to challenge yourself as you read to ask the question, "Who is the true epic hero of the story? What qualities does an epic hero possess and what sets him apart from others? Disregard your preconceived notions about Achilles based on the film Troy. We are not selecting a hero because he looks like Brad Pitt or Eric Bana or Orlando Bloom. We are selecting a hero based on heroic elements of honor, sacrifice, love, courage, etc. (Pause)

Are you excited? I'm excited. I love this story. And you're going to love it too! So, tonight I want you to read Book 1: The Rage of Achilles.

STUDENTS – HALF-HEARTED ENTHUSIASM FROM MOST OTHERS SEEMINGLY EXCITED TO START.

INT. CLASSROOM

AFTERNOON

4:00 PM

BELL RINGS TO DISMISS 7th PERIOD - TEACHER AND STUDENTS MOVE TO

DOORWAY.

TEACHER

See you tomorrow! And don't forget - "Read IT like you love IT!"

FADE OUT:

. . . And so a day, a unit, a literary adventure had begun in one ELA classroom. The two students who participated in this study provided rich renderings of their literary journey throughout their English IV course happenings through detailed product review interview sessions. The curriculum/lessons highlighted in this research process showcased the implementation of "Character Mirrors" at the beginning of the timeline for World Literature as it is presented throughout the course of English IV instruction. The first literary unit began with the Greek classic, the epic poem *The Iliad*. Throughout the instructional process there was recurring movement from modeling moments to active/independent reading/writing/thinking that allowed student discovery. The development and implementation of "Character Mirrors" curriculum/lesson design within the ELA classroom provided a guided process of literary awareness that allowed students a flexibility of movement from text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology beginning with the classics and moving into contemporary selections like Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. As students worked through each phase of the lesson/design they refined their own reading, writing, and thinking about the texts presented throughout the course. As presented in Chapter 3, the discovery process included the following three phases -

- I. Association/Transaction: lesson design focused on character, theme, or key word associations whereby students pulled from personal experiences and

began a reflective transaction between text-to-self which encouraged students to form personal associations with the reading selection(s) presented. See *Figure 1.1* below.

Character/Transaction Activity

Directions: Select ONE character/person from the selected reading that you most identify with and write their name in the middle of your paper/poster/PPT. You may place it in a rectangular or circular border. Around the name you will create a textual/visual collage that represents your character/person and self. Include key words (thematic, symbolic, characteristics, etc.), images, and quotes that are reflective of YOU as a mirror to your character. Remember this should be a character that YOU identify with as a person/reader! At the bottom of your paper/poster/PPT write a description of your collage and WHY you made that character/person selection and how YOU and your character are mirrors of each other.

Character

Collage/Character Description:

Figure 1 – Character Transaction Activity

- II. Analysis: lesson design focused on the developing critical literary understanding of purpose, audience, and tone by evaluating characterization development as presented in the text and the world they encounter within the text and their lived experiences. See Figure 1.2 below.

NOVEL: _____

English 1301/1302 "Character Mirrors" Enrichment Activity

Embedded Assessment: Literary Analysis

Your assignment is to work with the text of _____ from the frame work of one of the perspectives listed below and create a literary portfolio/poster in-line with your critical literary perspective/analysis essay (see below).

Multiple Perspectives for character development or text analysis:

- Archetypal Criticism – certain images, characters, and motifs that share a common interpretation recur in texts of peoples widely separated by time and space
- Historical Criticism – text cannot be separated from its historical context; situating a text in its time period helps the read to understand the text
- Feminist Criticism – in order to understand the text, one should consider the roles of the women and men in relationship to the women throughout the text
- Marxist Criticism – the issues of economics are central to the ideas the novel
- Reader Response Criticism – the reader's active engagement with a text is filtered through his or her experiences, social ethics, moral values, and general world views

College Readiness:

- Developing 21st century literacies, both in texts studied and created
- Emphasizing close textual reading and analysis through a variety of note taking strategies/graphic organizers
- Expecting students to collaborate by grade level teams
- Expecting students to develop independence in terms of textual understanding, synthesis, and product creation

Skills and Knowledge:

- Close textual reading
- Analyze text through a critical perspective
- Present multiple critical perspective in a single product based assessment
- Develop product and share with grade level team

Suggested Timeline: 3-7 days

- Day 1: Assignment outline, discuss literary perspectives, show sample of a literary criticism academic response.
- Day 2-3: Thematic analysis/development
- Day 4-5: Writer's Workshop
- Day 6: Presentation
- Day 7: Product Swap/Peer Review/Self-critique

Figure 1.2

III. Production: lesson design focused on synthesizing literary understanding/awareness via the creation of narratives/analysis that incorporates a variety of writing mediums. See *Figure 1.3* below.

Final Novel Project

Throughout the year we have studied literary classics throughout the ages. We have focused on the plight of man and the conflicts and struggles that man has faced throughout history: past, present, and future. As part of that exploration you will finish the year with the theme of survival. As you read the last two novels *I am Legend* and *The Road* you must actively reflect on the theme of survival and the subtopics we are presenting in classroom discussion. As part of that exploration you will complete one final project. YOU will choose which project fits your personality and will best depict your understanding of your selected novel.

Novel Choices:

Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks

Carmilla by Joseph Le Fanu

I am Legend by Richard Matheson

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

"The Walking Dead" by Robert Kirkman and Tony Moore

Project options:

1. **Character Map/Poster:** You will create a visual representation of one or two characters from your selected novel. You will need textual evidence that correctly develop a character profile. Your details need to be insightful and accurate. Some characterization items you can include are physical characteristics, dialogue, actions (physical/mental), judgments, attitude, tone, etc. You must include a one page character analysis with your poster in MLA format.
2. **Book collage poster:** You will create a visual representation of your selected novel/theme. The **tone** of your novel should be clearly reflected in collage. Use concrete images and key words/text that supports themes, setting, characterization, plot, etc. that are meaningful and accurately depict the novel selected. You need to include, book title, author, and a one page collage analysis with your poster in MLA format.
3. **Book/Movie poster:** You will create a book cover or movie cover that represents your selected novel. You must be creative, neat, and original in your presentation. You must include a one page character analysis with your poster in MLA format.
4. **Character/Novel scrapbook:** Compile a scrapbook of memorabilia that your character/novel might have collected or displayed throughout the novel. All artifacts must be captioned with

Figure 1.3

parenthetical documentation and significance. As you identify objects pay close attention to symbolization, motifs, imagery, etc. You must have at least 10 pieces of memorabilia. You must include a one page character analysis with your poster in MLA format.

5. **Music CD:** You will compile a music CD with 12 songs that best depict your novel. Your selections should be thoughtful and insightful. You need to create a CD jacket with a cover and a back cover that include title selections. You must include a one page title description for each song that pulls textual information from novel to support your music selections.

6. **Character Diary:** You will create a character diary that explores the inner thoughts and feelings for your selected character. Your diary should be an accurate reflection/analysis about your character given plot events/development. You should have at least 10 entries. It should be bound in a creative manner that depicts the world in which your character lives. You may handwrite or create a word document – font can be whatever you wish.

7. **Other:** IF you have another idea you must have it approved by me before you begin work.

NOTE/REMINDER: ALL projects that include a one-page analysis/explanation must be in MLA format. Your final PRODUCT can be handmade or you may use technology platforms for product creation. IF you are unsure it is your responsibility to ask about further project instructions.

Elements of a Novel: The following list is a guide to help you during your project creation. IF you need a more thorough list please refer to the online “Literary Devices” packet on my eChalk page.

structure	foreshadowing	irony	imagery
theme	juxtaposition	characterization	conflict
POV	tone	symbolism	plot
setting	mood		

DUE DATE: _____

Figure 1.3

These three phases became the foundation for the research findings and the retelling of participants' interaction/implementation of "Character Mirrors" upon their reading, writing, and thinking about text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology. The narrative presented offered a storied view by incorporating screenplay stylistic writing that showcased a live view of classroom observation, researcher/practitioner field notes used to reconstruct class/course events, student journals as they applied to the implementation and utilization of "Character Mirrors," digital artifacts that were practitioner/participant reviewed, and the use of interviews that offered detailed participant insight into the use of "Character Mirrors" throughout the literary process of reading, writing, and thinking about literature in English IV.

Through a mirrored lens it began with . . .

EMMA

She is a lovely girl, smart, popular, poised, on the verge of laughter. Her demeanor has a classic affect while being set in a modern world. Her understanding of course selections is hard won through copious notes and fervent questions. Yet she never falters. Her writing is precise with a hint of Elle Woods from "Legally Blonde." She always manages to surprise. And smiling, always smiling. She is a reader, she annotates, she wants to know more, she prompts discussion and then trails away in her own reflections. Who does she see when she reads? What does she think about? What captives her attention? Can she have a connection with dead men of myth? The book is pristine, just out of the box. She was the first to order the blazing blue and vellum pages. She comes prepared with her list delineating gods/goddesses/Trojan/Greek. It is just a peek at who she is and what she does and brings to the classroom.

Today was the first day to roll out the lessons for the "Character Mirrors" process. It was a frightening prospect to attempt with students let alone an active and engaged student. How will

a student like Emma receive/implement this into her literary reading, writing, and thinking? Will she think and create using the design? Will it offer her the opportunity to do something new, to interact text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology? The introduction is standard there is a lead into prior knowledge of mythological tales through the story of Odysseus and other mythology sources. All students come with at least his story of siren worlds, Cyclopean adventures, and the intervention of the gods upon mortals. It is mid-story, like so many of the conversations that buzz around the room.

DAY 1 - 7th PERIOD START BELL RINGS

3:10 PM

TEACHER

How many of you are familiar with Homer? Achilles? Hector?
Helen? Paris?

STUDENTS MURMUR, SOME OFFERING NODS OR VERBAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

TEACHER

Ok, good. Let's go back and see where our foundation begins.
How many of you know about Zeus? Odysseus? The Trojan War?

COLLECTIVE ASSENT FROM CLASS.

TEACHER

So let's dig in. How does Homer begin both of his epic poems?
When we begin reading *The Odyssey* where are we? Does it start at
the beginning? PAUSE.

EMMA

He's still trying to get home. The war is over and it's been like 9 years.

TEACHER

That's right. And does anyone know what that literary technique this called? When the story drops us right in the middle of the action? This is classic! This is how Star Wars starts. LONG PAUSE.

STUDENTS STARE AND LOOK AROUND AT EACH OTHER. NO ONE OFFERS A GUESS.

TEACHER

That is called - in medias res. Which literally translates into "in the middle of" SIGHS. STUDENTS SEEMINGLY REMEMBERING – So we begin *The Iliad* just like *The Odyssey* in the middle of the action. At the end of the long Trojan War. This time our heroes are Achilles and Hector. This is a war poem. The definitive war poem. It is long, it is powerful, it is beautiful, tragic, and relevant.

AUDIBLE/COLLECTIVE GRUMBLES. SIGHS. A FEW TRY TO FEIN ENTHUSIASM.

STUDENTS

Are we going to have the read the whole thing? Are we going to watch *Troy*?

TEACHER

No. We are reading selected passages about half. And yes, we will watch a video clips from *Troy*? But we aren't there yet. We have to read it first! MORE SIGHS. Now in order to help facilitate the reading I want you to become active readers. YOU cannot be interested IF you do not invest yourself in the reading process. So, the first step is knowing how to become active readers. So look at the first handout I gave you – “Before, During, and After YOU Read” (See appendix). I'm not going to go over every single component but I want to point your attention to a few things, like annotating your text. That is under the “Things to do while reading” section. YOU need to actively be on the look-out for patterns, themes, symbols, passages of interest, and my favorite – characters YOU identify with. That is the simplest way to spark interest in any story. That is going to be your first objective. Identifying with at least one character. That's it. So as we start the reading that's all YOU have to do. That easy, right?

STUDENTS

EN BLOC RESPONSE. Yeah. Yes. Mmmhuh.

TEACHER

Ok, let's get started. Open your book to Book 1: "The Rage of Achilles." 35 MINS. OF READING FROM BOOK 1 WITH PAUSES TO CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND TIME FOR TEXT ANNOTATIONS.

5 MINS. TILL BELL.

3:55 PM

TEACHER

Alright, so that was a good start. Tonight you are on your own. SIGHS. COLLECTIVE RUMBLING. You can do this. Just take it one section at a time. Check your own understanding. BUT always make sure you are reading with a connection to your character. We will read 6 books this week. LOUD GROANS. Hey, don't forget – "Read IT like YOU love IT!" It's so goooooood! Promise! You're going to love it!! STUDENTS CHUCKLING, EYES ROLLING, SMILING, GRUMBLING.

