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"Why I Press Play:" A Phenomenological Study of Teachers Using Film for Literacy in Appalachian Schools

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Jason DeHart entitled ""Why I Press Play:" A Phenomenological Study of Teachers Using Film for Literacy in Appalachian Schools." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Stergios Botzakis, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

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"Why I Press Play:" A Phenomenological Study of Teachers Using Film for Literacy in

Appalachian Schools

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Jason Doyle DeHart

August 2019

Dedication

For my wife, Christie, and my parents, Earnest and Diane. Your encouragement and support have made all the difference.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the teachers who participated in this study. It is my honor to represent your classroom work with some words and pictures.

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And I acknowledge three hearts. The way to a doctorate is paved with all the details of life.

Abstract

This study examines the experiences of teachers in rural, Appalachian classrooms who use film as a text. Film, in this study, was both an ensemble to be used for classroom viewing purposes and a creative writing opportunity for composition. The researcher drew on the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology, drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty, in constructing this work. In all, five teachers shared their thinking about how to use film most effectively with reading and writing tasks. These teachers shared a wide range of practices within the structure of their classrooms, and noted their own engagement with film. Popular films, short clips, educational videos, and teacher- and student-created projects were all considered, among other visual practices. Data collection involved an interview at the beginning of the research cycle, followed by teacher audio-recorded and/or written logs, collection of supplemental teaching documents, and a final interview. This dissertation explores four major themes that resulted from the research process, as well as providing an introduction to frame the conversation, a review of the literature to demonstrate what has already been done with film in reading and writing in specific content areas, and notes on implications for current practice, policy, and research drawn from the study.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

For the past ten years, it seems as though screens have taken a prominent place in nearly every classroom I have visited or taught in. These spaces for projection and digital display are often front and center in the room. This study explores the ways in which teachers experience using filmic materials as a text when working with adolescent students. A variety of studies have looked at the student side of the equation, often in urban areas (Beach & O'Brien, 2008; Brass, 2008; Goodman, 2003; Turner, 2011). My study fills an important gap not just in addressing the experience of the teacher, but in looking at how films are used for literacy instruction in rural, Appalachian locations. In what follows, I briefly explore my own interactions with film as a text, and then present the way this concept has been supported by literature in cinema studies and in literacy work.

When I began my career as a middle level English teacher in rural Appalachia, one of the first discoveries I made was that not all students willingly or energetically embrace reading tasks immediately. As I have had the opportunity to reflect on my literacy development as a doctoral student, I have noted that this was an experience that was also true of me at times growing up. Sometimes students arrived in my class with a clear love for reading that caused them to visit my bookshelf often, calling to mind the way I would seek out graphic novels and popular culture texts in the school library. There were other times when I had to work with students over the course of weeks, and sometimes even months, to find texts that engaged them. This experience has brought to mind the texts that I myself resisted as a middle grades student. These reading

struggles often created barriers that I had to break down. Very often, students who struggled with reading would even approach my class with the assumption that I would not like them or enjoy having them in class because of their lack of interest in the subject.

My resistance to reading has now transformed into a full-fledged love for literature, and in a way, I became an advocate for some of the books I resisted so much. Part of my work as a doctoral student studying literacy has been an examination of what made the difference for me, and what sometimes made the difference for my students. While I now read widely, I did not begin my reading life that way.   When I first encountered novels like *Island of the Blue Dolphins* and *The Witch of Blackbird Pond,* I met them with disdain. They were required reading and were not based on any popular characters I knew from film or television. These books, in my junior high estimation, were difficult to read while trying to play video games between pages. School reading, for the most part, was a task that I knew I had to complete, but I did not particularly enjoy these texts. I viewed them simply as hurdles I knew I had to get over or get through in order to satisfy a requirement that often felt arbitrary, an activity that only seemed to be focused on the need to finish questions at the end. Wilhelm (2016) has noted this reluctance to read in his text, *You Gotta BE the Book.* What was true of me in terms of reading reluctance, and sometimes full resistance, was true for some of my students, and apparently has been observed by other writers in the field (Gallagher, 2009; Wilhelm, 2016). Yet, I was always a reader in one way or another and, by the time I reached high school, I was engaging with books like *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Fahrenheit 451* with pleasure, and books like *Cold Sassy Tree* with acquiescent interest. In short, my love of film and media translated into later success with more traditional texts.

My first vivid memory of at-home reading started when I contracted double pneumonia in second grade. I remember being in the hospital, under a croup tent, with an IV in my arm. My parents went to the pharmacy across the street and purchased a stack of comic books for me to read. That same year, the film *Batman* (1989) was released. I was hooked on the experience of pairing these images I was finding on the page with images I found on the screen. So, my reading continued.

I would find other text experiences, like reading the novelizations of popular films. As an elementary school student, these readings often paired with comic book films. Later, they paired with the filmed adaptations of Michael Crichton books and other works by popular authors. Media played an important role in my formation as a reader. It only made sense, then, that media and comic books would ultimately make their way into my reading and language arts classroom.

In my classroom, discussions were most active and lively when connecting the material in a novel, poem, or short story to movies students had already seen – especially if these movies involved some aspect of thrill or horror. Sometimes I detected my own passion in their voices, akin to the excitement I still feel when I read that a film that has piqued my interest has entered post-production. On the occasions when I would show video clips to pair with readings or concepts from my standards, students would sometimes be so engaged that they would talk to the film, as if the flat images on the screen could hear them. Ironically, I cannot recall a single instance in almost ten years of classroom instruction in which a student responded in similar fashion to the flat page of a book. It seemed that my students shared some of my experiences with enjoying the messages they found in flickering images.

Further contextualizing this study is my personal history as an Appalachian reader, growing up in the mountains of West Virginia. It is not small surprise that my work with literacy would take me to a school system in a rural community, and it is no surprise that my work now returns me to an Appalachian context as I begin my work as a researcher. It has been noted that common stereotypes of Appalachia include the idea that members of this cultural community have low literacy skills (Donehower, 2003). Including media as part of the curriculum might have interesting results in an Appalachian adolescent classroom (Kist, 2005). This Appalachian rural context is another feature of how I have considered this study.

In the midst of my quest for providing meaningful experiences for my students, conversations often traveled to the movies and popular entertainment. Author Frank McCourt (2005) wrote about the looming presence of films in US culture, "No matter what you write in America there is always talk of The Movie. You could write the Manhattan phone directory, and they'd say, So, when is the movie?" (p. 4). In a similar vein, Beach and O'Brien (2008) suggested a "ubiquity" in popular culture texts, stating that students now need to be taught how to search for the media they wish to locate, including video clips. Given the pervasive nature of the film, this study explored educators' experience of using film when making connections to reading and writing with adolescent students.

My experiences of working with students in the middle grades classroom for almost a decade, coupled with my desire to reach all of the students in my charge, along with the joy of encountering other voices in the literature have caused me to reflect on my own history as a reader and writer. Since working through my doctoral program, I have had even more opportunities to reflect on these experiences.

My reflection on my own experiences aligns with Peshkin's (1988) comprehensive model of self-inquiry and reflexivity, and it is this model which I have adopted and adapted as I complete this study. I will elaborate on this concept more completely in chapter three. While I have worked to maintain reliability and validity in my study, I recognize that my own history as a reader, along with my experience as an educator, have been an ongoing, integral part of this work. As I conducted research and wrote, my ethical commitment has been to be fully aware of my own subjectivities so that my findings will be as accurate as possible (Freeman & Vagle, 2013). With this idea of reflexivity in mind, I can now align many of the decisions I made as a teacher with the experiences I myself had as an elementary and junior high school student. In the following section, I will provide more information about the problem of integrating film with reading and writing instruction.

Background of the Problem

This is first and foremost a study of teachers' experiences, working with planning, considering instruction, and attempting to make literacy connections with students in contexts where reading is not always valued. It is this focus on experience which had drawn me to the methodology of phenomenology, and the focus on interpretation of these experiences that lends itself to hermeneutics. Second, this is a study of film and its potential for use in making connections to reading and writing instruction. For the purposes of this study, I viewed film as a text. So, in a sense, this study has focused on the way one text – a popular, visual one – might be used to engage with less embraced texts.

I became aware of film-based practices of two educators through professional development presentations in a school district, as well as presentations at national and state-level conferences. Both educators teach a rural Appalachian region; one works at a middle school and

the other works at a high school. Both work in the discipline of history and social studies. My network sampling approach (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017) began with these two educators, and then expanded in a second wave to three other educators in the same region who have also been known to incorporate film into class in a snowball sampling design (Noy, 2008).

My interest in the topic of film as a text for adolescent literacy education was spurred by my experiences as a teacher, and by my literacy self-inquiry as a doctoral student. One of my initial questions of the professional literature was how theorists defined film, as well as what definitions there were for text, in general. It is this question of how to think about film as a text, as well as some further defining of what film means for the study, which I will explore in the next section.

Film as Text

For the purposes of this study, I viewed film as a text. My theoretical support for this view comes from both a film studies perspective and a literacy perspective. This conception of film as text is rooted in the concept of *la caméra-stylo*, the camera pen or camera as pen, put forth by Astruc (1948). Astruc was a member of the French New Wave movement and members of this movement contributed to the auteur theory (filmmaker as author), which currently lends directors like Christopher Nolan, Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, and others part of their appeal for viewers (Bordwell, Thompson, & Smith, 2016). A more recent theorist (Wexman, 2003) has also compared the role of director to the role of author.

The particular design features of what constitutes a text align with the complexity and artistry of film. Serafini (2014) wrote about text in terms of "written language" (p. 13) but goes on to describe film as a combination of "image, movement, and sound" (p. 155), noting the

auteur theory. In the same way that authors combine design features and creative elements like character and setting, filmmakers must arrange a variety of elements to convey a meaning. It is this meaning-making that most compellingly qualifies film as a text in my view. I might also note here that films in most cases begin with a written format, the screenplay, which is then translated onto the screen.

Hobbs (2007) identified text as "all the forms of symbolic expression that convey meaning from authors to readers" (p. 7). Rowsell, Kress, Pahl, and Street (2013) considered reading as a different process now, or a New Literacy, including "browsing screens," as well working with "pictures, gutters, trim sizes, fonts, and meaningful resources" (p. 1183). From these New Literacies voices I subsume film in a much wider range of text, including video games, singular images, political cartoons, social media platforms, and websites, as well as the digital media products students make themselves. Filmic text in this study included educational clips, teacher-created products, student-created products, and popular films, as well as reaching out to other visual forms like doodle notes and graphic organizers. Next, I will define film more clearly for the purposes of this study.

Defining Film for the Study

When I consider film as a text, I consider a series of many parts, or features, that make up an image on the screen, all colliding to form a final product – composed of many elements, and yet presented as seamless. Tan (2006) defined film as "a series of moving pictures that has been recorded and made available for viewing" (p. 483). Serafini (2014) went on to define film as a medium containing "image, movement, and sound" (p. 155). Taken together, all these definitions point to the need to examine film as a complex set of textual elements.

Film entails many genres and types of creation and distribution. In their discussion of film, Russell, Waters, and Turner (2014) included "Hollywood films," as well as "documentaries, television series, political advertisements, commercials, and digital videos" (p. 235). Bull and Kajder (2005) defined digital storytelling, in particular, as consisting of "a series of still images combined with a narrated soundtrack to tell a story" (p. 47). Denzin (1992) defined film as "an assembled simulation of the real," using the term "construction" and going as far as to call film a "text" (p. 140). What unites all of these definitions is a sense of integration, a multiplicity of products, and a commercial (or at least projected or streaming) purpose. These unifying features are what I would like to draw on as I define what film means for this study. Film in this study is defined as a text consisting of moving images which have been recorded as an assemblage for the purposes of representation. This definition can include short clips or entire feature-length films. As part of my interview process, I asked teachers to offer their definitions of film, as well. I will elaborate more on these responses in chapter three. Moving from the conception of film as a text, I next consider this text in terms of literacy practices. In the next section, I will consider film in the broader framework of New Literacies so that I can locate this medium in the literacy field.

Studying Film in a New Literacies Framework

I viewed film as a text and as a functioning ideological literacy practice under Street's (2003) explanation of autonomous literacy practices and ideological literacy practices. My understanding of these two sets of practices leads to the conclusion that autonomous practices are those dictated by schools and curriculum, while ideological practices are those that students engage with based on interest, often at home.