7TH PERIOD END BELL RINGS. BREATHE. END OF THE DAY.

4:00 PM

DAY 2 - 7th PERIOD START BELL RINGS

3:10 PM

TEACHER

So? How'd it go? Did you read? Did you select a character?

STUDENTS GETTING ORGANIZED. TAKING BOOKS AND SUPPLIES OUT.

EMMA

When we pick a character is that the only one we can use for the whole reading?

TEACHER

That's really up to you. If you really connect with a character in Book 1 and then find that in Book 6 you like another character more than you can absolutely change at that point.

EMMA

Ok, but it would probably better if the person stays the same right?

TEACHER

It'll be helpful as we move into each of the activities. Today we're starting with a "Character Transaction" activity and ultimately your connection with your character will lead to the final product for the Unit. But, with that said I want it to be a flexible process that YOU use to help get you through the text. So, if you have multiple characters we'll make it work. Alright, let's get started. I need all of you to look up and pay attention to the instructions on the board. This is just the first step in making literary connections. You cannot be right or wrong so that should help remove any anxiety you might have about the reading or the activity. Ok, so

what do you have to do? Let me just go through the instructions.

READ INSTRUCTIONS ALOUD. STUDENTS HAVE 15
MINUTES TO PUT A DRAFT TOGETHER.

Character/Transactional Activity

Directions: Select ONE character/person from the selected reading that you most identify with and write their name in the middle of your paper/poster/PPT. You may place it in a rectangular or circular border. Around the name you will create a visual collage that represents your character/person and self. You can include key words (thematic, symbolic, characteristics, etc.), images, and quotes. Remember this should be a character that YOU identify with as a person/reader! At the bottom of your poster write a description of your collage and WHY you made that character/person selection.

Character

Collage/Character Description:

Figure 2.1

STUDENTS WORK ON DRAFT. 15 MINS. LATER.

TEACHER

Ok, times up. Let's see what we've got. Let me have a couple of examples I can use as models. SILENCE. STUDENTS SHIFTING IN SEATS. PAUSE. This is not about right or wrong or evaluation. Everyone has something. I saw you working on it. Anyone? WAITING. Slowly getting older here!

EMMA

You can use mine.

TEACHER

Great! Let's go ahead and take a look at Emma's character transaction. PLACE WORK ON ELMO (DOCUMENT CAMERA). IMAGE PROJECTED ON WHITEBOARD AT FRONT OF ROOM.

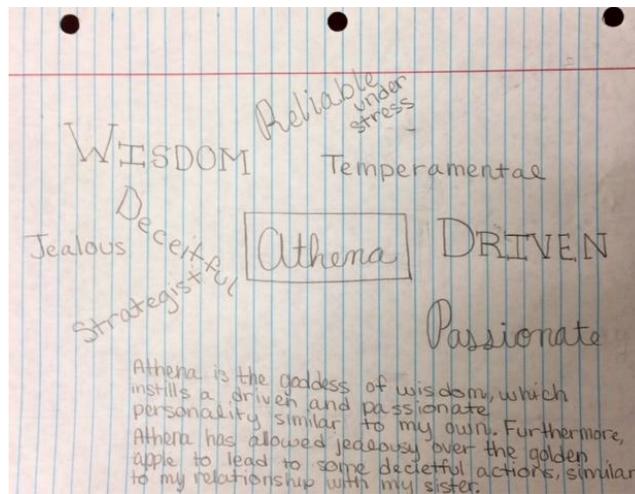


Figure 2.2

TEACHER

Ok, so pay attention. She has specific words/descriptors for her character – Athena. Now remember, these characteristics are a depiction of not only your character but of YOU. Now as we read you will be able to add this list of descriptors to build a stronger connection with the text and your character. Okay, the next thing you're supposed to do is offer an explanation as to why you selected the character. As you can see, Emma went

through each of the steps. Each of you should have something similar. Right? STUDENTS NOD IN ASSENT. Now let me have another example. I want at least one other. One with a different character. Did someone pick someone else? ANOTHER SAMPLE IS GIVEN. CHARACTER – ACHILLES. Good. Make sure you keep this safe and handy in your folder. Tonight for homework you need to read the online summaries for Bks 2-3 then we'll read Bks. 4-6 over the course of the next few days and then we'll revisit this activity.

STUDENTS SHUFFLE AROUND AND PACK UP SUPPLIES.

7TH PERIOD END BELL RINGS. BREATHE. END OF THE DAY. 4:00 PM

DAY 7 - 7th PERIOD START BELL RINGS 3:10 PM

TEACHER

Alright, we've just finished reading the first six Books. We are $\frac{1}{4}$ into the reading. You have been following a specific character as a reflection of self as you read. This character may or may not be the same one you selected when you started. However, you still should have a drafted "Character Transaction" page. Get that out now. Today you are going to take that one step further and turn that draft into a more polished product. Except there's a twist. Look up at the board and let's go over the instructions. PLACE ASSIGNMENT ON ELMO. READ DIRECTIONS TO CLASS. SEE *Figure 2.3* BELOW.

Character Mirrors Poster Activity

Directions: To create your poster you will use your "Character Transaction" word activity as the foundation for developing your poster. You should have selected a character that YOU most identify with as a reader and person. YOU should have written several descriptors, character traits, adjectives, etc. to illustrate personality traits you admire in that character, that you see in yourself, or that you would like to have. Using that activity as a template you will create a dual image poster of you and your character. You may use magazines, photos, or draw. Each of you will receive a square poster sheet. You will need to do the following –

- Fold poster in half (vertically)
- The left side should be a representation of the CHARACTER you selected – Be sure to identify character name
- The right side should be a representation of YOU
- Surround your character mirror with words from your "Character Transaction" activity. You can add as you go
- Select two quotes from the reading that are representations of your character , you, and your selected descriptors

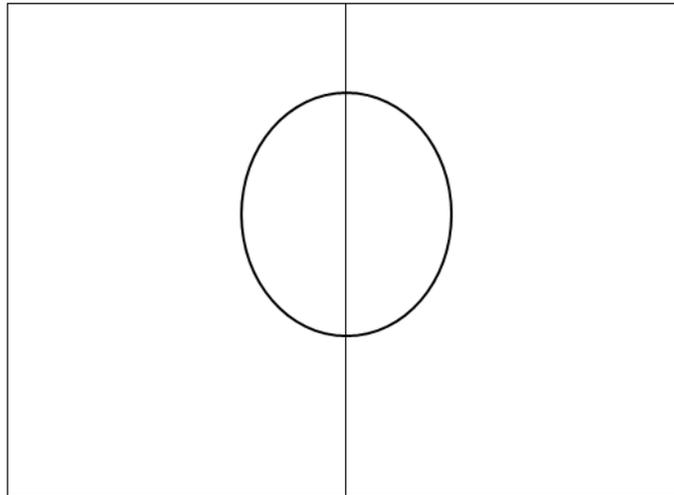


Figure 2.3

So, what's different? You here . . . POINTING TO DIRECTIONS.

WAITING FOR RESPONSE.

STUDENT

We have to have a picture for our character and of us and then use magazines for the words.

TEACHER

Good. The image of self and character is an important addition. You also need to have two quotes that best depict those

qualities/descriptors you have on your board. Don't forget that anytime you pull quotes that you have to use parenthetical documentation in MLA format. STUDENTS TAKING NOTES.

EMMA

Do we have to hand write the quotes or can we type these up?

TEACHER

Either way is fine. The most important thing to remember is that this is a reflection of your connections with the text. You want this product to be a thoughtful example/expression of your literary awareness as a mirror of your character and self. It should not look like you did it while driving down the expressway. SOME STUDENTS NODDING. SOME SMILING WITH KNOWING LOOKS OF PROCRASTINATION. Okay, you have the rest of the class

period to work on your poster and all day tomorrow. Let me say that when you are looking through the magazines for words and images. Make sure you are really looking for elements that will enrich your connection with the text and your character. You will be surprised at how many things in a magazine will illustrate what you are trying to present. Are there anymore questions? PAUSE.

EMMA

If we don't finish by the end of class tomorrow can we take it home to finish?

TEACHER

Yes, you may finish at home but ALL posters will be due at the beginning of the class period the next day. No excuses from anyone. That gives you more than enough time to complete your work. So, begin.

STUDENTS ACTIVELY MOVE AROUND GETTING SUPPLIES. ROOM IS FILLED WITH THE SOUND OF PAGES TURNING, SCISSORS CUTTING, QUIET TO LOUD CONVERSATIONS.

7TH PERIOD END BELL RINGS. BREATHE. END OF THE DAY. 4:00 PM

DAY 9 - 7th PERIOD START BELL RINGS 3:10 PM

STUDENTS ENTERING WITH POSTERS. MANY LOOK WEATHERED. OTHERS ARE CAREFULLY GUARDING WORK WITH TENDER HANDS. STUDENTS PLACE WORK ON CART IN THE FRONT OF ROOM.

Now the real work – reviewing, grading, critiquing. Her work is clean, an exemplar of instructions posted. Now what? The real questions begin. How did “Character Mirrors” add to her own literary journey? How did she use the lesson design to help establish connection with self and text? Careful details in her poster show investment of time and understanding but does this signify the lessons achievement or her own? At the end of course instruction Emma offered her own review of the assignment and her process of product development. Product review questions were created to link directly to the student as it applied to their application of “Character Mirrors.”

FLASHFORWARD

SUMMER

JUNE 2013

9:45 AM – BELLS OFF.

INTERIOR CLASSROOM. FLOURESCENT BULB FLASHING BACK LEFT CORNER. MUGGY. STALE AIR. DESK PUSHED TO BACK OF ROOM. FLOORS STRIPPED OF WAX READY FOR ANOTHER COAT. SINGLE LONG TABLE CENTER. PREP. QUESTIONS AND STUDENT PRODUCT(S) ON TABLE.

TEACHER

Hello! Good morning. How are you?

EMMA

I'm good. How are you?

TEACHER

Well, I'm still working if that's any indication. LAUGHING. So, let's not keep us from our summer any longer. Let's get started. WALKING OVER TO CENTER TABLE. BOTH SITTING DOWN. I've pulled the second lesson as part of "Character Mirrors" from the reading of the epic poem *The Iliad*. And I'd like to ask you a few questions about that lesson specifically. PAUSE. STUDENT NODS. THERE IS A SLIGHT FORMALITY IN POSTURE AND READINESS. Let's go ahead and look at your work first, okay? SAMPLE OF STUDENT PRODUCT OUT AND PLACED ON TABLE IN FRONT OF STUDENT.

EMMA

Okay. STUDENT LOOKING AT WORK AND THE

ASSIGNMENT SHEET SEE *Figure 2.4* PAGE

TEACHER

Okay. Are you ready?

EMMA

Yes, I think so. SOFT CHUCKLE. I'm nervous. And I know there's no reason but my stomach is shaky. HAND ON STOMACH. MORE SOFT CHUCKLES. MOVEMENT IN SEAT.

TEACHER

SMILES. That's okay. This feels . . . well, very formal because we are one-to-one and looking at your work. So I get why you might feel nervous. I'm feeling a bit anxious too. But I want to remind you that all this is over. You've already received your grade so this is just to help me as a teacher. If it makes it any better you can think of this as you grading me. SOFT LAUGHTER. You ready?

EMMA

Yes.

TEACHER

Great. Okay, so the first thing I want to ask you is - Was the "Character Mirrors" lesson clear in purpose and objectives?

EMMA

Yes . . . and no. At first I was stuck on thinking it was supposed to

be just like the first activity we did on paper in class. I remember that because I had to go back to the assignment sheet a few times to make sure I was doing it right.

TEACHER

Okay. I remember that too. Hmmmm. Alright, next question – Did the on-going character selection/reflection work to help you develop more meaningful connections with the text OR did it hinder your reading and creating. That’s a two-parter.

So, let’s just start with the first part.

EMMA

STUDENT REVIEWS QUESTION. Ummmm. I didn’t really like that it was so structured. I felt like I was locked into a character. I’m a reader. PAUSE. Not that I go around reading *The Iliad* every day but I do love to read. But as we read, I was glad to have someone to follow. I didn’t enjoy this book at all. I had a hard time getting into it so it was good to have a . . . something to keep me going. Because there were lots of times I didn’t even want to continue reading. I just really can’t relate to the mannishness of it all. In that sense I definitely helped me . . . it forced me to make a connection on some level. PAUSE.

TEACHER

Okay, good. And what about it helping or hurting your creating the poster? Did that character connection help? PAUSE.

TEACHER

SMILING. SHARING MOMENT. We all have the goddess in us. LAUGHTER. I know I like thinking so. Maybe no one else thinks that BUT I do. You know, everytime I've had students do this project I always end up picking Hector. And I always ask myself IF I am picking him because he truly is the character I feel I am most like or IF I am picking him because I see Eric Bana. LAUGHTER. So, really the most important thing is to just go there. Pick who you like for whatever reason because that IS your connection. PAUSE. LOOKING BACK AT PRODUCT EVALUATION QUESTIONS. So, would you say finding the images was the most enjoyable part of the lesson? PAUSE.

EMMA

PAUSE. THINKING. LOOKING AT POSTER. Mmmmm. I liked finding the words and the pictures that were linked to me. PAUSE. But I think I liked looking for the quotes most. I always take notes. And so, I liked having to go back and look at things that I liked while reading and put them into something. I love my highlighter and notepad! SMILING.

TEACHER

Well, I get that. I love making little notes in everything I read. And I always highlight passages that affect me most as a reader. Sometimes it just feels like a book is giving me personal advice or

makes me feel an overwhelming sense of love or sadness. I think it's incredible when words can move us to memories. SIGH. I love it! I just love everything about it!

EMMA

Is that why you were always saying, "Read it like you love it?"

PAUSE.

TEACHER

Actually, yes. I came up with that to encourage you guys to read. I am always optimistically hopeful that those words will inspire you guys to read. Not everyone loves it. And that just makes me sad.

PAUSE.

EMMA

It is sad. PAUSE. Sometimes I wonder why many of us don't like to read. Or why so many just want to watch, or listen, or play online games. Sometimes I think all of this . . .

HOLDING/POINTING TO CELL PHONE . . . technology makes us dumb. Not everyone. I mean I have to use it for

Yearbook and the school paper. I love to tweet and instagram, too BUT I do so many other things that have nothing to do with

it and so many of my friends don't. PAUSE. That would've been a good topic for the paper – "What if we lost all technology? Then what?" PAUSE.

TEACHER

SMILING. Hey, I think that's a great topic. I will have to let Mr. Warren know. Maybe he can use it next year. PAUSE.

REVIEWING QUESTIONS. Okay, so I have one more question about this project. Did the guided structure of the lesson help you establish a deeper connection text-to-self and text-to-text? And what does that mean to you? PAUSE.

EMMA

CONTINUED PAUSE. I'm not sure, really. I think it helped me get into the reading more than if I was just left on my own. So by picking Athena it gave me a reason to commit. And at first, I liked her strength but after awhile I just didn't like her. She was strong but she was mean and then she would lie to get her way. Well, not lie. She was more . . . tricky. And I didn't like that and I remember thinking at one point I'm not anything like her. And then I would find myself reading it and having all these feelings of anger toward her and so I guess that made me form a connection. It wasn't good. I was just filled with anger and frustration. But it was a reaction! PAUSE. It didn't make me love it. But I liked hating it. Does that count?

TEACHER

Yes! That definitely counts. I think that that would count. I think there is a fine line between love and hate. So I would definitely

take this as a positive. If you are reading and having a reaction to the text that is always a good thing. And I always love that. Love it or hate it! That's something! PAUSE. LOOKING AT NOTES. Well, I that's it for this lesson. Can we look at your final novel project now and discuss the idea of text-to-technology? PAUSE.

EMMA

Okay. SHUFFLING POSTER TO SIDE. PICKING UP *Year of Wonders* FINAL NOVEL PRODUCT. SEE *Figure 1.3* FOR ASSIGNMENT CRITERIA.

TEACHER

Alright, I have two products here. This is your essay and this is your creative product. Both of these were part of the process used throughout the lessons "Character Mirrors" and here are the assignment sheets for both. POINTING TO ASSIGNMENT SHEETS. I'm going to give you a few minutes to look over these two works before I ask you questions. This will give you time to refamiliarize yourself with the assignment and your work. Okay?

EMMA

Okay. REVIEWING ASSIGNMENT SHEETS AND LOOKING AT WORK. 10 MINUTES ELAPSE. PLACES WORK DOWN.

TEACHER

Ready? Okay, so we have your literary analysis assignment and your creative project. Let's look at the analysis portfolio, first.

I used that during the Shakespeare unit when we read *Hamlet*. Can you describe the role you selected to put this portfolio together?

PAUSE. You can look back at the assignment sheet to help you remember, okay? See *Figure 2. 5* below.

NOVEL: _____

English 1301/1302 "Character Mirrors" Enrichment Activity

Embedded Assessment: Literary Analysis

Your assignment is to work with the text of _____ from the frame work of one of the perspectives listed below and create a literary portfolio/poster in-line with your critical literary perspective/analysis essay (see below).

Multiple Perspectives for character development or text analysis:

- Archetypal Criticism – certain images, characters, and motifs that share a common interpretation recur in texts of peoples widely separated by time and space
- Historical Criticism – text cannot be separated from its historical context; situating a text in its time period helps the read to understand the text
- Feminist Criticism – in order to understand the text, one should consider the roles of the women and men in relationship to the women throughout the text
- Marxist Criticism – the issues of economics are central to the ideas the novel
- Reader Response Criticism – the reader's active engagement with a text is filtered through his or her experiences, social ethics, moral values, and general world views

College Readiness:

- Developing 21st century literacies, both in texts studied and created
- Emphasizing close textual reading and analysis through a variety of note taking strategies/graphic organizers
- Expecting students to collaborate by grade level teams
- Expecting students to develop independence in terms of textual understanding, synthesis, and product creation

Skills and Knowledge:

- Close textual reading
- Analyze text through a critical perspective
- Present multiple critical perspective in a single product based assessment
- Develop product and share with grade level team

Suggested Timeline: 3-7days

- Day 1: Assignment outline, discuss literary perspectives, show sample of a literary criticism academic response.
- Day 2-3: Thematic analysis/development
- Day 4-5: Writer's Workshop
- Day 6: Presentation
- Day 7: Product Swap/Peer Review/Self-critique

Figure 2.5

EMMA

PAUSE. “Reader Response.” That’s the one I used because it seemed like the easiest one to work with. I was already nervous about reading *Hamlet* and I didn’t want to make it harder.

TEACHER

Nervous? Why? Was that something you felt about reading Shakespeare or the play?

EMMA

It was definitely about reading *Hamlet*. I loved reading *Romeo & Juliet* freshman year but other Shakespeare works like *Julius Caesar* and the Sonnets were just so boring. *Romeo & Juliet*. Everybody gets that. Or maybe it’s just a girl thing. Undying love, young love, that is PAUSE romantic. SIGH.

TEACHER

LAUGHING. I think that sums up every 14 year old girls reading of *Romeo & Juliet*. I know that I still feel that way when I read it. But with *Hamlet* you were already not liking it before we started reading, is that right?

EMMA

Yeah, pretty much. It wasn’t so much not liking it but more like I knew it was going to be another book that was going to be hard to read and get into. So, I wasn’t looking forward to it.

TEACHER

PAUSE. So, did the idea of “Reader Response” help?

EMMMA

Ummmmm. PAUSE. THINKING.

TEACHER

Or “How did you use reader response as you read?”

EMMA

Well, it was the idea that I couldn’t go wrong. Like, I was going to read and then just put down what I thought in my reading journal. So, that helped me from thinking that I was going to make a bad grade or have the wrong answer.

TEACHER

And what about the visual/graphic note taking. Could you describe how that process helped you with the reading and analysis of the play?

EMMA

REVIEWING PORTFOLIO. Creating the notes in [Microsoft] Word and having to find different styles for each section, I liked that. My favorite is the one that looks like sticky notes. I do that when I read. Just stick them everywhere. I also liked having everything in small bits. And the color. I like looking at things that look fun. And so that made trying to figure out what was

happening easier. Then when I had to start really thinking about what I was reading then I just looked back at all the notes and it helped me focus on . . . PAUSE . . . you know, all the terms in the packet.

TEACHER

Yes, the literary term packet. So you used that as well. As a resource.

EMMA

I used it for everything.

TEACHER

Good. PAUSE. I have to say that I really like the sticky notes as well but the bubbles are great too. And I hoped it was manageable and that the graphic notes taken would add to your understanding help you get through those harder literary selections. PAUSE. I liked the variety of the notes you presented. But I think my favorite is the bubbles page.

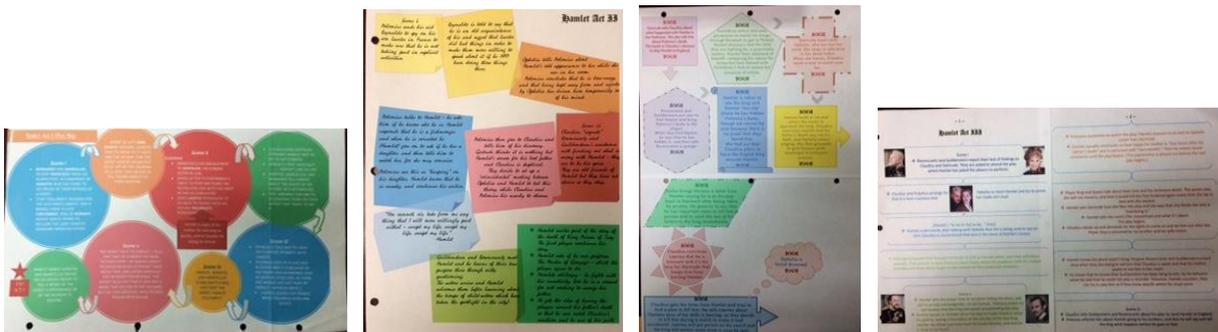


Figure 2.6

TEACHER

Now, working from your notes you moved into writing about the literature. Can you talk about how you moved from the notes into the thinking about the reading from a literary perspective?

EMMA

Ummmm. PAUSE. REACHING FOR PORTFOLIO. FLIPPING TO LITERARY ANALYSIS SECTION. READING. I used the notes for my evidence, they became the support that I needed for the literary terms I selected. I just went through all the terms and selected what I thought I could write about then after I went back to all of the notes to use them to back up what I was writing about. It made things easier and faster. Everything was there in front of me and I didn't have to go back to the book for much.

TEACHER

And using the list of terms you selected which ones to focus on?

EMMA

REVIEWING WORK. For Act I, I picked . . . theme. PAUSING TO REVIEW WORK. The themes of melancholy and ummm . . . death. And then all the support from the book came from my note pages. I also looked at characters, like Gertrude, Claudius, Horatio, and Hamlet.

TEACHER

That's good. Would you say that you were still using the components of "Character Mirrors" to interact with the text to write your analysis.

EMMA

Yes, I guess so. PAUSE. I mean you always told us to use the characters as a . . . ummm . . . guide.

TEACHER

That's right. I wanted the characters to be a fall back for you IF you couldn't find anything to relate to. We can always relate to how or what characters are going through or feel. And I can see here that in your analysis you wrote, ". . . the play is so well-developed that you can understand the way they may have thought or felt. . . You can sympathize with them . . . they make you keep reading to see what it is they are hiding, or what they are really like." And that I feel is an excellent example of how the lessons helped you think and write about *Hamlet*.

EMMA

Well, that sounds pretty good. I like that! That's mine?

LAUGHING. LOOKING AT WORK. HOLDING HAND OUT FOR PORTFOLIO.

TEACHER

Yes, that was you. See right here. SEE *Figure 2.7* BELOW. Proof

that you were thinking and writing about *Hamlet*. LAUGHING.

Literary Elements and Devices

Character is a major literary element of this play. It helps to create a depth, so that each person within the play is so well-developed that you can understand the way they may have thought or felt. You can sympathize with them because they each have their own secrets and they do not give everything away right at the beginning, they make you keep reading to see what it is they are hiding, or what they're really like. However they also give you enough to go on in order to get you synched with the characters themselves. People relate to values and attitudes of characters they watch and read about, so having a variety is important; for instance, there is the loyal and true Horatio who is friendly with Hamlet, while on the other end there is Claudius who is wary of Hamlet because of his own guilt and lies to keep what he has stolen (the queen Gertrude and the kingdom). There is also the father and aid Polonius who keeps his children in line with advice he picked up on in his old age, even if it means forcing his daughter away from a man she says she loves and who loves her back. They have deep emotions, like Gertrude's motherly love for Hamlet – showing not only in her wish to keep him in Denmark rather than Wittenberg, but also in trying to convince him to stop grieving for his father – which is actually making Hamlet more angry with her for how she is able to move on so quickly after he died. There are many levels to each character and they each affect the others in some way to create a very real social and psychological web which we see in real life.