What has interested me with using film is the way that teachers experience planning and using this post-typographic text (New London Group, 1996) to connect students to other reading and writing instruction. What I mean when I mention other reading and writing instruction is really centered on "traditional" text encounters – the typographic kind, like novels, stories, and other written compositions.

I considered this ideological literacy practice through the lens of New Literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) so that I could make sense of this phenomenon. New Literacies is an approach to reading and writing practices that considers technology, screens, digital media, and other applications. In the next section, I will elaborate on this framework with its unique definitions and characteristics.

Definitions and characteristics. In New Literacies, there is a distinction between the term "medium" and the term "mode." A "mode" has been defined as a means of conveying meaning (Kress, 2005). For example, a film can work through the modes of image, gesture, movement, and sound. Kress (2005) considered a "medium" as a means of distributing messages (p. 6). Film works as one example of a medium, conveying messages through a variety of modes, including image and sound. This product, taken together, can be considered a multimodal ensemble (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). What this means in terms of my study is that text now takes on new and divergent definitions, and that films work in complex ways to convey meaning.

Students in my classroom were exposed to traditional texts, such as novels and book prepared by textbook companies. However, students were also exposed to "a different kind of 'stuff'" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 28). Film was one example of this kind of material, or stuff. My consideration of film as a different kind of literacy material aligns with Lankshear and

Knobel's (2011) ontological definition of New Literacies, which suggests that reading and writing experiences have moved away "from conventional literacies we have known in the past" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 28). These literacies are described as "post-typographic," conveying meaning electronically "via digital code as sound, text, images, video, animations, and any combination of these" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 28). Film draws on all of these elements to convey meaning.

Researchers in the New Literacies paradigm discuss the always-changing nature of literacy (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008), meaning that to be literate calls for constant adaptation. Teachers of New Literacies see themselves as learning alongside students who may have more experiences with certain types of texts and utilize aspects of design in providing feedback to students. Kalantzis and Cope (2009) described New Literacies as outcroppings of new "new communication practices" and "embodied in new social practices," stemming from new practices in employment, citizenship, and formation of identity (p. 167). My study has been an effort to locate and describe how teachers draw on these literacy practices in the rural Appalachian classroom.

Street (2003) called these new literacy practices a "broader cultural conception" (p. 79). Thus, part of New Literacies includes recognizing the cultural context for a reading or writing practice and, given the composition of these materials, New Literacies often focus on conveying messages through modes that travel beyond the traditional printed words on a page. Mills (2010) noted that advocates of New Literacies "regard literacy as a repertoire of challenging practices for communicating purposefully in multiple social and cultural contexts" (p. 247). A crucial element of this study is the notion that connections can be made across considerations of access and equity in Appalachian schools, so that reading and writing practices can be opened up for

adolescent students. New Literacies entails a model of reading that, like Street's (2003) definition of ideological practices, moves beyond a prescriptive, school-based approach. In the most practical of terms, what this means for my work as a researcher and educator is that sometimes the textbook simply is not enough to make the meaningful connections necessary for learning to take place. In the next section, I will begin to flesh out about film pedagogy, including a brief view of how film has been used in classrooms over time.

Pedagogical Connections in the Study

My interest in film as text for this study led to the kind of data I collected in the field. I talked with educators about their experience of planning and using films as connections to traditional typographic literacy practices of reading and writing. In some cases, educators were not only using ready-made filmic products – they were creating their own films and videos, and including students in the process. In this section, I will highlight film pedagogy within a New Literacies Paradigm and then construct a brief history of film use in the classroom.

Film Pedagogy within a New Literacies Paradigm

When it comes to film, and media in general, there are a number of considerations for how students benefit from including exposure to media in curriculum. Of key note in the Appalachian setting for this study is the notion of access, as described by Hobbs (2011). Access, in this case, referred to both locating and implementing information that was considered "appropriate" and "relevant," as well as using technological tools effectively (Hobbs, 2011, p. 12). Buckingham (2007) echoed this concept of access as an essential for literacy development. It is this concept of access which first draws me, based on my own teaching experience and

identity as a research who grew up in the mountains of West Virginia, to the specific research field of Appalachia.

The New Literacies framework entails changes in reading and writing practices, and these changes have made their way into educational practice. Forzani and Leu (2012) suggested that New Literacies serve as an important aspect of curricular content for young children, and particularly those children who come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds due to lack of access to technologies at home. Kist (2000) reflected on his experiences of viewing film as a medium for communication and advocated for the implementation of new literacies in the classroom.

As I will show in the next section, film has been part of classroom practice for some time. Classrooms described in the New Literacies paradigm are places where students can explore reading and writing practices mingled with media resources. Literacy in these pedagogical spaces means more than requirement and rote. Kist (2000) highlighted the analysis made possible by New Literacies approaches in the classroom, as well growing understandings of symbolism, development of collaborative and individual student work and "evidence of active, engaged students" (p. 712). It is this the experience of integrating film as a text, as well as the possibility for film to connect with reading and writing practices, that forms the basis of my study.

A brief history of film in the classroom. Film has a long history of being used as tool for learning, reaching back to the beginning of film itself. My consideration of film as a text is less prevalent in the literature, as film has been defined more as a tool. Goodman (2003) wrote that films became a tool for classroom use soon after their advent, with the Catalogue of Educational Motion Pictures listing over 1,000 titles as early as 1910, and Goldfarb (2002)

supported this conclusion. According to Goodman (2003), Thomas Edison suggested that film would have a revolutionizing effect on education. Ferster (2016) traced his discussion of media back to Edison, as well.

Movies quickly made their way into classrooms due to nature of film as a medium with the potential for bringing ideas into concrete reality, while also appealing to emotions and the senses (Cuban, 1986). With the increasingly prevalent digital technology of the 1980s and 1990s, policymakers continued to advocate for the integration of these technologies, but there continued to be educators who resisted this medium. Goodman (2003) wrote, "In many cases teachers could not get access to the equipment they needed, or the equipment was broken, or they lacked the skills to use it once they did have it" (p. 11). In other cases, educators failed to connect media as a component of their curriculum because they did not see a useful purpose for the digital or visual texts.

Since the 1950's, a variety of movements in film have served to bring new dimensions to cinema. As Bordwell, Thompson, and Smith (2016) pointed out, "most filmmakers work in groups" and reflect a particular movement in time (p. 455). Some of these movements include the classical Hollywood cinema, Soviet montage, Italian Neorealism, and The French New Wave, among others. More recent directions in film have included blockbusters, animated features, and independent cinema (Bordwell, Thompson, & Smith, 2016). Film, under this consideration, is not a simple product, but a creative and authorial assemblage that has developed over time and with multiple creative paths influencing what film has become and eventually might be.

All of this tracing brings us to today's classroom, in which students hold screens that can show entire films in their pockets. Many classrooms have screens displayed at the front of their

rooms, alongside or in place of the traditional whiteboard. As I discuss the experience of film as a text, I have examined the ways teachers use this proliferation of screens to make literacy connections. In this next section, I will elaborate on the theories that have helped me make sense of the data I collect.

Guiding Theories

In this section, I will discuss the major theories that have guided my work, forming a theoretical framework for my research. I have selected these theories based on their unique contribution to the process of analysis for the data I have gathered. I considered the experiences of educators using hermeneutical phenomenology and have identified two voices that will guide me in this direction, namely Merleau-Ponty (2003) and van Manen (1997).

Multimodality will assist me in considering the materials themselves, the films, and how they work (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). The bridge between the educator's experience and the materials themselves, theoretically, will draw on the theory of symbolic interactionism. The primary figure who has written about film through an interactionist lens is Denzin (1992), but I will also draw on historical figures from the symbolic interactionist movement. I will now briefly describe each of these theories and will revisit them again in chapter three.

Phenomenology and Symbolic Interactionism

The purpose of this study was to discover how teachers experienced using film as a textual resource when working with adolescent readers in rural, Appalachian settings. Film, in my view, is considered a text. My work in this study will draw on hermeneutic phenomenology, an interpretive process that will include group evaluations and discussion (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997; Sohn, 2017). Specifically, I used the Transdisciplinary Phenomenology

Research Group (TPRG) that convenes on our campus to consider my findings and interpretations. The group is comprised of three to seven qualitative researchers who work as professors in a variety of departments. The group has also helped with over one hundred studies since its beginnings. In keeping with this approach, I began descriptively and then moved on to interpretation as I worked through the data I collected. The work of Merleau-Ponty served as a theoretical basis for my interpretation of the interview data I collected. As Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997) pointed out, a number of considerations are part of phenomenology, including the body, time, others, and experience. For the purposes of this study, the most significant of Merleau-Ponty's (1993) theories, which speak to the elements outlined by Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997), will be those which have applications to literacy in terms of signs and relate to film as an artistic medium, which I will expand on in chapter three. In my study, film works as an art form, but the teacher is also an artist who must experience the process of planning and teaching.

Speaking on arts and aesthetics, Merleau-Ponty (1993) wrote in "Eye and the Mind" about the role of the artist and the process of representing the world, particularly in painting. These reflections on artistry and the role of experience impacted my study as I considered the utility of film's artistic textual features, and the experience of the educator as an artist, crafting a learning environment where connections to literacy can take place. As teachers constructed and arranged their classroom plans and instruction, Merleau-Ponty's (1993) work helped me consider their experience of using film as a text. Thus, the major emphasis I draw from Merleau-Ponty's work is the concept of representation and what this representation, or deforming, means for classroom teaching.

As a secondary voice in phenomenology, I have been influenced by van Manen's (1997) concepts of evocation and intensification for constructing phenomenological work. The notion of evocation, or bringing an experience into a vivid presence, as well as the notion of intensification, or giving "key words their full value, so that layers of phenomenological meaning becoming strongly embedded in the text" (van Manen, 1997, p. 355) are features I considered when bringing the experiences I heard about in interviews into the shape of a dissertation. In other words, van Manen (1997) helped me know what to do with all of the data once I had gathered it and analyzed it. van Manen's (1997) concept of tension in a study applies when examining the tension of using a medium (film) that has been seen as secondary to major texts in educators' work (Serafini, 2014), as well as exploring the everyday tensions that teachers encounter in attempting to build connections for students between film and the processes of writing and reading. This notion of tension also helped me find the conflicts and resistance educators faced as they planned their teaching. These concepts, combined with Merleau-Ponty's (1993) work on representation (deforming), helped me sift through the data I collected and distill the most important elements from the experiences educators that were entrusted to me.

In order to consider the connections educators made between students and texts, I drew on the theory of symbolic interactionism (Denzin, 1992; Mead, 1926). Symbolic interactionism was helpful as a way of understanding the connections educators make between the experience of using film and the films (materials) themselves. This theory gave support in terms making sense of the meaning and experience teachers shared based on their interactions with the meanings they uncovered and wished to convey in particular films.

Symbolic interactionism has been utilized theoretically to explore to viewer's approach to film. Denzin (1992) described the role of the cinema-goer more openly and favorably,

identifying the experience as voyeuristic. Elsewhere, Denzin (1987) described the ways signs tell a story in a textual manner, even when embedded in objects.

Phenomenology served as a basis of my inquiry into a particular phenomenon and acted as a guide for my interactions with participants; symbolic interaction helped me make sense of the experiences that educators share in interviews, especially in terms of the meaning and experience participants share based on their interactions with the meanings they uncover and wish to convey in particular films. By weaving symbolic interactionism with phenomenology, I worked to obtain not only an interpretation of the phenomenon itself, but I also explored the ways in which films are encountered and experienced when used as a text.   When it comes to understanding the way films work, I have utilized the theory of multimodality for assistance. I will now elaborate on multimodality and what this theory has brought to the study.

Multimodality

For the purposes of this study, I used the theory of multimodality to interpret and discuss the nature of the films themselves. Multimodality makes use of Kress's (2005) considerations of the medium as a mean for distributing messages, and the "mode" as a functional element of the medium, like image, movement, and sound, employed to convey a message. According to Kress (2005), modes, or "culturally and socially produced means for representation" (p. 6) carry their own affordances, and media work in their own, distinct facilities.