Figure 2.7

Similes are a common literary device within the play; one in particular in Act I plays an important role in understanding Hamlet. The quote “It’s like a garden that no one’s taking care of, and that’s growing wild.” Refers to Hamlet’s life in his soliloquy; this helps to understand his state of mind because it brings out his inner turmoil. This simile sets up a basis for the rest of the psychological developments within the act, for instance when his father’s ghost tells him about his murder and that Hamlet should take revenge for him, Hamlet is very willing. I know it is in part because it is his father’s murder, however I believe it is driven on because Hamlet does not fear losing anything, since he believes everything is lost already. He says that there is nothing left in life, and he refers to his life as overgrown and wild, so he would have no trouble doing something that may risk his life and reputation.

Figure 2. 7

TEACHER

So, here you are forever immortalized as a thinker of Shakespearean texts. LAUGHING. Well, before we finish I have one last product review. The “Final Novel Project” - you selected *Year of Wonders*. SHUFFLING THROUGH WORK ON THE TABLE. PICKING UP FINAL WORK. MUSIC CD WITH TEXT ANALYSIS. Okay, so here’s your CD of music for the book and your literary relevance/analysis paper. SEE *Figure 2.8*.



Figure 2.8

TEACHER

REVIEWING PRODUCT REVIEW QUESTIONS. Okay, Can you tell me how you went about selecting the novel for your final project?

EMMA

That was easy! When you gave us the assignment I knew right away I wanted to do something with *Year of Wonders*. It's my favorite thing I've read in high school. Even right now it might be my favorite book.

TEACHER

Oh! Well, that's . . . wonderful. I really love that book. If the ending were different . . . better . . . I would say it would be one of my all time favorites too. So . . . you knew which book right away. What about selecting a product to make?

EMMA

PAUSE. THINKING. I was really thinking about making a book-to-movie poster like the ones you showed us in class. BUT I wanted to do something different to really show how I felt about the book because I loved it. I mean I cried, got chills, and got angry while I read. And I thought . . . Well, I could use music to show all of those emotions. So I ended up with wanting to make a CD.

TEACHER

Okay, so can you walk me through the process of moving from your ideas to your final product?

EMMA

Hmmm. Like, what do you mean? Like how did I pick the songs? PAUSE.

TEACHER

Umm. Well, yes from picking songs, to making the CD jacket, to getting CD together down to your explanation paper.

EMMA

The making of the CD and the covers was easy. I just found an image on Google that showed “Death” pics from the plague and I put that into a Word document and then typed up the song list for the back cover. And I setup the paper

size to fit the CD. Then I used iTunes to burn the CD and so that was no big deal. The song selection was harder. I really wanted to pick songs that fit perfectly. So, I worked hard at finding just the right songs that fit with themes and characters and how I felt.

TEACHER

And when you look back at this can you find one element about your final product that you liked the most or are most proud of?

EMMA

LOOKING AT SONG LIST PAPER. FLIPPING THROUGH EACH OF THE SONGS AND EXPLANATIONS. Ummm. I like so many of these songs. But . . . I if I had to pick just one it would be . . . ummmm . . . LOOKING . . . ummmm. “Keep Holding On” by Avril Lavigne.

TEACHER

Why? Could you just read what you put down as an explanation? PAUSE.

EMMA

Oh, sure. I said that it “relates to how Anna believes the villagers should handle the Plague situation. She is the main character in the novel that stays strong through all the

deaths of loved ones in the village. She does not give up or give into any obstacle. She reassures others and through her help, the villagers endure these tough times.”

TEACHER

How perfect. Well, Emma I think I’m going to end it just like that. STANDING. PUTTING NOTES AWAY.

STUDENT RISES. I really appreciate you taking time to sit with me and review your work and answer my questions during your summer.

EMMA

No problem. It was nice. I mean I really wanted to stay in bed. But I never get to go back and look at the work I turned in. So, that was nice. Usually it just gets thrown away.

TEACHER

Oh, I know. It’s hard to keep all the student work that’s turned in. It is even harder to throw work away that’s creative and thoughtful. This was really good. It’s always good to know what students think about lessons. So, thank you very much.

THERE IS SHUFFLING OF STUDENT WORK. CHIT CHAT ABOUT WHAT IS NEXT FOR HER. A HUG GOOD-BYE.

It was all so neatly wrapped up - her interview, her work, the lessons. Throughout the process

words and phrases that formed the basis for research coding and findings that occurred during instruction and lesson application were revealed during the interview session were – love to read, represent[s], qualities, character[s], linked, taking notes, technology, guided, structure, feelings, reaction[s], nervous, easy, help[ed], navigate, thinking about ideas, process, write, read, and emotions. As the research/practitioner it was clear that the student participant applied the three-step process of transaction, analysis, and production in her own reading, writing, and creating throughout the course. In the first artifact review session (see Figure 2.3), Emma listed the words – “wisdom, driven, reliable” as a mirror for her character association. Her selection was a true representation of her character as a thoughtful and dedicated student in English IV. However, when she provided her explanation about character selection she focused on the words – “passionate and jealousy” as an illustration of her relationship with her sister. These word selections indicate a personalized interaction with the text that establishes Emma’s text-to-self connections.

Per the classroom observations, field notes, and interview process the student participant detailed how she incorporated the use of character identification and universal themes to think about text-to-self. In the final “Character Mirrors” poster project (see Figure 2.5), Emma showcased many of her original character word associations and created a thoughtful product that showed creativity, depth of understanding, and her focused attention to detail and her own desire for academic success - as evidenced in the words– “obsess, driven, books.” As she moved from the association/transaction activity, Emma’s enrichment activity of graphic note taking also lead to in-depth reading and understanding of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. In her analysis of characters in *Hamlet*, Emma read and responded to the text in a personal and analytical way when she writes, “You can sympathize with them, because they each have their own secrets . . .

they make you keep reading to see what it is they are hiding . . ./There are many levels to each character and they each affect the others in some way to create a very real social and psychological web which we see in real life.” Her use of the word “they” shows how she developed a personal connection to the characters within the text and how she made text-to-self connections. Ultimately, the crossover or bridge from text-to-text connection was not presented in the course of the classroom interactions with Emma and was not illustrated in the artifact review interview session. The use of technology applications varied per the assignment/lesson and was directly tied to the participants’ technological abilities. The integration of technology per the three-step process was a generalized implementation of technology software application whereby the student participant used generic forms of technology – i.e. laptop/computer, Microsoft Word, iTunes, and the Internet. Her detailed account provided a glimpse into her academic approach to literature in the ELA classroom and the lessons of “Character Mirrors” as the foundation of product development. Emma’s admission of being a reader at first mention created a sense of disappointment. The lesson creation and implementation of “Character Mirrors” was intended for students who struggled with making connections with the texts read throughout the year and here was a student participant openly admitting her love of reading. However, her use of “Character Mirrors” to tackle difficult selections and to lessen her own fears about reading classical pieces and then using the lesson development as a tool to further her own literary awareness made the curriculum design applicable to active readers as well. Emma showcased that she used that design to further her own understanding to think about, write about, and create work about the literature presented throughout the year.

Feeling satisfied with Emma’s implementation of the “Character Mirrors” lesson design upon her reading, writing, and thinking I wondered what storied event Elliot would provide as he

used and worked with the lesson design. At once it is clear that Elliott is nothing like Emma. Often, seeming nothing like his peers. He is a paradox of a student - bright but unwilling to share, energetic but always keeping it at bay, silent but loud, introverted but social, active but non-participatory. For Elliott interest is key. He will not perform unless he is interested in what is being presented. So his story began with the first glimpse of an interest.

ELLIOTT

INT. CLASSROOM

AFTERNOON

3:10 PM

7th PERIOD BELL RINGS. TEACHER WALKS OVER TO STUDENT DRAWING SWORDS AND SHIELDS ON SCRATCH NOTEBOOK PAPER.

TEACHER

Elliott, Are you with me today?

STUDENT NODS.

TEACHER

Are you going to do the work? It's a step-by-step task.

PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

I don't like Achilles. I already watched the movie so I know what happens. DRAWING CONTINUES.

TEACHER

Well, you know that the movie is not like the poem. So you

only know what happens when Hollywood gets a hold of something and glamorizes it with beautiful people and bloody fight sequences. Right?

STUDENT GAZING AT DRAWING. LISTENING BUT NOT WANTING THE ATTENTION OR TO PARTICIPATE.

TEACHER

Elliott? PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

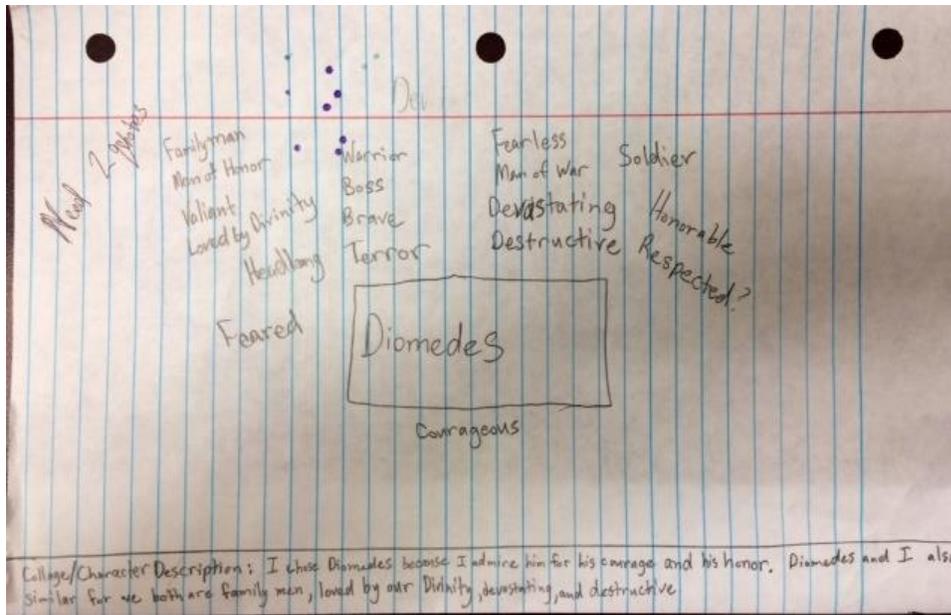
Yeah, I know. But I still don't like Achilles. He's not a hero.

TEACHER

Okay, then go with that idea. You have to have another character in mind. The character you feel is a true "epic" hero. So, why don't you start with that for this, okay?

TEACHER NAVIGATES THE ROOM. CHECKING STUDENT WORK AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS ALONG THE WAY. KEEPING AN EYE ON ELLIOTT. GIVING HIM TIME TO WORK. 12 MINUTES ELAPSE. BACK AT ELLIOTT'S DESK. WORK COMPLETED.

SEE Figure 3.0 BELOW.



TEACHER CROUCHING DOWN TO LOOK AT WORK AND MINIMIZE SPACE
BETWEEN SELF AND STUDENT.

TEACHER

Great! Could you based on these characteristics or traits
find some that you see in yourself? Which ones did you
select that you shared with the character of Diomedes?

PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

PAUSE. Respected. Family man. Those two.

TEACHER

Family man? Why that? It's an interesting choice for a young . . . guy . . . like you. PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

I guess. But it's me. I hang out with my folks. I like being with them. So, I'm a family man, kinda person.

TEACHER

Good, did you put that as part of your explanation? I'd like to see those reasons down at the bottom of the page. Okay, keeping working on that.

TEACHER WALKS BACK TO THE FRONT OF ROOM. STUDENTS SHIFTING TO FACE FRONT.

8 MINUTES TILL CLOSING BELL OF 7TH PERIOD. TEACHER RECAP OF CLASS HAPPENINGS AND REMINDING STUDENTS ABOUT ACTIVE READING OF THE TEXT AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE FOR HOMEWORK.

TEACHER

Good. You need to make sure you keep this safe and handy in your folder. Tonight for homework you need to read the online summaries for Bks 2-3 then we will read Bks. 4-6

over the course of the next few days and then we will
revisit this activity.

STUDENTS SHUFFLE AROUND AND PACK UP SUPPLIES.

7TH PERIOD END BELL RINGS. BREATHE. END OF THE DAY.

DAY 7 - 7th PERIOD START BELL RINGS

3:10 PM

TEACHER RECAPS WEEKS READING, DEVELOPMENT OF THE “CHARACTER TRANSACTION” ASSIGNMENT. SEE *Figure 2.2* PAGE 81. INTRODUCES EXTENSION ACTIVITY AS FOLLOW UP. SEE *Figure 2.4* PAGE 89. DIRECTIONS READ TO CLASS. AFTER SEVERAL QUESTIONS AND ASSIGNMENT EXPECTATIONS STUDENTS ACTIVELY MOVE AROUND GETTING SUPPLIES. TEACHER MOVES AROUND ROOM MONITORING STUDENT WORK LISTENING TO CONVERSATIONS SWIRLING ABOUT THE ROOM. PAUSING AT STUDENT DESK.

TEACHER

So, who is your character? Are you still with Diomedes? Or have you found someone else you like more? PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

I stuck with my guy. But, do I have to have an image of me, like a picture? Or can that be a magazine picture?

TEACHER

TEACHER ADDRESSING ENTIRE CLASS. The image or picture of self can be real, drawn, or a magazine picture of someone who will represent you on the poster.

TEACHER

Now, remember that the words and images you put on your poster need to be representations of your character and yourself. Everything you put on your poster should be reflections about you and your character. Okay, continue working.

STUDENTS ACTIVELY MOVE AROUND GETTING SUPPLIES. STUDENTS WORK TILL THE BELL.

7TH PERIOD BELL RINGS. BREATHE. END OF THE DAY. 4:00 PM

DAY 9 – 7TH PERIOD START BELL RINGS 3:10 PM

STUDENTS ENTERING WITH POSTERS. MANY LOOKED WEATHERED. OTHERS ARE CAREFULLY GUARDING WORK WITH TENDER HANDS. STUDENTS PLACE WORK ON CART IN THE FRONT OF ROOM.

Elliott's work has been carefully tended to. It is surprisingly crisp and thoughtful. How did his reluctance to read and work on *The Iliad* transition into a product that is clearly something he worked hard on creating. How did he manage to make a connection with one of the lesser characters in the epic poem? What was it about the character of Diomedes that resonated so much with him as a reader and individual? The poster offered a striking dichotomy between the character selected and self. The product review and interview session was revelatory experience.

FLASHFORWARD JUNE 2013

INTERIOR CLASSROOM. FLOURESCENT BULB FLASHING BACK LEFT CORNER.

DRY STALE AIR. AC PUMPING FURIOUSLY INTO ROOM. STUDENT SAMPLES HELD

DOWN BY PAPER WEIGHT. SINGLE LONG TABLE CENTER. 1:00 PM. STUDENT RUSHES INTO ROOM. WINDBLOWN HAIR BREATHLESS. TEACHER LOOKS UP SURPRISED.

TEACHER

Well, that's an entrance. Why are you running?

ELLIOTT

Am I late? Wasn't I supposed to be here at 12:30?

BREATHING HEAVILY. LEANING OVER ON TABLE.

TEACHER

SHAKING HEAD. No, our time was 1 o'clock. So, you're right on time. Do you want to sit and catch your breath?

You look a mess.

ELLIOTT

Uh, yeah. BREATHLESS. . . Just need a minute. . .

TEACHER

Alright, settle down and I'm going to run a copy and we'll start in just a minute.

2-3 MINUTES ELAPSE. TEACHER RETURNS TO ROOM. STUDENT ACTIVELY GOING THROUGH WORK ON TABLE.

TEACHER

Elliot! I had that in order! You're going to get a chance to look at all of that in just a minute. Good lord, sit down!

ELLIOTT

NONSTOP BARRAGE OF TALKING. AN AFFRONT TO THE SENSES. Are we going to watch my video? I brought my laptop. It's probably better to use mine because the processor is faster and I have built this one to run media/film files. Cause I could get that going, if you want.

TEACHER

HOLDING HANDS OUT SIGNALING STOP. Okay, time out. Take it down a gear. I promise we'll get there. But let's just start from the beginning, okay? I want to have you look back over the second assignment we used as part of the "Character Mirrors" lessons. PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

HALF-WAY ON CHAIR. ONE LEG FOLDED WITH KNEE TO HIS CHEST. Okay, which one was that?

TEACHER

It's *The Iliad* "Character Mirrors/Transaction" poster.. Here's a copy of that assignment. SEE *Figure 2.4*. Do you want to look over it?

ELLIOTT

Oh, yeah . . . yeah. I know that one. Nah, I'm good. I remember.

TEACHER

Okay. So when you started this did you feel that the lesson was clear in purpose and objectives?

ELLIOTT

Pretty much, I mean I remember asking about the picture you wanted of us on the poster but other than that it was clear. We normally ask a bunch of questions anyway, right?

TEACHER

Yes, you guys always asked a bunch of questions. PAUSE.
LOOKING AT PRODUCT REVIEW QUESTIONS.

Alright, so the next question has to deal with the on-going character selection/reflection. Did you feel that this process helped you to develop more meaningful connections with the text? Or did it hinder your reading and creating?

ELLIOTT

For me it helped. I didn't want to read it or think about it. I've watched the movie a bunch and there's not much that supports . . . Achilles as the epic hero. It's his story but I think of him just as the great Achilles. So, I had to find someone else. I was gonna pick Hector cause he's awesome but I thought that's too predictable and let's face it . . . I'm nothing like him. CHUCKLE.

TEACHER

Hmmm. You didn't pick Hector because you didn't think you were like him. But Diomedes is pretty fierce too. So why him? In your draft you pointed out that you choose him because he was a family man and respected. But looking at your poster now what would you would highlight? PAUSE.

STUDENT REVIEWING WORK.

ELLIOTT

Uhhhhh . . . well . . . I kinda think it's all cool.

TEACHER

It is. Let me go back to the second part of the question real quick. Did you think that the assignment helped during the creative process?

ELLIOTT

For sure. I wasn't really interested at first. But then I had this character and this assignment. And it's way easier than having to really write about it . . . I mean it wasn't easy. I really did work to find just the right things. I didn't want it to be just a bunch of junk on a poster. I wanted it to count.

STUDENT STILL LOOKING AT POSTER.

TEACHER

Well, I'm glad. PAUSE. So, what are some words or

images that stand out to you and why? PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

Can I talk about more than two? Cause I have a few things that are really cool.

TEACHER

Sure. What are they? PAUSE. LOOKING AT POSTER.

SEE *Figure 3.1* BELOW.



Figure 3.1

ELLIOTT

I'd pick this quote. POINTING TO TOP LEFT HAND CORNER OF POSTER. "The wounds of war are not always easy to see." To me that fits perfectly with everything we were reading and talking about. You know the idea that there's no glory on the battlefield. PAUSE. THINKING. It's all just brutal, violent, war. But then there's this other idea that you know when it's all done the soldiers have to deal with all the pains. And . . . guilt.

TEACHER

So, you think that these Greek warriors would have felt guilt about what they were doing to the Trojans? PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

I don't know. PAUSE. They couldn't just walk away like it

was nothing. Neither side. I mean everyone was killing someone's brother or son or father. That's mentioned a lot. I don't want them to be okay with that. That's why I picked that quote. It's like in your face!

TEACHER

Well, wow! That was a very inspired explanation. I don't know if I'm ready for your next selection. LAUGHING. But I am going to brace myself, so go ahead.

ELLIOTT

Uh . . . the red man. He looks like the Greek figure on the front of my book and the word "Spoken" because he is young but also smart. When he talks he thinks. And he wants to be taken seriously. I get that. I've been around adults all my life. And my parents are . . . older parents so I learned at an early age to kinda act like an adult and I wanted to be taken seriously when I talked. So I just felt like that was something I had in common with him.

SHIFTING IN CHAIR. PAUSE. LOOKING UP. That's it.

TEACHER

So, I definitely see a text-to-self connection. Did you have a text-to-text connection that you made? PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

Ummm. . . what do you mean? PAUSE.

TEACHER

Did you ever think about other texts we read or that you had read and incorporated them into making the reading of *The Iliad* more purposeful. Something along those lines. . . You know when I read sometimes it happens automatically. Maybe it's the style of writing that reminds me of another book or sometimes the events pull from something that has actually happened and so I make those cross-connections. Did any of that happen for you?

ELLIOTT

No, not really. I mean now that you ask I could definitely think of other things and relate it back. But then no, I didn't do that. I just did the assignment. I don't remember thinking about other books.

TEACHER

Okay. STUDENT SHIFTING/MOVING AROUND IN SEAT. Do you need a break?

ELLIOTT

I'm good. PAUSE. Why? Do you need a break?

TEACHER

I'm good. Let me go ahead and pull the next lesson. PULLING STUDENT SAMPLE. And we can start reviewing that. Alright, here we go. This is the

“Enrichment Activity” that I had you do for the Shakespeare Unit. HANDING STUDENT PORTFOLIO. HANDING STUDENT ASSIGNMENT SHEET. SEE *Figures 1.2* or *2.6*. Can you tell me about the role you selected and why?

ELLIOTT

LOOKING OVER ASSIGNMENT SHEET. Yeah. Reader Response. PAUSE.

TEACHER

I think everyone picked that one. LAUGHING.

ELLIOTT

That’s because it’s the easiest one. Those other ones forget it. I’d have to go back through notes or do research or something. So, no.

TEACHER

Well, fair enough. I get it. I don’t like doing more work than I have to either. PAUSE. So, let’s get right into it. How did using multiple forms of graphic note taking help you develop your analysis? PAUSING TO LET STUDENT FLIP THROUGH PORTFOLIO.

ELLIOTT

I didn’t use different forms. Did I do that wrong? PAUSE. I got a good grade.

TEACHER

No, you didn't do it wrong. I suggested that ya'll try different forms so you could see which one worked best. You didn't have to use multiple ones. And you didn't. So how did you like sketching out the story using . . .

LOOKING THROUGH PORTFOLIO. . . the flowchart?

SEE *Figure 3. 2* BELOW.



Figure 3.2

ELLIOTT

LOOKING AT WORK. It made it easier to read. I had to *No Fear* copy so that really made it easier. But then when I had to break down the plot for the notes that was good. It made me remember what was going on. And there's a lot going on. IN A DEEP DRAMATIC VOICE. Hamlet, sad. Hamlet, mad. Hamlet, mad mad – like crazy. Hamlet, dead. Everyone, dead.

TEACHER

Ha! I like that! MIMICKING DEEP DRAMATIC VOICE.
Hamlet, sad. Hamlet, mad. Hamlet, mad mad – like crazy.
Hamlet, dead. Everyone, dead. That's great! *Hamlet* in 10
seconds. LAUGHING.

ELLIOTT

Yep, that's it in a nutshell. LAUGHING. PLEASED.
Maybe you could put it to music.

TEACHER

Okay, let's behave. We need to be serious! LAUGHING.

ELLIOTT

IN DEEP DRAMATIC VOICE. Serious, like this?
LAUGHING.

TEACHER

LAUGHING. TEARS IN EYES. No, I mean it! We have
to get back on track. We could go on like this for hours and
it's summer. Let's not. TRYING TO RECOVER FROM
LAUGHING.

ELLIOTT

Oh, alright. I'll behave. That's no fun but I will.

TEACHER

Okay, let's get back to how you developed your notes. Did
you use one or multiple programs to create them?

ELLIOTT

I used two. I did most of it in Word. I just inserted the flowchart and then found images online and saved them in Photoshop so I could work with them. But that was at the last minute. Some of the images are really bad. I just stretched them instead of editing them. So, they don't have the best resolution. Oh, and here with the first one I was running out of ink so that one looks crappy. But I could've made them even better if I hadn't waited to the end. But I turned it in on time. You see. POINTING TO GRADE.

TEACHER

Yes, I'm glad you did because you would've been docked. And you weren't. LOOKING BACK AT PORTFOLIO. Now, how did you move from your notes to the literary analysis?

ELLIOTT

LOOKING AT PORTFOLIO. Uhhhhh . . . I . . . you know . . . I used the notes but I went back to the packet you gave us first and looked for something I could write about.

TEACHER

And what did you find to use? Can you find that in the first Act? PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

Yea. I picked themes. Death and secrecy. Then I went back to the notes to kinda refresh me about things that happened. Then I went back to find quotes. I think the quotes were good. I remember liking what I wrote.

TEACHER

Can I give you a minute to read through that so you could pick a few lines you really like. PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

READING PAPER. 5 MINUTES ELAPSE. Do you want me to just start reading it?

TEACHER

Yes, go ahead.

ELLIOT

This one's secrecy. "Secrecy in Hamlet is mainly a theme present in Hamlet, although it is evident in the actions of characters like Polonius and Gertrude./In Act I, Scene 1, the ghost that appears to Marcellus and Horatio refuses to speak to them. This can be seen as an act of secrecy as it will only speak with Hamlet. "Let us impart what we have seen tonight/Unto young Hamlet, for upon my life/This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him." PAUSE. LOOKING UP.

TEACHER

That's good. PAUSE. Now as you look back over that would you say that you were still using parts of "Character Mirrors" to interact with the text to write this?

ELLIOTT

Hmmm. I don't think I see to much of that. I mean there's no looking at any of those characters and applying to myself or anything. FLIPPING PAGE.