As an example of these distinct facilities, Kress (2005) contrasted the concept of author in terms of a traditional book and the concept of author in terms of a screen representation. Representation, then, is the goal of utilizing these modes and media, and the representation points back to aspects of living. Affordances were defined as "distinct potentials and limitations

for representation of the various modes" (Kress, 2005, p. 12). Jewitt (2008) went on to define affordances as that which "is possible to express and represent easily," which is shaped by the ways "a mode has been used, what it has been repeatedly used to mean and do, and the social conventions that inform its use in context" (p. 247). These considerations of affordances delineate what particular media are used for and can accomplish.

My analysis focused on the descriptions of processes and experiences teachers encounter when using film as a text and, as part of this experience, gave attention to the ways in which films convey meaning. This sense of meaning was included in how teachers drew on elements like image, gesture, print, and sound within films to communicate content. In the next section, I will provide a problem statement and research questions that will form the basis of my focus in this study.

Problem Statement

In this section, I will provide the problem statement that justifies this study, as well as a research question that has guided my thinking. In this interpretive study, I drew on the approach of hermeneutic phenomenology to examine the experiences of educators engaged in the process of planning and instruction using film as a means of address literacy needs. Hermeneutic phenomenology has been especially helpful as I began with descriptions, and then managed my interpretations and emphasized interpretation of the experience of teaching using film to connect to literacy. Literacy, in this study, was defined through Street's (2003) discussion of ideological literacy practices, which moves beyond a prescriptive, school-based approach and considers a wider contextual range of reading and writing practices.

In order to complete this work, I conducted face-to-face interviews with educators who work with adolescents in a district that includes rural Appalachian families at both the beginning and the end of the study (Polkinghorne, 2005). Many studies have previously looked at the film-based practices of students in urban settings (Beach & O'Brien, 2008; Brass, 2008; Goodman, 2003; Turner, 2011). While studies have considered the literacy practices of Appalachian students, often focused on the effects of poverty and lack of access to typographic texts (Hicks, 2013; Purcell-Gates, 1997), this study specifically aimed to look at the experiences of teachers in rural Appalachian settings when using film as a text in order to make connections to literacy. As stated earlier, the purpose of this study was to discover how teachers experienced using film as a textual resource when working with adolescent readers in rural, Appalachian settings.

Furthermore, this study aimed at examining the tension of using a medium (film) that has been seen as secondary to major texts in educators' work (Serafini, 2014), as well as exploring the everyday tensions that teachers encounter in attempting to build connections for students between film and the processes of writing and reading. Hermeneutic phenomenology provided a methodological framework for probing the experiences of my participants and as I moved beyond description into interpretation. Merleau-Ponty's consideration of deforming acted as a major guiding voice within this methodological context. Symbolic interactionism has served as a guiding theory as I consider the experiences of educators in this study and their use of film. Finally, Bezemer and Kress's (2016) work on multimodality served as a guiding framework for understanding how the films themselves work.

Research Question

In order to complete this work, I used one research question to serve as a guide to my inquiry of learning more about the experiences of teachers in rural Appalachian settings who use

film as a text in order to make connections to literacy. With qualitative methodology in mind, my question was aimed at exploration and discovery. My central research question was:

1) How do educators experience using film as a resource for literacy development when working with rural Appalachian adolescents?

Summary and Conclusion

My study has roots in not only my personal literacy experiences, but also in the observations I made in my own classroom. My research question addressed educators' experiences using film as a literacy resource when delivering instruction for adolescents and the experience of using film as a literacy resource for educators working with adolescents. In order to complete this interpretive study, I drew on the approach of hermeneutic phenomenology to examine the experiences of educators engaged in the process of planning and instruction using film as a means of address literacy needs.

In terms of theorizing my study, I relied on the phenomenological work of Merleau-Ponty (1993), as well as the theory of symbolic interactionism (Denzin, 1992; Mead, 1926) to consider educators' experiences using film as a text. Merleau-Ponty's (1993) concept of deforming helped me consider the experience of the teachers as artists using film to represent content, while symbolic interactionism helped me make sense of the moves teachers made to connect students to the materials that were part of classroom work, including their role when showing and viewing. I applied Street's (2003) ideological view of literacy practice as I encountered planning materials and handouts teachers used, because this conception of literacy helped me consider the practices of teachers with film both at home and at school, as well as the ways in which filmic practices were valued (or undervalued) between personal and pedagogical approaches. Kress's

(2005) theory of multimodality also served an important role in helping me consider the ways filmic materials are constructed.

Film as an educational text has a history reaching back to the very inception of the medium, and there are definitions and characteristics of film that exist within media literacy. This history in professional literature and in literacy study firmly situates the textual ontology of movies. Reading and writing processes are woven into the fabric of film. Moreover, schools are an ideal place for concepts like access to be addressed (Hobbs, 2011). Beyond this notion of access, there are interactions of economic brands and power that are wound up in filmic materials (Fairclough, 1995; Hobbs, 2011). To this end, this study affirms that film is an important classroom text, as well as a complex, multimodal assemblage that allows teachers to make meaning with students (as well as for themselves). In other words, movies are not a secondary or lesser medium, but a rich and even political ensemble that has the capacity to address literacy learning. As a multimodal assemblage, I looked at film as a New Literacies practice and have chronicled the experiences of teachers using this medium when working with adolescents in rural, Appalachian communities.

Layout of the Dissertation

Beyond this introduction, I have explored key literature in Chapter Two, which includes a focus on the ways in which teachers have documented their use of film with reading and writing tasks, as well as voices from research that explicate the Appalachian context of this study. Content area literacy yet constitutes another aspect of the conversation in Chapter Two, as I worked with teachers across two disciplines (English and Social Studies).

I outlined my research plan and process in Chapter Three, including a more developed theoretical framework, discussion of how teachers were selected for the study, and explanations of data collection and analysis methods. In addition to these descriptions, I have included information in Chapter Three about the ways I worked to build integrity into the study, including research group support, multiple data sources, and member checking. In Chapter Four, I first introduce each teacher I worked with and then I share the four major themes that I have drawn from this study, including a discussion of the common ground from which teachers stood in their experience. Finally, I situate the findings of this study in the larger construct of practice, policy, and research in Chapter Five.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Based on my classroom experiences and my own literacy self-inquiry, I conducted a study to explore teachers' experience with using film as a textual resource in Appalachian rural classrooms. This study is first and foremost about teachers' experiences, working with planning, considering instruction, and attempting to make literacy connections with students in contexts where reading is not always valued. It is this focus on experience which has drawn me to the methodology of phenomenology, and the focus on interpretation of these experiences that has led to a hermeneutic approach. Secondly, this is a study of film and its potential for use in making connections to reading and writing instruction. For the purposes of this study, I have defined film as a text. This definition has allowed me to explore the implications of this medium when considering reading and writing practices in secondary classrooms. The notion of film as a text has historical roots in cinema studies (Astruc, 1948), as well as currency in the way that film is talked about pedagogically now (Golden, 2001). So, in a sense, this study focuses on the way one text – a popular, visual one – might be used to engage with less embraced texts.

As I explored the question of how educators use film as a resource to make connections to literacy, I have provided a review of the relevant research in terms of (a) the geographic and disciplinary context of the study, (b) relevant literature from the disciplines that the study will include in terms of literacy, and (c) studies that consider film as a composed text.

Appalachian Context

In considering the context for this study, I have defined as Appalachia in regional terms as stretching from the Northern boundary of Ohio to Southern states like Georgia and Kentucky (Moore, 2005). Yet, this geographical way of defining the context for the study is only topographically sufficient. Appalachia has been viewed as a region of diversity in its political and sociological make-up (Smith & Fisher, 2016), as well as its representation in popular culture (Moore, 2005), and the literacy practices of its residents (Heath, 1983). Appalachia, like many other regions and contexts, is one that can be approached by means of stigma rather than reality (Donehower, 2003). Indeed, if one is not careful, the boundaries of what is defined as Appalachian can be defined in terms of what is small, impoverished, bucolic, and richly populated with work animals.

When it comes to literacy practices in this region, access is a key component of working with media. Purcell-Gates (1997) explored this notion of access not just in terms of media but in relation to the interactions of schools and parents in Appalachia, leading to a feeling of exclusion. Hicks (2013) has also explored the power of providing textual connections for students in Appalachian contexts, and has noted the struggle to overcome challenges of poverty in the region.

As has been noted in chapter one, stereotypes of Appalachian learners often paint members of this region as illiterate and impoverished (Donehower, 2003). While professional literature, including Hicks's (2013) account of teaching in Appalachia, does bear out the existence of poverty in Appalachia, my study has explored the notion of being literate in terms of film as text. Donehower (2003) has noted that literacy in Appalachia entails a complex series of relationships between reading and writing tasks and what these tasks actually mean for the

community. This notion of the complexity of literacy in Appalachia, as the well as the societal implications of these practices, has been seen in other research, as well (Sohn, 2003; Webb-Sunderhaus & Donehower, 2015). Heath (1983) explored the multiplicities of literacy practices that existed in within diverse Appalachian communities and found that there was not one simple way of speaking, reading, and writing in these contexts. A wide range of reading, writing, and even speaking practices were enacted between two towns, including oral traditions, interactions about toys, games, and early reading books, and texts related to religious practices.

Based on these voices from professional literature, as well as my own experience as a life-long resident of Appalachia, it seems that an accurate portrait of Appalachia is as varied as the literacy practices enacted within its boundaries. This study's consideration of film in Appalachian culture challenged yet another stereotype of this region – namely, that Appalachia is "engaged in a centuries-long struggle to the death with modernity" (Peine & Schafft, 2012, p. 93). For this study, the work teachers have done with using film as a text calls these two assumptions into question.

Nevertheless, stereotypes of the region continue. In *Other People's Words*, Purcell-Gates (1997) makes the case that it is not reading and writing, per se, that created boundaries for members of Appalachian communities, but differences in preferred styles of written language. In the same way that a film might act as a relevant material, Purcell-Gates (1997) found that real text matters, even for adults. For the adult literacy learner (Jenny) in *Other People's Words*, real text meant material that was relatable and accessible. Adding to Appalachian stereotypes, the global picture of the region has more recently been complicated by political events, leading some to call this region "Trumpalachia" (Billings, 2019). Billings (2019) contended that the ethos and sociocultural nature of Appalachia cannot, however, be reduced in this way. In other words,

there is no single ideology present in the entire population – nor is there a singular set of literacy practices, as Heath (1983) has demonstrated. Sohn (2003) has also spoken to the problems inherent in making essential generalizations about an entire region. The story of what Appalachia is like is perhaps more homogenous than some representations allow, including literacy practices. Although poverty exists in Appalachia, living in the region may not necessarily be summed up as impoverished. Even though some members of the region may lack in literacy skills privileged by public school education policies, a thriving sense of written and oral expression exist. Elliott (2015) commented on Sohn's (2003) work and explained that teaching formalized language can tricky to negotiate when working with members of Appalachian communities, striking a similar chord with Purcell-Gates's (1997) notion that the way language is used and defines might sometimes create barriers. With all of this in mind, my approach to Appalachia in this study has been with respect to my subjectivities – particularly as a life-long native of the region. I describe these subjectivities in more detail in chapter three.

Aligning with the framework of my study, Webb-Sunderhaus and Donehower (2015) situated Appalachian literacy as a social practice, drawing on Street's (2003) work, and as an aspect of New Literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). These researchers questioned the assumptions that are often made about Appalachian readers and argue for the formation of a counter-narrative. What may be true of literacy practices for some residents of the region may not, upon closer consideration, be true for all. Moreover, the sense of isolation that has been a result of the region's physical landscape may be mitigated by voices that have the ability to carry their message across a variety of media. Screens exist, even on the other side of the mountain. It is my hope that this study will lend itself to the larger conversation of what is true and untrue about these stereotypes through an examination of how teachers address literacy needs for

adolescents from this region. In the next section, I will consider film more broadly as one kind of text that comprises a New Literacies approach for pedagogy, with more detail focus on how and why film has been used in the classroom.

<div align="center">**Film as a "New Literacy" with Adolescents**</div>

Moving beyond the context of this study, I will now discuss the particular literacy practices that I have chosen to explore. Film became the central focus of my work and, for the purposes of this study, I defined film as a text. My theoretical support for this view came from both a film studies perspective and a literacy perspective. This conception of film as text is rooted in the concept of *la caméra-stylo*, the camera pen or camera as pen, put forth by Astruc (1948). Astruc was a member of the French New Wave movement and members of this movement contributed to the auteur theory (filmmaker as author), which currently lends directors like Christopher Nolan, Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, and others part of their appeal for viewers (Bordwell, Thompson, & Smith, 2016). A more recent theorist (Wexman, 2003) has compared the role of director to the role of author.

Using perspectives from New Literacies, I subsume film in a wider definition of text. Hobbs (2007) identified text as "all the forms of symbolic expression that convey meaning from authors to readers" (p. 7), not just applying the term to traditional print. Rowsell, Kress, Pahl, and Street (2013) considered reading as a different process now, or a New Literacy, including "browsing screens," as well working with "pictures, gutters, trim sizes, fonts, and meaningful resources" (p. 1183). These two views connect well with the New London Group's (1996) concept of grammar, which details specific features that constitute a text's usage and affordances. Adding insight into these considerations is a focus of the present study. Next, I will define film more clearly for the purposes of this study.

As technology has increased, platforms have changed, and reading occurs in new spaces. These new spaces require a diverse set of skills. As Botzakis (2011) wrote, "More so than ever, students need to be able to read, examine, and respond to texts in diverse media formats" (p. 161). Descriptions of practice among adolescents included, but was not limited to, interaction with videos and film. For example, Botzakis (2011) identified social networking communities like Facebook and suggested that adolescents "create videos to post on YouTube" (p. 161). This use of media can be extended to include video games. Indeed, the term "media" can apply to many wider strands, including interactive media, hypermedia, cloud media, and immersive media (Ferster, 2016). For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the medium of film, a long-used but under-theorized tool used for educational purposes.

Educators have the choice to draw on film, along with other media, in ways that can shape and develop learning or use film in what Hobbs (2006) has termed "non-optimal uses" (p. 35). These non-optimal uses were characterized by a lack of forethought and planning about the instructional intention of the video and frequent purposeless showing films that lacked clear connections to content. An example of such a use is showing a movie simply for the sake of filling time the day before a break. According to Hobbs (2006), such uses of film help to shape perceptions about the medium, as well as district policies about how to incorporate film. These nonoptimal approaches to film serve to "diminish" the medium (Hobbs, 2006, p. 39). In contrast, optimal uses of film include processes of analysis and dialogue about how the film works to convey its message. This more pedagogically rich use of film includes a sense of purpose and is essential to the lesson, rather than a time-filling distraction. s

In the next section, I will explore what professional literature has to say about the ways film can be used broadly in reading tasks as I move to make the case for film as a text in pedagogy

Reading Tasks

Examining the literacy practices of adolescents, researchers have suggested that "reading is a fluid practice that involves movement across multiple genres of texts and that draws on multiple modes to comprehend texts" (Rowsell, Kress, Pahl, & Street, 2013, p. 1199). In this section, I will provide voices from research regarding the ways film has been used with tasks focused on reading processes, making connections across disciplines, but also highlighting concepts found in English/Language Arts classrooms.

Analysis of Film's Features

Just as educators in English/Language Arts classrooms use novels and short stories to consider individual working parts, such as setting, plot, and theme, so too can films be broken down and analyzed in terms of their working parts. Golden (2001) wrote of the aspects of movies, such as mood, tone, and theme, that tie the experience of film to the experience of reading a printed text. Golden (2001) then provided a variety of terms related to the elements and design contained in films, including camera angles and lighting, which were suggested as foci for classroom analysis. Bordwell, Thompson, and Smith (2016) refer to this process of deconstructive analysis of the movie as the formal approach to film criticism. This approach has even made its way into state standards for adolescent learners (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2017, p. 34). In addition to the typical elements of narrative found in written texts, films make use of the mode of movement to convey meaning (Foster, 2016; Lankshear &

Knobel, 2011). All of these design concepts speak to the intricate features of how films are composed and lend themselves to discussing film as a textual material within a New Literacies framework.

The affordances of film are understood but often invisible to students. According to Jolly (1998), students arrive in classrooms with an "almost innate" understanding of what directors are trying to communicate (p. 5), including tropes of who protagonists and antagonists are on screen, which can then be applied to reading experiences. This use of film was described as a "visual reinforcement" for content (Jolly, 1998, p. 5). I would contend that, even with this "almost innate" understanding (Jolly, 1998), scaffolding and critical consideration is still essential for viewers, drawing attention complex issues beyond antagonist and protagonist tropes. Innate, for example, may include the seamless use of visuals to create a cohesive story structure, as opposed to understanding a major theme communicated in a film, a particular editing device and its implications for the narrative whole, or a political or societal stance communicated by a character or other plot element. These more intricate details of message and filmic grammar might require more support for comprehension. For example, scaffolding might be necessary when evaluating what can be considered authentic in media, and what can appropriately or inappropriately be considered fraudulent.

Once exposed to the language of film, students can read films closely, delving into the multiple layers of meaning a film can convey. Film, according to Schmertz (2016), can be approached through a series of textual interventions. These interventions included close analysis of frozen frames in films that students had already seen, discussion of how students might change specific elements of scenes, examination of the choices directors make in terms of

camera movements and angles combined with discussion of how students might change these elements and asking students to imagine how they might cut a particular sequence of film.

Teasley and Wilder (1997) suggested a three-part framework for teaching film that moved beyond passive consumption. The first "sequence" of the framework was called "Three Ways of Reading a Movie," (p. 15) which included the concepts of investigating and analyzing literary, dramatic, and cinematic aspects of the film. Literary aspects included setting and plot, among others, dramatic aspects included acting, makeup, sets, and costumes, and cinematic aspects included, but were not limited to, cinematography and editing. These mechanistic and isolated features are one basis of consideration; in the next section I will discuss using film when thinking through larger thematic topics.

Analysis of Larger Messages in Film

Beyond film conventions, there are other layers of meaning that can be explored using film. Serafini (2014) suggested that film can be used from a variety of analytic stances, including literary, cinematic, dramatic, and ideological (p. 157). Literary considerations included characters, setting, and other concepts familiar in an English/language arts classroom. Cinematic considerations included camera angles, lighting, and elements particular to film construction. Dramatic considerations included "costumes, acting, blocking, makeup," while ideological considerations included "perspectives assumed, cultural norms and biases, and value markers" (Serafini, 2014, p. 157). Analysis, then, can be conducted in a variety of ways using film. Just as educators consider novels, poems, and short stories analytically, these sources indicate to me that films can be broken down into a variety of figurative, thematic, and grammatical elements and in a variety of ways. Film can be approached from a variety of

stances in terms of analysis and is packed with many opportunities for critical and dialogic exploration.

Examining the intents, agendas, and messages contained in media is another layer of analysis. According to Hobbs (2007), there is an intent or agenda imbedded in media messages, usually tied to a form of power, connected closely to the concept of propaganda. For Hobbs (2007), superficial and global questioning types used by Golden (2001) can be extended as students interpret and analyze, thereby considering the symbolic nature of students' own reality. Golden (2001) included these questioning types, ranging from prompts aimed at answers found within a text and then answers found by reaching beyond the text and making connections with one's experience, to demonstrate the variety of inquiries that can be addressed through film.

In terms of specific instructional strategies, Serafini (2014) mentioned comparing comic book representations of characters to filmed versions and drawing on comic books to understand the storyboarding process; considering the "implied viewer" a film assumes to analysis techniques used in the film (p. 158); and employing the Bechdel Test, a consideration of how women are portrayed in film. The Bechdel Test, according to Serafini (2014), includes noticing how many female characters are represented in film, how often these characters address each other, and how often this address includes topics other than men. The "test" stems from a comic strip, *Dykes to Watch Out For*, in the installment "The Rule," published in 1985, and serves as a critique for the parts women often play in film. In short, the test indicates that women have historically played a secondary role to the male characters, as men outnumber women and, even when women are present, their conversation is dominated with concern about the men around them. Scheiner-Fisher and Russell (2012) also noted that the Bechdel Test was a useful analytical tool, particularly when considering concepts of gender equity in historical films. What

is most significant here is that a film can lend itself to conversations about social equity and concepts of justice, including the marginalized populations one might find in an Appalachian setting.

All told, there have been a number of ways that film has been used in research literature when addressing reading needs. There are a variety of ways that film can be analyzed and critically encountered as a reading task. English classrooms are one place this kind of work occurs, but there are implications for other content areas when using film. In the final section of my consideration of reading tasks, I will briefly discuss film as a tool for motivating reluctant readers and connecting with adolescents' lived experience across content area classrooms.

Film and Motivation

In other studies, film has been seen as invitation for readers who do not typically engage with reading at school. Smilanich and Lafreniere (2010) described the disengagement of a reluctant reader, and how this disengagement was transformed into enthusiasm when discussing the film focused on an area of the student's interest. This study suggested, "Film offers an immediacy and accessibility that the printed text frequently does not" (Smilanich & Lafreniere, 2010, p. 604). It is this immediacy and accessibility that might be invitational for struggling adolescent readers.

Furthermore, Smilanich and Lafreniere (2010) provided an example of how one specific visual text, in this case a film, can act as a source of motivation and engagement for a reluctant or struggling reader. In this case, a particular popular film served as a focus point for entry into a consideration of literacy concepts. This example from the professional literature illuminated the

possibility of finding an engaging film that can then act as a motivating text, helping students become more engaged with learning.

In addition to the immediacy described by Smilanich and Lafreniere (2010), it has been suggested that the thematic content of movies have shown to be engaging for students.   Teasley and Wilder (1997) described such themes that were particularly relevant to adolescents, including coming of age, families, belonging, dreams and quests, and love and romance. With careful selection of appropriate films, educators may have the ability to positively influence student behavior and the ways students view themselves, thereby using film to create engaging classrooms. In the next section, I will explore voices from the literature that speak to a film-based approach in social studies classrooms.

Disciplinary Considerations

Having explored the use of film with reading at a more global level, I will examine film's impact within specific disciplines more closely in this section. Most particularly, I focus on using film with history and social studies in this section.   Because some of my conversations with educators focused on using film in the context of social studies classrooms, I would like to briefly explore in this section what the professional literature bears out when considering using film's overlaps with English/language arts approaches. I will then turn my attention briefly to how films are more specifically used in social studies classes.

From English Class to History/Social Studies

When it comes to reading in English/Language Arts classes, Lent (2016) suggested that it is a common belief that these teachers are the only one responsible for reading instruction, including processes like summarizing, synthesizing, comprehending, and engaging "in mental

dialogue with the author" (p. 20). Sturtevant and Linek (2004) further emphasized that literacy has power across content areas, and Unrau (2008) identified content areas as spaces for engagement in literacy practices. For English/Language Arts classes, film has long been used as a basis for comparison between the book and movie, and teachers face the challenge of balancing traditional texts and digital media (Page, 2012). Additionally, film has been used as a source of dialogue about representation, as well as springboard for critique.

First, film can serve as a space for building conversations about the ways that people are characterized. Gainer's (2010) study of media literacy explored the capacity for building conversations about representation with a group of eleven students. This study, focused on the use of film with literacy, took place in an after-school program and gave middle school students the opportunity to view popular films and discuss the ways people were depicted.

Gainer's (2010) study has implications for both English/Language Arts and social studies. Students observed and discussed concepts of democracy, representation, and race using a film clip, creating a dialogic classroom organized around a visual text experience. There was a dialogue present in both of these studies that served to elicit (a) literacy-based content knowledge and (b) sociocultural concepts of self and others. Participants viewed film clips that displayed depictions of students and school settings and were then interviewed about how they might edit these videos to reflect counter-narratives, leading a kind of consideration of a writing (or rewriting) process.

Beyond these concepts of representation, film gives teachers the ability the interpret messages. Jolly (1998) suggested that films can be used for more than filler in classrooms, and the prospect of political and societal messages contained in film support this stance. Hobbs (2007) and Golden (2001) provided examples of processes of analysis and critique that can move

beyond passive viewing. For Hobbs, (2007) this use of film took place in a high school case study, with particular attention given to the ways films were used as a propaganda. Again, this use of film has implications for both language arts and social studies.

A critical use of film speaks to the foundations of how viewing should occur. Postman (1985), even in his critique of the rise of entertainment culture in decades past, concluded with an encouragement for educators and other viewers to actively consider the ideological construction of film and other media. In its framing, the encouragement is tantamount to a warning for critical analysis and careful consideration of the power of media. He wrote, "The problem, in any case, does not reside in *what* people watch. The problem is in *that* we watch. The solution must be found in *how* we watch" (Postman, 1985, p. 160). It seems that the question is no longer will we view, perhaps not even how often will we view, but how will we view? Having briefly considered how film can be used with tasks in both language arts and social studies, I will now turn my attention to the social studies more particularly.