TEACHER

Okay, so you'd say "No" to that – is that right?

ELLIOTT

Yes, I'd say "no"

TEACHER

Okay. There's just one more thing for review and then we we'll be done. So your last project was the movie you submitted. STUDENT UP. GETTING LAPTOP OUT.

ELLIOTT

I have a copy on my desktop. I'll just pull it up from here.

TEACHER

Okay, I have your Script preface and your screenplay.

GIVING COPIES TO STUDENT.

STUDENT WALKS OVER TO LIGHTS AND TURNS OFF ONE SECTION OF ROOM LIGHTS.

ELLIOTT

Do you want me to just start it?

TEACHER

Not yet. Let me look at the questions and let's start with that and then look at the movie. So the first thing is how did you go about selecting the novel for your final project?

SEE *Figure 1.3*.

ELLIOTT

The Road! Is that a question? Do you remember me when we were reading that?! I was crazy for it! Remember?

TEACHER

CHUCKLING. Uh, yes, it was just a few weeks ago. So, yes I remember. And so do you, obviously. But could you verbalize why you selected it? Just for this - POINTING TO PRODUCT REVIEW QUESTIONS.

ELLIOTT

It's so bad it's good. It is everything that makes the world scary and unpredictable. Survival of the fittest in the most extreme conditions. It's wicked scary.

TEACHER

So would you say you had a strong reaction to the premise of the book or the characters? PAUSE.

ELLIOTT

Well, it starts so fast and in the middle . . . like . . . *The Iliad!* Oh, oh . . . what was that called? Oh! I've got this.

GRUNTING. LOOKING AROUND ROOM.

TEACHER

SMILING. SNICKERING. You're right. You want me to give you a hint? Hmm.

STUDENT SQUIRMING AROUND. POUNDING HANDS ON HEAD.

ELLIOT

UGH!!! I totally know this! Where is that literary packet when you need it? Ah! . . . Oh, alright. One hint! It will drive me insane.

TEACHER

LAUGHING. It's three words. It's not in English. AND it means "in the middle of the action." Does that help?

ELLIOTT

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I got this . . . it's . . . in media res! Right?

TEACHER

Very close. It's medias. But I would've counted that right if you were taking a test. So, you're good. So can you go on now?

ELLIOTT

Yes! Oh, the relief. Ha! I'm never going to forget that now.

It will be my literary term I drop to impress people.

SMILING.

TEACHER

Yes, that will be very impressive. Okay, stop that! Let's get back to work. POINTING TO LAPTOP SCREEN. MOVIE PAUSED. Can you walk me through the process of moving from your ideas to your final product?

ELLIOTT

NONSTOP RESPONSE. Really? How long you got? I mean I worked on it the entire two weeks. Literally from the minute you gave the assignment I started drafting the script, then the screenplay and that was a good 4-5 days. Then I started to make the short. I had to go on location around town. I had to have a tripod and film myself and then go back and check the frames and then when all that was done I had to do film editing to put all the frames together and insert sound and special effects. And then I had to go back and check my film against what I wrote on the script. So what part do you want me to go over, again? TAKES DEEP BREATH.

TEACHER

Uh, well . . . ah. Let me think a minute. That was a lot of stuff you just rattled off. So let me see what . . . PAUSE. It's clear this was a very layered project. Why'd you go through such a complicated process of for this project?

ELLIOTT

It was just the idea that you were going to let me do a movie that got me going. I didn't even think about putting it all down on paper until I need something to work off. Not just my ideas floating around. So I found myself writing it all. The preface, the script, and then the movie.

TEACHER

And what programs or software did you use?

ELLIOTT

A few. I also jumped from my PC to a MAC. So I could use Roxio or MovieMaker and GarageBand.

TEACHER

Now these programs you're talking about are these standard or are these more specialized. Like would they be part of the bundle on a new computer? Does everyone with a computer have them?

ELLIOT

Most new laptops come with some type of program to do

sound editing and film making but they can be real basic. The software I use I've been messing with for years and I've purchased extra things to meet my needs.

TEACHER

So this wasn't new for you. Navigating the technology wasn't an issue.

ELLIOTT

Yea, that was like nothing. Well, wait. Using the software was nothing but the filming was a pain. I had to repeatedly act out a scene. Check it on location. Decide if I wanted to use it or redo it. And there were plenty of times it just wasn't right so I would have to redo a whole segment and check it again before moving on to the next place.

TEACHER

And if you had to pick one component of this final product you are most proud of what would it be?

ELLIOTT

Oh, man. Can I say all of it? PAUSE.

TEACHER

Nope. You have to select one element.

ELLIOTT

The film sequences. I usually film others and it's so easy but this was hard. It was a good learning experience for me.

So, I'm really proud of it. BUT I love the special effects.
Sorry, had to get that in. The fire was something new. I'd
never added that kind of effect to anything I'd done before.

SEE *Figure 3.3*. BELOW

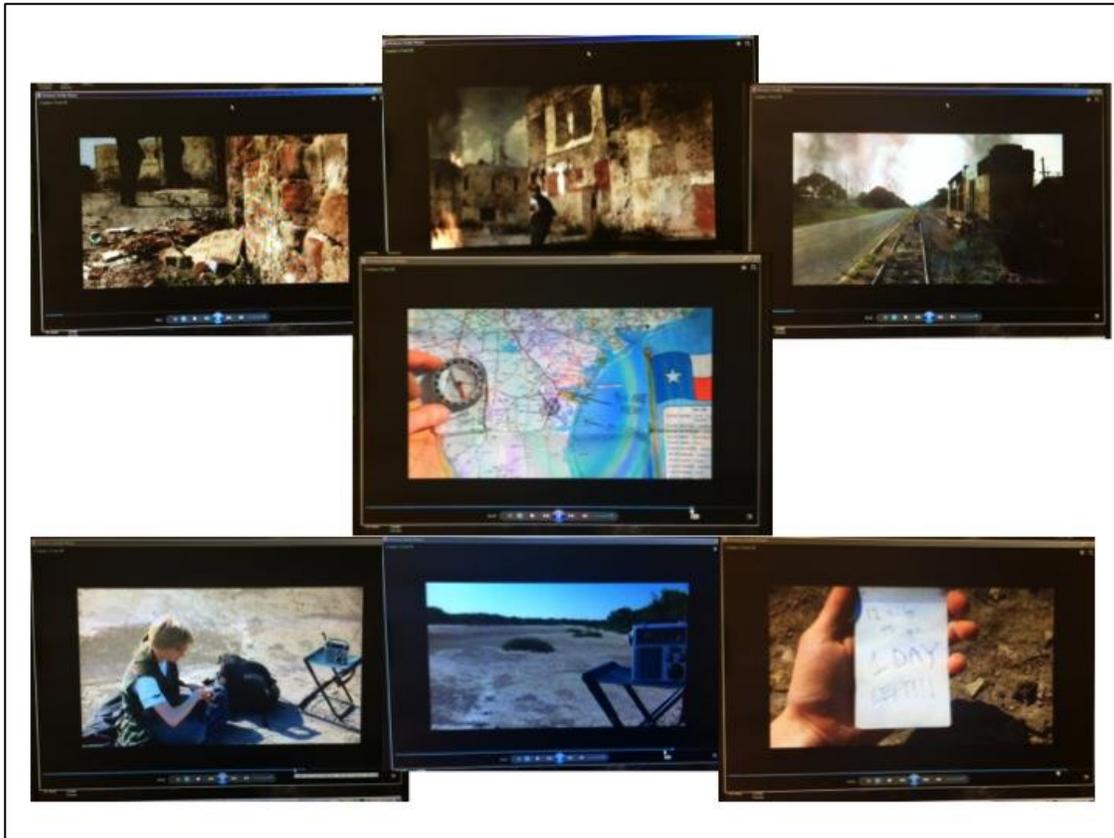


Figure 3.3

TEACHER

Yes, the fire was impressive. I loved everything about this.
It was clear that it meant a lot to you and that was
awesome.

ELLIOTT

And now I'm using it as a showcase so I can get into a movie/film making program at the University of Dallas. So, I'm getting to use it twice. AWESOME!!!

TEACHER

That's great Elliott! That's very exciting. But before we move into good-bye. Could I have you look at your script Preface? I really enjoyed that a lot. You had this before the screenplay as a setup for the action. You broke into two sections – “The True Survival Paradigm” and then you had the “Breakdown of the Video” Could you read just a small portion from each of those sections? Something that resonates with you because of the reading and what you made. SEE *Figure 3.4* BELOW.

The True Survival Paradigm

The skills needed to survive in the civilized, corporate world are completely different than the skills needed to survive in a subsistence, survival-oriented world. You no longer fight for a promotion, or a pay raise in your career filing information or filling out spreadsheets; you fight to find food, shelter and protection... You fight to survive...mankind no longer holds supremacy over the world. Mankind is now a flower among weeds... all too easily overwhelmed. The hierarchy of necessities is reduced to its most basic, almost primitive form... Grocery stores will no longer provide you with the essentials of daily life; you must provide those for yourself. Electricity will not last, and before long, it will be regarded with a value that parallels diamonds. It is therefore important to plan accordingly. Sentimentality, nostalgia, and emotional attachment are luxuries that one cannot afford to trifle with. Value is only taken in resources that prove crucial to your survival: such as food, water, weapons, and shelter... Fiat money (paper money) soon becomes worthless, because no government remains to credit it with value. The greatest value would reside in any medium with which one can remain in contact with whatever outside world remains. The primary factor that impedes survival is isolation...solitude...Groups prove much more effective than single individuals in terms of survival, and your likelihood for survival increases exponentially if you remain part of a group. Regardless of religion, race, views, or opinions all survivors must now fight together against opposition. We must no longer quarrel amongst ourselves... United, we stand... divided, we will surely fall...

Figure 3. 4

CHAPTER 3: REDIRECTION

Night has fallen over the wilderness, where the traveler sleeps in a sleeping bag. Embers of a fire smolder into ash a short distance away. The radio is silent, and the air is still... The faint, grey glow of morning peeks over the horizon...

A twig snaps...

In a flash, the traveler's gun is drawn, and pointed towards the origin of the sound, before the man's eyes are even open. The rest of the traveler awakens, and follows suit, reaching full attention. The man clambers out of his sleeping bag and to his feet. He holds his flashlight in his other hand, pointed in tandem with his gun.

An inferus stares blankly at him, hobbling along in front of his flashlight.

The man stares, wary, with his gun pointed at the inferus, but does not fire...

Figure 3. 4

Breakdown of the Video (Spoilers)

I started the project by writing the analysis of survival themes, and from there, the movie script essentially wrote itself. I incorporated all of the major themes from the analysis into the script, including the desire to be in a group, the availability of resources (or lack thereof), and the worthlessness of paper money in contrast to valuable resources. The most difficult part of filming the shots was keeping them in isolation, while still remaining faithful to the imagery depicted in the script. Cars, people, music, and talking occupied the field of view just outside the view of the camera, making it very tricky to portray the traveler in a barren, uninhabited world.

The majority of the backgrounds were matted and composited to look barren and destroyed, which involved carefully placing an altered still image (of destroyed buildings) in the exact, corresponding area of the shot, without obstructing the path of the traveler in the image (because he was still in the original background shot, so the new background, when dropped on top, can't cover up the traveler at any point). It was very important to me to establish the concept that these events and environments were local, to evoke an emotional and personal connection by the viewer, and perhaps, in the future, include even more locations familiar to people, in order to heighten the connection. I added a zombie scene into the final film, because I realized I needed something to keep the viewer engaged with something more than just a walking traveler for six minutes. I also felt it was important to show that the protagonist sympathized with the suffering zombie, and killed it more out of compassion for the human it was, than out of spite for the creature it has become. I worked with no budget, so I couldn't make a full zombie, or even a face, because liquid latex (a crucial ingredient) is very expensive. Trust me, I really wanted to tray I full zombie. In the end, I smeared my arm with black greasepaint (left over from another

Figure 3.5

ELLIOTT

READING. 1-2 MINUTES ELAPSE. FLIPPING PAGE.

BEGINS READING IN A MUTED TONE. “Regardless of religion, race, views, or opinions all survivors must now fight together against opposition. We must no longer quarrel amongst ourselves . . . United, we stand . . . divided, we will surely fall . . .” LOOKING UP. RDING FROM SCRIPT – CHAPTER 3.

“Night has fallen over the wilderness, where the man sleeps . . . Embers of a fire smolder a short distance away. The radio is silent, and the air is still . . .”

TEACHER

So, why that selection?

ELLIOTT

PAUSE. THINKING. I think it kinda goes back to *The Iliad* in a way. You know how I just didn’t want them to be okay with the violence of war? PAUSE. I didn’t want it to be okay to just be alone like in *The Road*. I mean what happens with humanity in that situation? PAUSE.

TEACHER

Sometimes people aren’t humane in survival situations or war. And I think you see that in both of those pieces.

ELLIOTT

Yeah, I know. I just don't want that to be an okay thing.

That's why I wrote it into the script.

TEACHER

And what about the second section. The "Breakdown of the Video?"

ELLIOTT

READING OVER SECTION. That really takes you step-by-step through what I did. See here – POINTING TO PAPER. SEE *Figure 3.5* PAGE 2. I forgot that another thing that made it hard was that I was trying to portray isolation and wanting to find a group and that when I was filming there was noise from cars, people, and music in the background so I had to go back and buffer those sounds. . . to keep it authentic.

TEACHER

Well, you did a great job cause I don't here anything.

PAUSE. So what about the script? HANDING STUDENT SCRIPT. Can you pull one thing from there?

ELLIOTT

You know, there were so many things while reading that he did, the author, that made me see this picture of it in my head. So I focused on those images - the idea of night, the

landscape wild, no one there, just silence and stillness. That could even fit with *I am Legend*. It's just the idea of facing it alone. No hope. How do you make yourself go on. And that was what I wanted to show. That basic element of survival. Of never giving up. PAUSE.

TEACHER

Well, I just don't know a better way to end this than that. I think that's a perfect way to close. Let's end here. Can we just FADE OUT? CHUCKLING.

ELLIOTT

FADING OUT is good. Just never give up. POINTING AT TEACHER.

TEACHER

Deal.

TEACHER STANDS BEGINS REMOVING STUDENT WORK FROM CENTER TABLE. STUDENT PACKS UP LAPTOP AND A BOTTLED WATER. OPEN CONVERSATION ABOUT COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANS. THEN A HUG AND A GOOD-BYE.

Everything about meeting with Elliott was fast paced, energetic, and lively. Unexpected candor and enthusiasm revealed a passion for film and technology that would have otherwise been lost in 10 minutes of an assignment submitted. Like with Emma, as I reviewed the interview transcripts the following themes/thematic phrases were used – love to read, represent(s), qualities, character(s), linked, taking notes, technology, guided, structure, feelings, reaction(s), nervous, helped, thinking about ideas, process, emotions, and technology.

Initially, the text-to-self connection for Elliott lingered in an obstinate refusal on this part to want to read the epic poem at all. After convincing him to find another character that he could connect to he managed to become self-motivated enough to actively participate with the reading and assignments presented. As Elliot moved from resistance to active participation with the lessons presented his unexpected character selection of “Diomedes” continued to provide him with an intrinsic motivation to read and helped him make text-to-self connections throughout the reading process. His text-to-self connections offered a rare look at how a young person perceives themselves in an adult world and became a strong foundation for the “Enrichment Activity” that showcased his feelings about his character and self through his character selection and word associations that mirrored his “love of family, courage, and honor.” While Elliott did not feel like he applied text-to-text connections within in his work/products he clearly had applied this in his thinking about the literature as is evident in the artifact review interview session when he made connections between *The Iliad* and opening to Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*. For Elliot, the Final Novel project became his definitive course product and was an unexpected and revelatory piece that showcased how lesson design and product choice selection are powerful tools for motivation and student achievement. Elliot’s writing showcased his own literary awareness by his purposeful pre-script writing of “The True Survival Paradigm” as a preface for the action in his film short. His developed screenplay implemented the use of character development, setting creation, time placement, and the nuances of a post-apocalyptic world that takes center stage. Additionally, his video breakdown established how he “started the project by writing the analysis of survival themes, and from there, the movie script essentially wrote itself . . . It was very important to me to establish the concept that these events and environments were local, to evoke an emotional and personal connection . . . in order to heighten the connection.” His integration of

themes, setting, and desire to reach the reader via connections of text-to-self and text-to-technology is clearly detailed in his step-by-step movement from writing to filming.

The purposeful selection of lessons from both participants ensured a level of consistency and integrity to showcase how the lesson design of “Character Mirrors” could be used with different learners, readers, writers, thinkers, creators. The screenplay narrative used created a scene that mirrored how the student became part of the lived and working experience of the curriculum/lesson design. A comparative look at the participant’s work/artifacts illustrates that there are shared elements of “Character Mirrors” implementation throughout the guided process of instruction. However, the work/artifacts and student implementation varied per the participant’s reactions to the text, characters, and project. Through their voiced interactions with their own work they illustrated how curriculum/lesson design informed student learning and how their observations informed practice. Through their literary awakenings they worked harder with each new text and assignment given. They read more, they wrote more, and they thought more. There was eventually a self-motivated process of close critical reading and writing and ultimately the integration of technology that produced creative student products. For the student participants the lesson design did not just lead them to reading, writing, or technological application in isolation. The students guided the lesson design upon their own development and they integrated the three components of transaction, analysis, and production as they moved throughout the exploratory process, thereby; giving each participant multiple venues of reacting to and thinking about the literature presented. Each of them formed their own literary perspective by applying text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology throughout their literary journey.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I detailed how two students in one course of English IV shared their academic and literary journey as they integrated the curriculum/lesson design of “Character Mirrors” and applied it to their reading, writing, and creating text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology. The narrative presented offered a personalized view of classroom instruction and student product review sessions that illustrated how “Character Mirrors” was used as a foundation that was applied throughout the year.

Chapter 5: Outcomes and Implications

“I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and that there are as few as there are any other great artists. Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit.” – John Steinbeck

At the end of this academic journey the research purpose, topic points, student goals, and curriculum/lesson design objectives continue to offer an opportunity for reflection about the guiding questions that governed the research presented. Even after implementation and review of the findings per the research participants and curriculum/lesson design interactions it is clear that there is a need for seamless instruction of content in the ELA classroom while offering diversity and rigor. Reading, writing, and technology curriculum should be presented in a layered manner that weaves all components together to provide a strong foundation for student development via text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-technology. The creation and use of researcher/practitioner created curriculum titled “Character Mirrors” was a guiding principle that established the research purpose and questions throughout the study and findings process. Throughout the year balanced instruction included presenting classical to contemporary pieces with a three-step process of literary formation that included student/character transaction, literary analysis, and literary production. The creation of “Character Mirrors” was a direct answer to the gaps occurring in one ELA classroom filled with a diverse group of students – who had different literary backgrounds and reading/writing levels. Initially, the excitement of presenting new texts to students became a sad and frustrating event because it was clear that while I was enthused, the student’s “reading [was] losing momentum . . . [because] the students weren’t hooked . . . their eyes were dutifully passing over pages, but their hearts just weren’t in it” (Jago, 2000, pg. 41). With that in mind the focus of the study was to explore how two students in one section of

English IV author literary awareness through literary reading, writing, and technology applications through the ongoing mantra of “Read IT like you love IT!”

The movement from foundational motivation into literary analysis and critical thinking focused on three specific ELA topics in-line with the research purpose and questions and are as follows –

1. Literary Criticism – which included a blend of traditional critique of literature presented as well as incorporating the self into the reading and explication of the text.
2. Narrative Construction – the thinking of and creation of a narrative or analysis based on the influences of literary elements, such as – characterization, theme, setting, tone, etc. upon the reader/writer.
3. Digital Literacies – utilization of technology/technology applications for the creation of student narratives/projects.

The importance to spark interest that would lead to critical thinking was tied to the students forming their own literary awareness, not just as an ELA objective but to move them from readers to lifelong learners. “Character Mirrors” embodied the challenge of “making creative activities visible to students . . . and situated the study of literature at the center of every [student’s] life . . . not only the college-bound of future English teachers who need the nourishment that literature can provide, but all the students” (Jago, 2000, pg. 51) as life-long readers and learners. The literature used throughout the year highlights how the teaching of ELA content is a layered and structured process and showcases that there is a deeply embedded rigor and an academic intellectualism that while it promotes the foundation of literary thought often creates potholes of understanding in a high school setting. The movement from literary criticism into narrative construction and digital literacies illustrates how these ELA content specific areas

can contribute to the classics and move students into thinker, writers, and creators navigating the traditional and contemporary ELA content.

Through their voiced interactions with the curriculum/lesson design of “Character Mirrors” and their own work the student participant’s stories became the lived experience of instruction and understanding following the three-step process of (a.) transaction (b.) analysis. and (c.) production. Each participant formed their own story through their interactions with “Character Mirrors” and the text presented throughout the academic year. The coded themes and phrases presented in classroom interactions and during the interview sessions mirrored their lived experiences as they integrated “Character Mirrors” with class reading(s), writing(s), thinking, and product creation.

“Character Mirrors” as a curriculum/lesson design mirrored the expectations of instruction and the hopes of the Instructor upon student learning throughout the reading, writing, and production stages in one course of English IV instruction. Throughout the implementation of the lessons, instruction and learning became a mirror for the students to express themselves in a variety of writing formats. The most important insights gleaned from this study were based on two principles 1. Curriculum/lesson design that is purposeful and relevant to students can lead students to become active participants throughout ELA instruction. 2. Educators/Practitioners need to embrace the power of content creation that allows intellectual growth for their students and the craft of teaching while incorporating contemporary and technological applications that are relevant to the learning process and the student population. The purpose and objectives behind creating content specific curriculum/lessons focused on the necessity that “if contemporary classrooms are to serve contemporary student populations effectively, there is a need for investigating and addressing teacher beliefs . . . that impact . . . awareness of student

variance and the curriculum and instruction teachers plan to deliver to diverse learners” (Tomlinson & et al., 2003, pg. 125).

Content creation of “Character Mirrors” became the foundation of making literature come alive to a new generation of students - many of them plugged and wired with technology. Their literary awakenings kept instruction and lesson design in a fluid state of on-going development that worked with the notion of getting students “into his or her zone of proximal development and through repetition of cycles that [help] learners grasp new ideas, master new skills, and become increasingly independent thinkers and problem solvers” (Tomlinson & et al. 2003, pg. 126). By creating curriculum/lessons that meet the diverse needs of our students we begin to close the gap between reading and writing levels by invigorating self- motivation within each of our students. Teachers/practitioners need to draw from content expertise and create curriculum/lessons that speak directly to the needs of students. Practice must meet the needs of the students in order to encourage and excite the learning possibilities within every student. Lessons must go hand-in-hand with student learning and achievement - they must not be separate components of isolated instructional practice.

While the integration of technology still poses an access issue for some districts and students once they leave campus, the open structure of the lessons allowed students to be creative producers of literary thought. Technology applications and lesson design can also go further than the glimpse presented here. It is important to note that while access to technology and navigation of software applications is often a by-product of student proficiency most districts are fast-closing the gap between instruction and technology. There is a multitude of ways for teachers and lesson creation to integrate the technological advances that students encounter in their daily lives within the classroom setting.

After the interview sessions and artifact review it is evident that the student and content creation of text-to-text cross connections needs more development to bring that component to the forefront to make the lessons and learning connection stronger to all the texts presented throughout course instruction. Teacher autonomy within their content needs to remain a valued source for innovative instructional practices that support and encourage student learning in a way that meets the needs of the students we know and teach. Despite the ever increasing demand to retain a level of rigor in classroom instruction that is often thwarted or removed when districts buy into prepackaged and boxed curriculum and are tied to standardized achievement tests. Teachers need time, resources, and encouragement to bring new practices and learning strategies to life in the classroom and into the lives of their students. When passion for teaching meets the reluctant and unsure student, practice and content should be the bridge that enlivens student learning.

Implications

From the research and the development of the lessons it is clear that there are many areas that can and need to be further explored and that research findings only lead to more questions. After the initial review of data from classroom observations/field notes, student samples and the student product review interview sessions four areas for future implications based on ELA content curriculum design stood out. They are as follows –

1. Product-based assessment as instructional design/teaching strategy
2. Differentiated Instruction as lesson design/teaching strategy
3. Reading and Imagination
4. Revising, revisiting, rewriting, rethinking

Product-based assessment. The tenets of product-based assessment are not a new

concept in educational practice. However, there is still if not more than ever a need for teacher/practitioners to encourage, support, and offer research as to how product-based assessment allows for creativity, originality of thought and student motivation within content instruction. With careful development and planning product-based assessment can become an instructional design that teachers can use as a strategy to inspire student motivation that moves beyond regurgitation of content facts and moves into critical thinking, literary analysis, and product development.

Differentiated-instruction. The practice of differentiated instruction is an on-going source of frustration for many educators due to the fact that it is often seen as a watering down process in content delivery. However, given time and resources this too can be a valuable form of lesson delivery and assessment that not only meets the needs of the students but can become a teaching strategy that helps form curriculum/lesson development that offers multi-modal learning that can occur independently or within group settings. Content development and the efficacy of teacher autonomy are areas that need to be championed and pushed to the forefront especially in the face of standardized testing and boxed-curriculum as instructional design.