Film and Social Studies

Film has served as a text for critical analyses of historical events, a jumping off point for reading and writing tasks that promote reading historically with specific purposes in mind, such as to "compare and contrast events," "create narratives from existing information," and "untangle threads of fact from often conflicting accounts and perspectives" (Lent, 2016, p. 19). According to Lent (2016), to be engage in literacy in a social studies classroom entails an approach that honors the tenets of the content area. Indeed, Lent (2016) explores the implications of literacy across a variety of content areas and makes recommendations for meaningful and relevant connections to reading and writing tasks. Part of the process of using film in history courses involves looking at who is telling the story and judging accuracy based on concepts of narrative.

Metzger (2007) noted that films tend to convey only a dominant narrative, advocating for film-based lessons that "analyze historical narratives by reading a film for explicit meanings and subjects," thereby considering more than one narrative (p. 70). According to Metzger (2007), films can be opened to more critical dialogue and thoughtful consideration, rather than simply keeping to teacher-centered activities. This level of critique, with history particularly at the forefront, is a process that goes beyond passive viewing and engages the student in critical response, even exploring a kind of empathy between the present and the past.

Film has been used as a means of exploring historical topics and creating opportunities for further analysis. Following this analytical vein, Toplin (2003) suggested that film might be used beyond discussions of cinematic language to explore political topics and pointed out that careful attention should be paid to the entertainment purpose of film when considering the historicism of the medium. In short, film can be used for more than descriptions of lighting and camera angles. The intention and agenda, including the power dynamics of the film, can be explored with students. Thinking about inaccuracies in the telling a film employs calls for students to focus on details and critique the trustworthiness of what they encounter in cinema. Such work includes a critical literacy component when considering media not entirely unlike the ways people are represented in some popular films. Metzger (2007) wrote of similar concerns in history education, suggesting that content knowledge must be paired with the emotive and persuasive content of film in order for effective classroom instruction to occur.

Looking further at the use of film in social studies, Russell, Waters, and Turner (2014) included a variety of approaches to this medium. These included considering the purpose of films, including the purpose of entertainment. This discussion could include critical reflection and analyses of inaccuracies, multiple interpretations, and activities might include acting out

specific scenes or rewriting scenes to adhere to more historical representations. As noted earlier, film can be used a vehicle for discussion of social issues. Russell, Waters, and Turner (2014) noted that topics should be suitable to the audience with whom they are used.

Specific content recommendations for exploration when creating films included concepts of propaganda, critical analysis, and ethical representations. Moving beyond specific disciplinary concerns, in the next section I will explore the ways film has been used as a connection to writing tasks throughout the professional literature.

Writing Tasks

A number of studies have looked at the ways that films are used when working with adolescents to address reading needs. In this section, I will consider the ways studies have looked at taking the task of reading with film and translating it to writing. In some cases, writing means that students respond to films on paper with ink. In other cases, the writing process is actually one in which students themselves compose films, including draft, editing, and sharing their work.

In terms of public education curriculum in the United States, Leu et al. (2011) wrote that New Literacy practices are "positioned most visibly in the writing standards, not the reading standards" (p. 11). Being a reader in a society that operates with multimodal texts means that the process of becoming literate inevitably turns not just to consideration, but also to creation. Bezemer and Kress (2016) pointed to multimodal texts, including electronic and web-based platforms, as one source for invitations to participate and even edit what has been read, including consumer-based sites that seek user input.   With this notion of creation and interaction in mind, I

have culled a variety of studies that indicate that film and digital media have been used to address writing standards and, more broadly, the process of composition.

To begin with, journaling is one writing product students can create in response to a film. Tan (2006) wrote that teachers should ask students to record their reflections in journals, along with a clear focus and instructional goal provided by the teacher, and that teachers can use diverse means, including discussion and self-reflection to support students who may struggle with written journal reflections. For some classrooms, responding to a film can be done on paper, grounding the student response in more traditional, typographical text.

When considering more creative writing modes, Fluitt-Dupuy (2001) suggested that film is a vehicle for teaching argumentative writing, and advocated for before, after, and during viewing strategies for students. Previewing activities included Internet searches to learn more about content in the film, as well as a consideration of any cultural or vocabulary issues prior to viewing, while journaling was an idea shared for a during-viewing activity. During viewing activities centered on the action of viewing itself, either at home or in class, and working to respond to film in journal format. Post-viewing activities accounted for the most robust set of ideas from Fluitt-Dupuy (2001), including writing reviews, summarizing, reading other reviews, and writing alternative endings for films. The film review served as the major location for argumentative writing, with Fluitt-Dupuy (2001) noting that films can be used in this way effectively due to the interest that students usually display toward them.

Films begin as written products in the forms of storyboards and screenplays. Bruce (2011) discussed multiple ways to use storyboards in classroom settings, citing the use of visualization and required interaction with texts as a rationale. In particular, Bruce (2011) advocated for the use of storyboards as a means of comparing student-created interpretations of

scenes to existing filmed versions, including discussions of the choices made by directors. Storyboards were also used to deconstruct film, a process Bruce (2011) referred to as reading the film, and which included "breaking a scene down into component pieces of camera, editing, and various audio cues" (p. 83). By participating in this process, students could see how separate aspects of the film worked together, and the use of storyboards showed students that interpretations of texts could differ. This strategy pairs with Serafini's (2014) advice to use still images and compare the purpose and message of the still image to the filmed montage. In this way, educators can call attention to individual shots or frames contained within a film.

Moving from storyboards to scripts, Baines and Dial (1995) advocated for the use of screenwriting as a vehicle for engagement with the writing process, drawing on students' interest in film. Of note was the motivational basis for using screenwriting, as well as the inclusion of an entire writing process in order to complete a final product. Screenwriting also requires students to think analytically about the process of film, including "camera angles, music, words, and images" (Baines & Dial, 1995, p. 86). By participating in screenwriting, students have the opportunity to read and adapt a story with multiple opportunities to return to the text in order to construct their product.

Just as making films involves a process, so too do screenwriting lessons make use of a brainstorming process, and one potential starting point may be having students make a list of their favorite films. Once students think about some of their favorite films, as a kind of mentor text, they can think about the way to frame their stories visually. The steps in drafting a screenplay included creating a detailed outline, followed by descriptive writing about the main characters in the proposed film. Following characterization, students work to describe the setting and the entirety of the plot. Once students work to think through descriptions of characters and

setting, they can turn attention to the format for a screenplay. Baines and Dial (1995) suggested using a short story as a practice writing for developing a screenplay, adapting the story to the appropriate format, and then creating a final screenwriting product, based on all their planning stages. Final products were also filmed in a two-day class segment of the lesson.

Film was seen as a means of provoking critical questioning and close reading, with suggested practices including keeping a media diary, implementing Socratic dialogue in discussing film and media, and creating messages through media platforms, addressing ideas of audience and purpose. Hobbs (2011) endeavored to describe uses of film and media that went beyond superficial incorporation in lessons or time fillers. Particular questions of media could include considerations of authorship, as well as techniques for engagement and establishing understanding. Film can also be explored in terms of what values are communicated in representations of reality, as well as which elements are neglected or omitted.

Finally, Rowsell, Kress, Pahl, and Street (2013) conducted a two-year project in "an urban, highly diverse secondary school in Toronto," focusing on students in the 11th grade (p. 1200). Students in this study drew on popular culture and media texts and demonstrated an interest in moving the texts to a stage of creative response. Texts included gossip magazines and YouTube videos. Students then created gossip texts related to popular culture, following a critical consideration of the ways messages were conveyed in print and video texts, "demonstrating the converging of different values, stereotypes, and hidden messages in visuals and written text" (Rowsell, Kress, Pahl, & Street, 2013, p. 1202). This study further demonstrated that students became aware of rhetorical strategies as they viewed both print texts and videos. In the next section, I will consider studies in which students have moved from written composition to actually composing films.

Composing Films

Film is not a simple medium and critical examination of film as a medium involves moving beyond passive consumption. Teachers need not use film as a time waster or as a means of providing distracting entertainment; there is educational value to be found in the thoughtful, critical use of film as a classroom instrument, particularly for struggling readers. O'Byrne (2014) suggested that teachers should help students move from passive recipients of film to "curators and ultimately 'constructors' of media (p. 103). In this way, O'Byrne's (2014) findings suggest that, even on days when film is included as part of the classroom routine, teachers should be thoughtful and strategic in their use of the medium. A well-defined purpose statement for the film may be useful, as well as critical consideration of how the chosen film applies to content standards or intended learning goals.

Mills (2010) suggested that teachers must use scaffolding when incorporating film as a teaching tool, particularly in the process of digital video creation; this scaffolding then supports the synthesis of stronger, more complex products from students. Making films as a focus of composition is not a simple process, as evidenced by the multiple steps outlined by Bull and Kajder (2005). Mills (2010) noted, "Teachers have a key responsibility to scaffold multimodal literacies and model new technical proficiencies" (p. 41). If they are willing to do so, educators can then elicit more complex and sophisticated products from their students. Mills (2010) further noted, "It is time for Shrek to meet Vygotsky in the multimodal literacy practices of adolescents at school" (p. 44). Rather than subscribing to the idea that the film will simply do the work of conveying lesson content on its own, Mills (2010) points out that creating films is a step-by-step process that still involves teacher interaction and modeling.

Film can be a source of engagement and students sometimes express preference for visual representations of learning, in contrast to more traditional modes of expression. An example of these concepts from professional literature related to movie-making occurs in Bulfin and North's (2007) report on the daily digital media use of 15 and 16-year-olds in Australia. Of note in this study is the interactions of the youths regarding a film studies class in which they were enrolled. The students discuss an assignment in which they are asked to watch a film and complete a report, in which one student expresses that he would rather "make a film" than write a report (Bulfin & North, 2007, p. 258). This process of making film was one that the students approached enthusiastically, and one that would draw on skills they were learning outside of school. In terms of literacy practices, the participant (Jess) uses film with her friends to capture video of the group "filming dangerous stunts" (p. 259). In their implications section, Bulfin and North (2007) suggested that teachers utilize this interest in film to engage in critical consideration of these literacy practices.

Digital storytelling. Bull and Kajder (2005) discussed digital storytelling as a film-based classroom methodology. The digital stories were suggested for use in public classrooms, so long as they were based on the demands of curriculum. Bull and Kajder (2005) recommended that digital stories be told from the perspective of the student, rather than a removed third person. Features of digital stories include a question that must be answered by the narrative, content that appeals to the emotions, and specific choices about including only those elements that are needed to tell the story (economy).

A number of film-based composition projects, when focusing on adolescents, have been undertaken in urban settings (Beach & O'Brien, 2008; Brass, 2008; Goodman, 2003; Turner, 2011). I will elaborate on these examples in this section, as well as a film-based composition

project in a rural setting (Chisholm & Trent, 2014). New literacies, including Internet texts and film, have been noted as important elements of public school curriculum, particularly for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, according to Forzani and Leu (2012). The rationale for this conclusion was the difficulty of gaining access to technologies for students from lower income households. Goodman (2003) suggested that using film as a tool for students has the potential to include inquiry and act as a learner-based strategy, including incorporation of a variety of elements, from brainstorming to video production and editing.

Making films at school can open up opportunities for overlooked talents, especially in terms of access that students may not find at home. Brass (2008) focused on the literacy practices of a Latino teenager's use of digital movie creation in an ethnographic case study. The participant's success as a movie composer in an after-school program was contrasted with his struggles in the routine tasks of school itself. The program lasted for ten weeks, and data included field notes, a copy of the participant's final video, and video and audio recordings of the participant's interactions with others in the program. The participant began to process of movie creation by collaboratively generating ideas with peers through storyboarding, followed by filming and editing completed when the after-school program could meet. One limitation of the program was that the technology needed to complete the digital creation and editing was only available at the school, creating barriers for learners in carrying their learning on into other contexts. Brass (2008) contended that the participant's role as a learner was defined narrowly by the school's curriculum, and that assumptions about low-achieving students should take into consideration a wider breadth of contextual literacy practices. Following from this idea, a consideration of how media are incorporated into standards-driven curriculum might be helpful as educators strive to reach all students.

As another example of a multiple step-by-step process including notions of brainstorming and drafting, Spires, Hervey, Morris, and Stelpflug (2012) described a process of film creation for students called Cinéma Viritéen (Truthful Cinema). Video was described in this study as important vehicle for allowing students to create products, with creation/synthesis being an important aspect of technological learning. The site of this pilot project was an 8th grade classroom, and students worked through the Cinéma Viritéen process to construct five-minute video productions. This process included the steps of "Ask a compelling question; Gather and analyze information; Creatively synthesize information; Critically evaluate and revise; Publish, share and act" (Spires, Hervey, Morris, & Stelpflug, 2012, p. 485), and the researchers commented on the user-friendly and accessible nature of programs and technology to create and edit videos, formerly seen as expensive and complicated tools. Again, the concept of access shone through in this study.

Hull and Katz (2006) completed a case study of both a young adult, aged 24, and an adolescent, aged 13, describing the way these two participants explored narratives of self through digital means in a project called Digital Underground Storytelling for Youth (DUSTY). Data consisted of field notes, writing samples including story scripts, and transcribed interviews. One finding of this study was the way in which author identity was achieved by both participants as they created digital stories; these stories paired image with text and music to convey meaning. These meanings were often conveyed with the symbolic use of images, which corresponded to Kist's (2000) description of new literacy practices as drawing on a deeper understanding of the use of symbolism.

Dara, the adolescent participant, revealed herself to be an engaged writer, in contrast to her more reserved interactions in the traditional classroom setting. For both participants,

interactions with story with digital creation transcended the challenges of a low-income and sometimes violent social context. Both participants also worked to have a more positive and agentive view of themselves through the creation process, particularly by using digital media to reflect on their families, as well as connect to societal causes.

Reflections on urban life. Film can serve a place for students to reflect on and represent controversial topics they find in their own lives. Beach and O'Brien (2008) described a research project called the Violence Project, focused on considering the role of violence in media and its impact on adolescents. Students in this study created "hypermedia productions," which included examples from film and television, among other media genres (Beach & O'Brien, 2008, p. 781). One group in the study chose a film that influenced a teenager to commit suicide, storyboarding a project that included "scanned juxtaposed images" of the teenager with an image of a highway (Beach & O'Brien, 2008, p. 782). Another group set up a screening station where they "tabulated and charted different types of violence in a table and digitized the video segments that represented those categories" (Beach & O'Brien, 2008, p. 782). This study was a demonstration of students' developing skills in searching through media, and allowed them to represent strong issues.

In another example of students exploring potentially controversial topics, Goldfarb (2002) described a project called Video Machete, "a Chicago nonprofit youth media production organization" (p. 79). Starting in 1994, Video Machete serves as a place where students can come together with members of their community in after-school settings and draw on video as a resource for social transformation. Topics related the local community, including gangs, were explored through the project, and emphasis was placed on postproduction. Goldfarb (2002) wrote that youth acted as producers and participated "in public forums that accompany the

distribution of their tapes and presentation of their media projects in exhibitions" (p. 81). This project served as one example of an application of film that not only focused on the literacy abilities of the students involved but touched on aspects of navigating the world around them, identifying and discussing relevant topics for everyday life.

Other examples of film as a tool for engagement and transformation occur in the literature. For example, Turner (2011) reported on the literacy experiences of an inner-city teen who attended an under-funded school. The middle school, which served as the site for the study, had a high African American and Latino population and was chosen because of this composition. Difficulties in this study included navigating equipment that was outdated. The school used Windows 98, a software that was almost ten years old when the article was written. This study served as an example where students were granted access, but there were still drawbacks to the use of technology given the datedness of the tools made available.

By making films, students can move through a process of brainstorming and editing, much like the traditional writing process. Goodman (2003) completed a case study of an after-school documentary film-making workshop called the High School Documentary Workshop in an urban high school. Students who participated in this workshop predominately came from households with a low socio-economic status and homes with low vocabulary. The project was collaborative, with students working in groups for 12 of the 18 weeks the workshop took place, and included a process of students generating questions, then taking their microphones and cameras out into the community to gather images and conduct interviews.

The process of gathering and documenting the images and information is one of that Goodman (2003) described as full of excitement for the students, followed by times of critical reflection during the editing process. At the end of the process, students showed their products

publicly in a variety of venues, including libraries and film festivals, providing opportunities for the students to take on the role of experts and answer questions about their video topics. Though students explored an important topic (i.e., youth violence) and made use of technology, it was only after the project that all of the processes the students used to conduct the workshop were evident for the students themselves.

Film projects in rural settings. Of final consideration is a study based in a rural setting, which would resemble my own research site. Chisholm and Trent's (2014) study focused on the digital literacy practices of one high school student in a 10th-grade composition course. Fourteen students were included in the study, but the authors chose one particular student as a focal point for their work; their decision was based on her diversity in representations in her classroom work throughout the semester. Analysis was completed through a multimodal lens, focusing on the combination of "visual and linguistic modes" (Chisholm & Trent, 2014, p. 307). The site for this study was a high school in a rural Appalachian community, which was ranked as a lower-performing school.

Students used mentor texts to create two written assignments over a 12-week period in the course, ultimately culminating in a digital project. Through a process of frame-by-frame composition pairing images with words, the student used story elements to convey her message, including setting, sequence, and resolution, and employed visual metaphors (e.g., a road symbolizing a journey). Chisholm and Trent (2014) suggested that the use of digital storytelling helped the student reflect on her experience with place, exploring her thoughts and feelings. Kist (2005) completed a similar case study of a rural classroom in Canada, creating "multimedia advertising campaigns" which utilized "Flash animation" (p. 51). Kist (2005) commented on the

ways students worked together and the learning engagement that took place with multimedia projects.

What It Means to Write…Film

It is this type of multimedia work and this type of setting which have formed the context of my study. Writing tasks begin with the notion of responding to viewing experiences in written format, including thinking through stories in a visual format for screenwriting and journaling in response to films. These approaches incorporate film, as well as its language and structure, while rooting responses in traditional pen, paper, and ink.

Further possibilities exist in creating digital projects, including short films, in response to the world that surrounds students. Sometimes a pedagogy that includes composing films serves to illustrate the differences between literacy practices at home and at school, and there have been examples from the literature on writing that show a filmic pedagogy has the potential to begin bridging gaps in access for under-funded schools and students who face the challenges of poverty. My review of the professional literature suggested that a number of such projects have taken place over the last thirty years in urban settings. In contrast, only a small number of such studies have focused on the reflections of rural, Appalachian students, much less the experience of educators using this medium. It was my goal to understand the experience of educators within these boundaries when working with film as a text.

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Summary and Conclusion

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This review of the literature has focused on (a) the major educational uses of film when working with adolescent literacy, (b) particular research studies aimed at composition and

reading experiences for adolescents paired with film, and (c) teachers' reflections on film as an educational resource.

Drawing from research on this topic, educators can use film with adolescents as a tool for building analytical skills (Golden, 2001; Serafini, 2014). Adolescents can approach analysis in a variety of ways, exploring the individual features of films and how they work, as well as the larger themes presented in films. These latter processes can focus on the accuracy of representations (Toplin, 2003), as well as the trustworthiness of resources (Hobbs, 2007) and the ways film represent gender issues (Serafini, 2014). Adolescents can make use of this analytical work to critique films (Hobbs, 2011) and find ways of representing the content of films actively (Bruce, 2011). Such analytical and critical use of film takes place in reading classrooms, but extends to other content areas, as well (Lent, 2016; Unrau, 2008). Such a content-based use of film can help students explore political messages and cultural representations contained in film (Gainer, 2010; Toplin, 2003), separating science fiction from science fact (Barnett et al., 2006), as well as developing a thoughtful response about the ways stories are told in film (Metzger, 2007). Movement from passive viewing to active engagement has been seen as critical for the educational use of film, regardless of real or ostensible disciplinary boundaries.

Additionally, studies have considered the ways students go about making film, with Mills (2010) noting a need for scaffolding when going through the process of creating movies. Many studies focusing on film-based composition projects have been conducted in urban settings with adolescents (Beach & O'Brien, 2008; Brass, 2008; Goodman, 2003; Turner, 2011), while Chisholm and Trent (2014) providing an example of an adolescent in a rural setting who used a digital video project to explore her identity. Film was seen as a means by which adolescents

could process the challenges they faced and represent their communities, as well as represent their learning (Payne, 2008).

A number of filmic projects have also been conducted, drawing on media portrayals of adolescence through collage (Adriaens, 2011; Rowsell, Kress, Pahl, & Street, 2013), as well as serving as a vehicle to writing projects (Fluitt-Dupuy, 2001). These projects serve as examples of student-created projects that draw on film and media, but do not involve the direct creation of digital media. Working with media includes consideration of what literacy means in terms the digital and filmic, along with typographic texts. In the next chapter, I will discuss the research design, methodology, and methods I have used as I completed this study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

As I explained in chapter one, my experiences as a student and my personal literacy history have formed the basis of this study. It is this inner wandering that has led me to the theory and design of the study I describe in this chapter. The opportunities I have had in my time as a doctoral student to reflect on my classroom practices and the ways my school experiences as teacher and student shaped my classroom have helped me understand why I included some texts in my language instruction. This has led me to the question of how other educators have worked to include similar texts.

My study is first and foremost a study of teachers' experiences with film, from the planning phase of considering instruction when attempting to make literacy connections with students in rural, Appalachian contexts where reading is not always valued or accessible (Purcell-Gates, 1997). It is this focus on experience which has drawn me to the methodological underpinnings of phenomenology, and my own experience and role as the researcher which has led to a hermeneutic approach (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997; Sohn, 2017). Therefore, this study has been formed as a hermeneutic phenomenological study, and these are terms I further expand on in this chapter.

As stated in chapter one, I view film as a text, so the conversation turns to discussions about language and communication. The textual ontology of film is a concept I discuss more fully in this chapter as I consider the major theoretical figures who have guided my thinking

throughout the study. So, in a sense, this study focused on the way one text – a popular, visual one – might be used to engage with less embraced texts.

As I worked through this study, I focused on the research question: How do educators experience using film as a resource for literacy development when working with rural Appalachian adolescents? In this chapter I first discuss the foundation of my methodology, and then I revisit my research question as I discuss the theories that have guided me, as well as the design of this study in more detail. From there, I move to discuss the specifics of how I strived to maintain a high standard of quality throughout the research process.

Phenomenology

As a study focused on gaining an understanding of a particular classroom and planning event (the use of film), phenomenology has afforded a methodologically unique vantage for understanding and interpreting this specific object of inquiry. This methodology has allowed me to carefully consider the lived experiences of teachers and to do so through an iterative interview process. From these considerations, I was able to begin with first-hand accounts teachers offered and work through a process of interpretation to distill what is essential to the experience of using film as a text with rural adolescents. Merleau-Ponty (1945), in particular, afforded me the opportunity to consider this experience from a variety of perspectives.

In terms of the history of the movement, Husserl has been noted as the founding figure in phenomenology (Spiegelberg, 1994). Below, I trace a history of this qualitative methodology by briefly elaborating on both the transcendental approach and the hermeneutic approach to completing phenomenological work.

Phenomenological Approaches

Husserl (1965) wrote that phenomenology is concerned with "'pure' consciousness, i.e., consciousness from the phenomenological point of view" (p. 91). Sohn (2016) noted that Husserl essentially worked to construct a "science of consciousness" (p. 75), an objective way of viewing a phenomenon. Working from this scientific viewpoint, Husserl proposed an investigation into experiences that transcended the personal experience of the researcher, leading to term transcendental phenomenology. This consideration of consciousness issued into an analysis of experiences, and the work of the phenomenologist entails that he or she "penetrates to the phenomena" in question by means of a "fully intuitional realization" (Husserl, 1965, p. 96). These phrases convey to me the need to work toward a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon, and this phenomenon serves as a focal point in this work. While Husserl's work was descriptive in nature, my purpose is to circle around a central interpretive question. It is my focus on a particular phenomenon and teachers' experiences with it that had drawn me so strongly to this methodology. In the next section, I provide a foundation for this interpretive work from phenomenological literature.