Reading and Imagination. The mantra “Read IT like YOU love IT!” brings to life that reading and imagination go hand-in-hand. Students need the opportunity to reestablish the long lost art of reading to engage their imagination. ELA instruction should not only focus on attaining a canonical look at literary selections it should also and equally be charged with creating life-long readers and thinkers. While it is clear that when students ask, “Why should I read so carefully?” (Bleich, 1975, p. 4) that there is already a disconnect from content to imagination. And while it is standard to recite a litany of reasons answering their question the most important quality cannot be articulated. It is not enough to rationalize the importance of

reading it is through modeling and content development that teachers actively motivate and encourage their students to have ownership in their reading and writing success. Instruction, lessons, and modeling moments do not need students to read to imagine the lives of the characters they need to read to remember and make connection with characters presented in their own life experiences as a way to capture their imaginative memory so that they can continue to build literary memories that take them beyond the classroom.

Revising, revisiting, rewriting, rethinking. According to Knobel and Lankshear, “. . . there is no end . . .” possibilities are a form of “endless(ness)” (2008, p. 26). In ELA instruction the idea of presenting the process of revising, revisiting, rewriting, and rethinking concepts, literature, art, media or any other form of sensory information is part of the on-going recursive movement in the art of composition and literary awareness. Students as readers, writers, thinkers, and creators need to have a sense that all works have the possibility of evolving and becoming something better or different – something that can be a product that shows growth and maturity as they revisit their work. This type of instruction supports the use of portfolios as a product-based assessment and content specific project that can show student growth over a specific period of time or unit presentation. In addition to this model fitting with narrative construction it would be interesting to see this as it is can be applied to technology applications and platforms from blogs, Tweet@#hashtag/reviselways, Facebook, and Instagram as discourse communities that research how students author self, construct meaning, and reciprocate and revise “endless” communication forums.

Each of these four components can lead to researcher/practitioner development of content design that is a product of content expertise that cannot be massed produced. As always, research and practice need to allow the evolution of the world and student to become part of the

intellectual landscape of instructional design. If we want students to be caught up in our world of myth, romance, adventure, the gothic, fantasy then why would we stop ourselves from being swept up into their “viral” world of sound bites and media clips. I see a world of opportunities waiting to embrace possibilities and that is the most important lesson research and practice can offer.

Supplemental Materials

TITLE	PAGE
Read IT like YOU love IT!	154
“Character Mirrors”	158
The Reading Journal	156
Shakespearean Themes	160
Study – Information Sheet	162
Student Email/Availability Verification	163
Student Artifact Review/Interview Questions	164



BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER YOU READ

English IV

C. DeLaGarza

Reading Guide: *Beowulf* translated by Seamus Heaney

Things to do before reading:

- Make sure you have the right edition. You **must** have the right edition to do well on the reading test, to participate in the class discussion, and to write the essay(s)
- Generally, it is a good idea to read the introduction and to look on the internet and in your local library for background information. There is a multitudinous amount of information on the web, be sure to be careful about which websites you use and always check for reliability. **You can also refer to my “Resources” page on eChalk.**
- Be familiar with vocabulary terms that are specific to the text and genre.

Things to do while reading:

- Start and maintain an annotated character list on the inside front cover of your book.
- Read actively
- Read aloud
- Pay attention to patterns used by the author
 - Repetition of images, themes, words, phrases
- Mark and comment on interesting passages
- Mark passages you do not understand
- Mark passages, sentences, or specific words you feel have thematic or symbolic significance
- Try to limit highlighting by using pencil to underline and make margin notes
- Engage others in your household or circle of friends to discuss what you are reading and the issues that are being addressed

Things to do after reading:

- Decide what your favorite passages are and Why?
- What surprised you the most?
- Which characters do you sympathize with and why? Whom do you consider most at fault?
- What lessons do you think the novel, story, or play teaches you?

How to prepare for the test:

- Review notes
- Review vocabulary
- Review annotated character list
- Review key passages
- Identify the main events
- Identify the major themes

Study Guide

Form: Poem

Genre: alliterative verse, elegy, resembles heroic epic

Language: Old English

Setting: action occurs around 500 A.D. but narrative recounts historical events that have happened earlier; Denmark and Geatland

Protagonist: Beowulf

Narrative Point of View: Narrator recounts story in 3rd person, from a generally objective standpoint. Narrator does have access to character's insights. Narrator moves forward and backward in time.

***Main Characters:** You will compile a working annotated character list

Thematic Strands:

Establishing Identity

Tension between the Heroic code and other Value systems

The Difference between a Good Warrior and a Good King

Motifs:

Monsters

The Oral Tradition

The Mead-Hall

Symbols:

The Golden Torque

The Banquet

Journal Topics:

1. What is a hero? Explain and give examples from the text.
2. What is courage? How is this displayed in the text and how does it differ from today.
3. What qualities should a good leader possess? Discuss the differences and commonalities of leadership then and now.
4. What does it mean to be loyal?
5. Why is reputation important?



READ IT LIKE YOU LOVE IT!

Character Mirrors: Text-to-Self, Text-to-Text, and Text-to-Technology

Literary Application for Reading Comprehension and Narrative Composition

As you read your mind, senses, and imagination are working to make sense of plot, characterization, setting, symbols, imagery, conflict, themes, and a variety of other literary devices that are in play within the text. So, how do readers process all this information in a meaningful way that will help them retain novel elements without losing purpose? The first thing to establish as you read is what is your purpose? Reading is connected to a variety of purposes which can include reading for . . .

- Information
- Enjoyment
- Investigation
- Experience

Throughout the semester your assignment is to work through texts selected and form a personal subjectivity with the text, in particular with characters who share or “mirror” personal characteristics and attributes as yourself. Over the course of the reading you will keep a journal that should chronicle your journey as a reader/participant in the experiences embedded within the text. As you actively read pay close attention to . . .

- Characterization
- Point of View
- Conflict(s)
- Theme(s)

At the close of each novel unit you will present a product of your choosing that will highlight your perspective as a reader and writer. You will work through each novel to develop a product based on your autobiographical narrative using technology applications to create your literary and composition product. Your product is YOUR creation. Below is a suggested list of product options:

- Music CD
- Movie
- One-man play
- PowerPoint
- Character/Novel blog
- Art piece
- Screen play

Each of these products will be used as a final component that is a reflection of your reading and autobiographical narrative. Please feel free to explore product ideas not listed.

The Reading Journal

Your journal is designed to help you develop critical thinking and reading skills so that you can articulate your reading perspective and to help you develop personal/autobiographical narratives and prepare you for the process of literary analysis. By monitoring your reading movement throughout the piece you will begin to develop active participation with the text and will soon find that instead of just reading with your eyes, you are reading for experiences. In order to establish this habit of active reading/analysis your journal will have a dialectical setup. You will vertically crease pages creating left and right hand columns. Use the left column to express SELF evaluations of the text and the right column to illustrate textual/literary happenings.

Left column

- Comment on thematic strands YOU identify with – love, jealousy, betrayal, bravery, anger, gratitude, family, sadness, etc.
- Reflect on yourself as a reader – What did YOU focus on? What mattered most as you read? Who did YOU sympathize with? Why?
- Discuss elements of the story that resonated with YOU on a personal level.

Right column

- Discuss character development – attributes, characteristics, descriptions, dialogue, etc.
- Discuss POV – How does the lens/perspective enrich plot development or add to tone or mood of the selection?
- Comment on details that lead to connections via text-to-text, text-to-world, etc.

Your journal should represent your reflections on the readings but more importantly yourself. Basically, YOU are creating a reading/writing conversation between you and the text. This journaling process will begin as a personal reading/writing endeavor that will lead up to writing personal narrative(s) and later literary analysis. Remember, you have all the tools you need to be successful. Below are a few more items that will help you start this process.

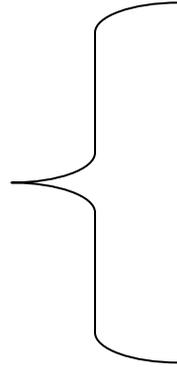
Writer's Toolbox

- Select sensory details while reading/writing to help you identify/establish mood, setting, and characters you are trying to develop.
- Literature is like a window into other lives/worlds BUT it can also be a mirror. The books we read help us to see the world and ourselves in new ways.
- Writing does not have to impress your reader with flowery language for poetic affect that has no purpose beyond the superficial. Rely on specific details that enrich the moment or scene.

Shakespeare's Tragedies Overarching Thematic Strands

Romeo & Juliet

LOVE



- At first sight
- Physical/appearances
- Forbidden
- innocent



BETRAYAL

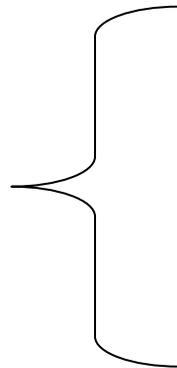
MARRIAGE

FRIENDSHIP

LOYALTY

OTHELLO

LOVE



- Jealous
- Lustful
- Overbearing
- Innocent



In addition to themes presented in R&J -

STATUS

RACISM

SECRETS

MAGIC

HAMLET

LOVE

- Incestuous
- Platonic
- Familial
- Innocent



In addition to themes presented in R&J and Othello -

SUSPICION

MADNESS

OMENS

DOUBT



REMEMBER: You need to actively look for examples of how Shakespeare uses dramatic elements in the play to create suspense, tension, humor, etc. (foil, comedy of errors, soliloquy, aside, dramatic monologue, etc.)
NOTE: Universal themes are mirrored in our lives through our experiences. The influence of themes within classical literature is made real/relevant because we all understand love, anger, jealousy, etc.

INFORMATION SHEET

Character Mirrors: Creating Identity – Text-to-Self, Text-to-Text, Text-to-Technology

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. By providing email availability for summer interview and document analysis on class assignments and lesson implementation you are consenting to participate in the study. By participating in this study, you are also certifying that you are 18 years of age or older. Please do not respond to calendar availability email if you do not consent to participate in the study.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying how students in English IV author their identities through the presentation of “Character Mirrors” using digital technology within the context of the literature presented in their ELA classroom. The purpose of this study is to how students describe themselves in their autobiographical narrative and how students make connections to the literature presented in the ELA classroom in digital format. You were selected to be a possible participant because you confirmed calendar availability.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in one interview that will last approximately 2 hours regarding the above stated research purpose. You will also be involved in artifact analysis and creation explanation which will last approximately 1 hour per artifact. Artifacts will be projects you created this semester.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated with this study are minimal. All identify records will be removed and your participation will be anonymous via the use of pseudonyms throughout the course of the study.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

Participation may directly impact lesson plan implementation and the use of technology applications within the ELA classroom.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi or Del Mar College being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is anonymous and your identity will be maintained and kept confidential through the use of a pseudonym throughout the course of the research. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the principal investigator will have access to those records.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Christine DeLaGarza at (361) 877-8331, email at cjuliag13@gmail.com

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study has been reviewed by the Research Compliance Office and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact Erin Sherman, Research Compliance Officer, at (361) 825-2497 or erin.sherman@tamucc.edu

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE/AVAILABILITY VERIFICATION

Dear Student,

I am in the process of working on my dissertation research study at Texas A&M – Corpus Christi. I am excited to be able to work and conduct research for this degree at King HS and look forward to the academic opportunity it is providing me as a student and instructor. For the research study I am looking for 4 students who would be willing to participate – anonymously- in this study. The first step in participant selection is calendar availability. If you are interested in participating and are available June of 2013 please confirm by replying to this email with “AVAILABLE.” Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christine DeLaGarza
English IV Instructor

Student Artifact Review/Interview Questions

Character Mirrors Poster –

- 1. Was the “Character Mirrors” lesson clear in purpose and objectives?**
- 2. Did the on-going character selection/reflection work to develop a more meaningful connection with the text or did it hinder the reading/creating process?**
- 3. What part of this lesson was most enjoyable?**
- 4. Did the guided structure of the lesson help you to establish a deeper connection with the text and self?**

Character Mirrors Enrichment Activity

- 1. Describe the role you selected to create your analysis?**
- 2. How did the use of multiple forms of graphic note taking help you develop your analysis?**
- 3. Discuss working with multiple mediums, platforms, or software applications?**

Character Mirrors Final Novel Project

- 1. How did you select the novel of choice for your final project?**
- 2. Walk me through the process of moving from your ideas to your final product.**
- 3. Can you pick one element/component from your final product that you liked most or are most proud of?**

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