As a researcher who has also been a teacher, is from the region represented by teachers in this study, and who uses and enjoys film, I did not strive to reach a transcendence of the phenomenon. Recognizing my need for interpretive practice in this study, I moved from Husserl (1965) to Heidegger (1958), who wrote considerations of place and human experience, placing emphasis on the interpretive nature of the methodology. According to Speigelberg (1994), Heidegger was seen as Husserl's "legitimate heir" (p. 339). My work has been with teachers who exist and experience reality in a particular place, the classroom, and in a particular region, Appalachia. This Heideggerian place becomes concrete out of nothingness, born by elements of

thought, as well "communication" and "action" (Heidegger, 1958, p. 19). Thinking of a study of teachers attempting to convey messages to students through a variety of methods causes me to circle back to these terms in Heidegger's (1958) work as educators actively seek ways to communicate with students, working within the boundaries of place.

Hermeneutic phenomenology, with its emphasis on understanding and interpretation of human experience, supported my thinking as I talked with teachers who often work in changing and shifting environments. Just as Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) noted in studying high school settings, classrooms are unpredictable places, full of a wide range of experiences. Phenomenology has helped me make sense of all of the information teachers have shared with me so that I could for an understanding of the teachers who have taken part in this study and how they worked with the phenomenon of teaching with film in rural settings. I entered my research sites with a personal history as a reader and a teacher; my job as a hermeneutic phenomenologist was to collect and interpret the experiences of other teachers, regardless of my own subjectivities (Peshkin, 1988).

Van Manen (2009) helped me see the potential for phenomenology as an approach to a New Literacies study, as did Rowsell's (2014) phenomenological consideration of literacy practices. The central focus of this latter study was teachers' and students' experiences with screens when using iPads in classrooms, and the study took place over two years in Canada. The study addressed the question of whether or not reading on a tablet was different, and in what ways the processes involved in reading were different. My interest was sparked by both the attention to screens in this research project, as well as primacy of everyday literacy interactions that formed the study's findings. Rowsell's (2014) use of phenomenology illustrated for me the kind of descriptions this methodology could afford when it comes to classroom interactions, as

well as the power of phenomenology in gaining an of understanding experiences with the arts.

From this example in literacy research, I drew the conclusion early on in my research process

that phenomenology entails an accounting for what is occurring in the present, with a unique

specificity for examining the details of a lived experience.   Moreover, Rowsell's (2014) use of

Merleau-Ponty led me to consider this theorist's work. I now move from my discussion of

Husserl and Heidegger to a discussion of the theories that have guided my research and analysis,

and explain the connections I see between his work and my study.

Theoretical Framework

Before elaborating on the theoretical foundations of my work, I first describe my

epistemological and ontological foundations as I approach this study. When I think about the

focus of my study, the term experience first comes to mind, as well as the term interpretation.

Given the interpretive nature of this work, I began from a foundation of constructivism, which I

locate in the literacy field (Draper, 2002; Turner, 2014). The goal of my research is to

understand. The nature of what I am understanding in the individual's experience in the context

of particular phenomenon. I liken this to a prism, or sense of experiencing a phenomenon from

multiple perspectives. There is a general structure to the prism, but the individual's perspective

depends on a number of factors, like position (geographic, hierarchical) and illumination

(physical, emotional, cognitive).

My worldview accounts for a general structure in educational practice, reaching for those

elements that we "seize" upon as common to experience, while I also recognize individual,

plural, and varied realities (Spiegelberg, 1994, p. 7). The seized upon elements offer up thematic

concepts that speak to the nature of qualitative work – finding the commonality among a wide

variety of experiences – while also valuing the malleable nature of human experience. As I have worked to gather meaning from this study, a focus on the major themes has proved helpful.

This process has called for interpretation, and this process permeated every aspect of the research process (Hatch, 2002, p. 179). I began first with description, and then moved from these descriptions into developing an interpretive understanding of these teachers' lives (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). It is the fundamental role of the qualitative researcher to "make sense of social situations," and this act of making sense is interpretive work (Hatch, 2002, p. 180). It is from a collection and distillation of commonalities in the human story that I began to make sense in this study, and this connection to the human story in education has compelled me to be a qualitative researcher.

Phenomenology was significantly helpful as I sought to understand the experiences of Appalachian teachers using film to connect to literacy. I was able to talk with teachers about their daily lives both inside and outside of the classroom, as well as gain an understanding of the classroom lifeworld and how teachers' experienced shaped it. My use of this methodology also granted me permission to follow the path of conversation as teachers in study were willing to share in order to explore the use of film in more detail (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). In order to have a way of thinking about literacy and how literacy is approached in the classroom, I used Street's (2003) definition of the term, which includes the consideration of ideological literacy practices, which moves beyond a prescriptive, school-based approach and considers a wider contextual range of reading and writing practices. Street (2003) served as this theoretical link in the way I think about literacy in broad terms. The use of both ideological and autonomous, or prescriptive, literacy practices helped me think about the kinds of films teachers were using, and even the way they viewed film as their own ideological practice.

In this study, film is seen as a post-typographic text (New London Group, 1996), and I root my discussion of film as a text in the definition Hobbs (2007) offered for text: "all the forms of symbolic expression that convey meaning from authors to readers" (p. 7). As I stated in chapter one, this textual approach helps me view film as an ideological literacy practice through the lens of New Literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) so that I could make sense of this phenomenon. Within phenomenology, I place my attention on the work of Merleau-Ponty and how his interpretive processes have helped me make sense of experience. Figure 3.1 offers a visual summary of my theoretical framework, which I describe in narrative form in the following sections.

Merleau-Ponty and Literacy

Merleau-Ponty considered experience in a number of ways, including a focus on bodily experience and how the body exists in the world (Sohn, Thomas, Greenberg, & Pollio, 2017). In other words, for Merleau-Ponty, human beings are both in the world and of it, and part of my task in this study was to seek understanding about how teachers exist in their classrooms in terms of a specific material (i.e., the film). Low (2016) considered this exploration of bodily experience and suggested that we are always engaged in the processes of interpretation and organization as we encounter the world around us.

Merleau-Ponty (1993) has served as a guiding vehicle in terms of phenomenological voice, and his work speaks to literacy, in general, as he discussed signs and sign systems in his essay, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence." In this essay he wrote, "taken singly, signs do not signify anything" and "each one of them does not so much express a meaning as mark a divergence of meaning between itself and other signs" (p. 76). As someone interested in reading and writing processes, this quotation serves as a connection point between
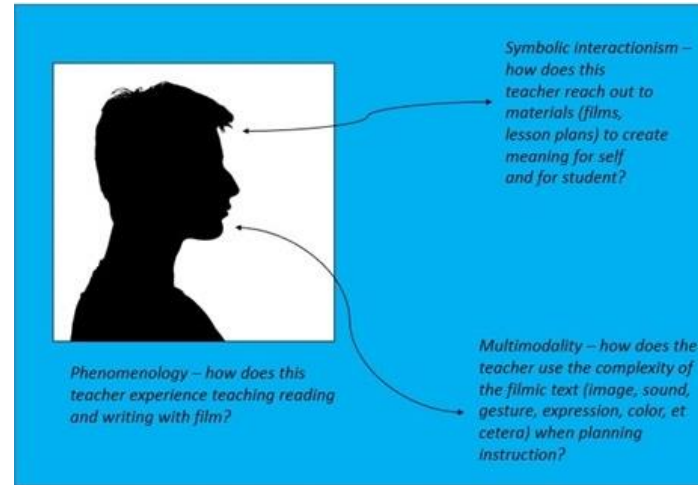
Figure 3.1. A visual representation of the theoretical framework.

phenomenology's consideration of being and language and solidifies for me the important role Merleau-Ponty (1993) played in my thinking. For example, the way a friend's "speech over the telephone brings us the friend himself, as if he were wholly present in that manner of calling and saying goodbye to us" (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p. 80). Language, in this way, has the power not only to communicate rote sounds and functional elements, but serves as a means of bringing reality to us. What all of this means for my study is that Merleau-Ponty (1993) speaks in very direct theoretical terms about the power of words and communication. In addition to this theoretical approach to language, I explore Merleau-Ponty's (1993) impact on the filmic aspect of this study.

Merleau-Ponty and artistic representation. For this study, the teacher who is choosing the specific elements of films to use in classrooms has been seen as the primary artist, while the filmmakers whose works are being displayed in classrooms are the secondary artists. Based on Merleau-Ponty's (1993) phenomenological consideration of the role of the artist and the representation of reality in art, this study addressed the question of how teachers appropriate the representations found in filmic texts. Thus, Merleau-Ponty's work not only touches on language and literacy but went on to explore facets of artistic representation. In his essay, "Eye and Mind," Merleau-Ponty (1993) pointed out that we see what we are looking at, and that vision is not possible without the movement of the eye. This calls to mind the way the camera in a film functions as the eye of the viewer, showing the audience what is intended to be seen, just as the teacher might be seen as an artist (Bienen, 2009), choosing what images and text structure to use, and which ones to omit.

The artist draws from a palette that includes "lighting, shadows, reflections, color," objects that "have only visual existence" (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p. 128). It is the artist then who

gathers these elements and "asks them what they do to suddenly cause something to be" (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p. 128). But these representations, as Merleau-Ponty (1993) wrote, are not the objects themselves. They are meant to "resemble" their real-life counterparts; they are "only a bit of ink put down here and there on the paper," or a "figure flattened down onto a plane surface" that "scarcely retains the forms of things" (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p. 131). Bezerra (2013) has considered contemporary film in response to Merleau-Ponty's theory, suggesting that films explore questions of "realism centered on the phenomenon of experience," examining the viewer's relationship "to the camera" (p. 77). In this way, the theoretical framework of phenomenology is useful in considering the way concepts and figures are embodied, or represented, on the screen. The word Merleau-Ponty (1993) used for this process is "deform" (p. 131), and objects represented in artistic fashion, then, are deformed or deconstructed ontologically in order to fashion some sense of resemblance in art. For the classroom context of this study, this means that teachers have taken concepts that are sometimes complicated, challenging, or even resisted and convey them somehow – but how?

Film is one way that a concept might be represented, but Merleau-Ponty's (1993) theory is particularly relevant when thinking of how this concept is artistically represented. This theory of deformation speaks to this work in terms of the teacher as artist, rendering concepts for student understanding, but also in terms of the artistic merit of the films themselves, including music, direction, and cinematography. Filmmakers arrange images, along with other design features like lighting and sound, to convey meaning. With all this in mind, artistry is theoretically woven throughout the phenomenon under inquiry both as I consider the artistic work of filmmakers and the creative work of teachers as they plan to use films. Next, I discuss

two other theories that have guided my thinking, providing further nuance to considerations of film as text.

Considering the Materials

Moving beyond the theoretical purpose of drawing on film as a material, I employed the theory of multimodality as I considered the textual nature of film itself, as well as additional materials teachers used in class. Bezemer and Kress (2008) defined a mode as "a shaped resource for making meaning" (p. 171). This notion of a social cultural ontology of text connects with Merleau-Ponty's (1993) consideration of the way language works to construct meaning for individuals, calling to mind familiar images, as well as my own interpretive epistemology as I work to understand the experiences of others. The work of the film as a multimodal text means that movies draw on a variety of resources to communicate meaning. Film, under this view, is a combination of multiple modes, including sound, angles, image, light, shadow, color, and movement. Film works as a medium to convey a message to the audience. Multimodality, then, was indispensable as I considered the ways teachers experience the complexities of film to meet literacy demands.

As a helpful component of my theoretical framework, Bazalgette and Buckingham (2013) suggested that multimodality be used more as a framework for analytic process, and less as a characteristic applied to materials themselves. Film has been included as one example of a multimodal medium (Serafini, 2014), which is defined as a means of distributing messages (Kress, 2005). Of concern here was the notion of representation, a process that occurs through modes, or "culturally and socially produced means for representation" (Kress, 2005, p. 6). The concepts here are a sturdy frame for speaking about the affordances and features of film. However, when it comes to understanding the interaction of the individual-in-experience and

filmic material, there is the need for additional theoretical considerations. For this reason, I have turned to symbolic interactionism, which I define and discuss below.

Bridging Person and Materials

In order to consider the interactions of participants with the texts they are using, I drew on the theory of symbolic interactionism for support (Denzin, 1992; Mead, 1926). Symbolic interaction was especially helpful to me in understanding the space between the materials the teachers themselves, because I was able to further consider the roles teachers took as viewers and observers, and because I was able to think about the ways teachers chose specific ideas and examples in films and seize on them to represent meaning for and with students. This use of symbolic interactionism aligned well with Merleau-Ponty's (1945) consideration of perceiving objects and others. Furthermore, my use of symbolic interactionism helped me be mindful of the decisions teachers were making to ensure that the materials were connecting with a student audience.

The movie was not entirely embraced in Mead's (1926) aesthetic consideration. Later work in symbolic interactionism embraces film more readily, as is the case with Denzin's (1992) work. Film, as I noted earlier, has traveled a continuum of multiple paths in development and style since Mead's (1926) writings. Symbolic interactionism was helpful as a way of understanding the connections educators make between the experience of using film and the films (materials) themselves. This theory gave support in terms making sense of the meaning and experience teachers shared based on their interactions with the meanings they uncovered and wished to convey in particular films.

Symbolic interactionism concerns the way individuals reach out to materials to make meaning in the world around them (Blumer, 1969) and serves an important theoretical role in my study as I consider teachers using materials to make connections for students. The theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism has been used before in literacy studies (Braund, 1985; Kim, 2013; Moje, Dillon, & O'Brien, 2000; Ziegahn & Hinchman, 1999), facilitating the process of interpreting meaning gathered through interactions in terms of identity and negotiation of already-existing social constructs. It is this focus on the individual and "personal experiences," considered in tandem with the material world around them, which suggests the utility of symbolic interactionism in this study (Denzin, 1992, p. 2).

For Braund (1985), symbolic interactionism served as a framework for uncovering the identities and "roles having been negotiated" through "enacting them in a routine fashion" (p 198). Similarly, symbolic interaction served as a means for Ziegahn and Hichman (1999) to find "meaning in complex social contexts" (p. 87). What this means for my study is that, as teachers discuss the ways they experience planning and using film, symbolic interactionism helped me further understand how teachers make sense of these materials for their own teacher identities and as they encounter the standards and structures that schools have in place, either encouraging or discouraging their use of film.

Early on, symbolic interactionists did not readily embrace film as a developed art form (Mead, 1926). There was a notion of aesthetic experiences found in artistic work, but Mead (1926) saw film as "very immediate, rather simple, and fairly primitive" (p. 391). This makes sense when I consider the often rudimentary and early mechanistic film work that circulated in the early and mid-1920s. More recent consideration of film through a symbolic interactionist lens readily embraces film and our relationship to this medium (Denzin, 1987; Denzin, 1992).

Denzin (1987) described the ways signs tell a story in a textual manner, even when embedded in objects. In later research, Denzin (1992) would describe the role of the viewer as voyeur. He wrote that we, the viewer, play our role as those who peek in, and we do not even pause to ask permission. As consumers of visual media, including film, Denzin (1992) describes the work of the camera as representing our window or eye into the filmed world.

Having considered the major theories that helped me make sense of the findings in my student, I now discuss the design of the study in practical terms, including a rationale and what I actually did with the theories I have described.

Rationale

Following from these and other footsteps in the professional literature and building on my personal experiences as a teacher and student, this study took place in a rural Appalachian school in the southeastern United States. Many studies have previously looked at the film-based practices of students in urban settings (Beach & O'Brien, 2008; Brass, 2008; Goodman, 2003; Turner, 2011). While studies have considered the literacy practices of Appalachian students, often focused on the effects of poverty and lack of access to typographic texts (Heath, 1983; Hicks, 2013; Purcell-Gates, 1997). There has not been a study that has looked specifically at the experiences of teachers in rural, Appalachian settings, working with film to meet the literacy needs of adolescents. Therefore, this study specifically aimed at the experience of teachers in rural settings when using film as a literacy tool in order to further explore and understand the affordances of film when working with adolescent readers located within these settings. Furthermore, this research setting reflected my own experiences as an educator, working with students from rural settings, and my own personal literacy history as a student from Appalachia. It is not a random placement, but a geographic realization of my prior experiences and the

trajectory of my research interests. This hermeneutic phenomenological study focused on understanding the particular phenomenon of teachers' experiences with the use of film as a text in rural Appalachia.

Research Question

As I completed this study, I circled around the research question: How do educators experience using film as a text for literacy development when working with rural Appalachian adolescents? I now discuss the teachers that have lent their voices to this work, followed by a description of the data collection methods I used.

Teachers in the Study

Identifying teachers for this study was of primary interest. The criteria for teachers for this study were those working with adolescent readers in rural Appalachia, working to meet reading and writing needs using film (deMarrais, 2004). For this study, teachers who met these three criteria were able to speak directly to the phenomenon I explored. I became aware of the media and film-related pedagogy of two teachers at two different schools through presentations at national and regional conferences. At the onset of the research project, I contacted these two teachers by email to set up initial meetings and interviews. They formed the network sample for the study (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). I then expanded the sample by using a snowball method (Noy, 2008). The first teacher, Tom Wahlberg, was able to suggest one additional educator for the study. The second teacher, Violet Mayfield, suggested two additional educators. When possible, I made face-to-face contacts with these teachers and also communicated electronically according to what worked best for their needs. I have constructed more detailed

introductions to the five teachers in this study in chapter four. In the next section, I describe the locations where the study took place, which I also render in Figure 3.2.

Locations for the Study

Data collection occurred at two schools in this study. Crystal Creek Middle School is a bit of a geographical oddity. The school sits in the middle of a fairly busy small town, and some students can walk home at the end of the day in ten minutes or less. Other students have bus rides of about one hour one way. The school is mostly Caucasian, and the faculty is of similar make-up. In terms of economics, Crystal Creek is divided almost evenly between middle school families and students from lower socio-economic levels. As noted in chapter two, this notion of poverty is sometimes seen as a common feature of Appalachian schools (Donehower, 2003).

The middle school is built on the team concept, with three teams in each grade level. The size and shape of each team depends on the number of students in any given year, as well as the principal's discretion. Sometimes, if a group of students is smaller, one of the teams is swallowed up, and teachers are known to move from grade level to grade level to accommodate the shifting population.

Meanwhile, across town, Oakwood High School is most assuredly off the beaten path. If students attend this high school, their ten-minute walk increases to a longer drive or bus ride, and the students from the further reaches of the county are in closer proximity with shorter bus rides – or slightly longer ones if they are from the other side of the county.

Just as the economics of Crystal Creek are divided, so too are the socio-economic factors at Oakwood. Expensive homes sit on hilltops in some places, while a turn down this road or that road brings to light disheveled mobile homes and abandoned structures.
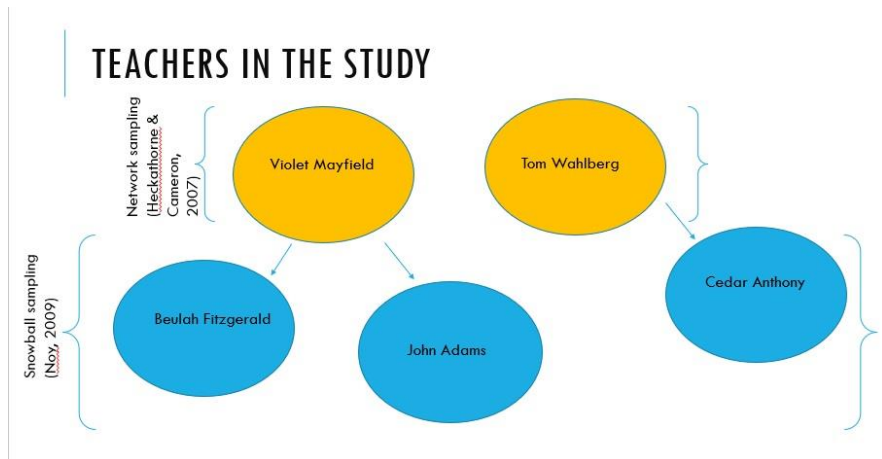
Figure 3.2. A visual representation of teachers who participated in the study.

If it weren't for a sign at the side of the road announcing buses entering the highway, the casual traveler would never know they were near a school. Oakwood High sits among trees, as well as sloping hills dotted with farm animals. Some classrooms look out on the front circle, while other classrooms have views of the slopes and the cattle that graze on them.

At both Crystal Creek and Oakwood, a number of teachers work in a variety of ways. I first became aware of the filmic pedagogy of two of these teachers through presentations at a national conference. In the next section, I will discuss the kinds of data I was able to gather in working with these two teachers, as well as three additional educators who chose to participate in the study. Table 1 acts as a visual summary of the activities of each teacher in the course of the study.

<div align="center">**Data Collection**</div>

My data collection was composed of interviews, artifacts (i.e., materials provided by teachers), audio-recorded and written teacher logs, field notes collected in my research journal, and member checks. These member checks were completed by both email and text message, depending on the preference of the teacher. In this section, I briefly describe what each part of this collection process involved, and then discuss what I have done with the data once I collected it.

Phenomenological Interviewing

In order to complete this study, I have drawn on a phenomenological approach and my data have been gathered primarily using audio recorded phenomenological interviews (Davis et al., 2004; Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997; Stelter, 2010). I conducted two interviews with each teacher. In each of these interviews, I prioritized the first-person accounts that interviews

Table 1 - Teacher Participation in the Study

Name	Study Start	Study Finish	Handouts	Reflections
Beulah Fitzgerald (Crystal Creek Middle)	November 12, 2018	December 13, 2018	0	0
Cedar Anthony (Crystal Creek Middle)	November 2, 2018	December 21, 2018	1	11
John Adams (Crystal Creek Middle)	November 12, 2018	December 19, 2018	4	4
Tom Wahlberg (Oakwood High School)	November 23, 2018	January 25, 2019	1	7
Violet Mayfield (Crystal Creek Middle)	November 21, 2018	January 21, 2019	4	1

offer returned to the interview transcripts throughout the course of collection and analysis as I worked to understand and make meaning from what was said (Stelter, 2010). I completed an interview with each teacher at the beginning of the research project, and a second interview at the conclusion. This use of two interviews gave me the opportunity to return to topics that were mentioned in the first interview, and also served as a fresh opportunity for teachers to reflect on what they had done during the research project. Moreover, using iterative interviews (Polkinghorne, 2005) helped me move to a more complete understanding of this phenomenon.

Interviewing has been considered as a data source in prior phenomenological work (Ziegahn and Hinchman, 1999), and Kendall (2008) suggested a utility for interviewing when approaching literacy studies. Because of the experiential focus of this study, first-hand accounts and reflections were valuable sources of data. Interviews took place at a time and in a location that afforded privacy and comfort for teachers. These locations included but were not limited to planning rooms, classrooms, and reserved rooms in school libraries.

Phenomenological interviewing is a direct consideration of the participant's life world, specifically focused on the "everyday lived world of the interviewee and his or her relation to it" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 28). To this end, I focused on educators' lived experience, particularly related to planning lessons that integrate film as a means of communicating ideas. I interviewed teachers once at the beginning of the study, and then once more at the end of the study, an iterative process that helped me become more fully aware of this phenomenon (Polkinghorne, 2005). Iterative interviewing was especially helpful as it allowed teachers to share with me on a second visit, following weeks of brief interactions with me and a focus on the use of film in teaching. What is more, these second interviews provided an opportunity for me to probe further into the experiences of educators. Davis et al. (2004) described phenomenological

interviewing as a method which "concerns the 'what' of an experience and seeks to capture the specific meanings uniquely characterizing that experience" (p. 423). These experiences are then "named" using "either the language of the participant or the more conceptual knowledge of the investigator's discipline" (Davis et al., 2004, p. 423).

Following deMarrais's (2004) description of the phenomenological interview, I began with open-ended questions in order to elicit the participant's experience (a "Think about a time when you" question) and iteratively returned to these experiences, seeking to understand the phenomenon more richly (pp. 57-58). In my role as researcher, I asked "short, descriptive questions that lead participants to respond" (deMarrais, 2004, p. 58). Along the way, I learned how to tailor this questioning process to align with the process of completing a hermeneutic phenomenological study, including how to take note of participants' words and build follow-up questions based on the flow of the conversation.

Artifacts

Because part of my research question dealt with how educators experience teaching film, handouts were a helpful component of data. I originally designed this study with collecting lesson plans in mind, as had been in the case in previous studies (Aguirre & Rosario Zavala, 2013; Rogers, Cooper, Nesmith, & Purdum-Cassidy, 2015; Whitacre & Peña, 2011). However, I quickly learned that many teachers do not keep any kind formal, and in some cases even informal, lesson plans.

Symbolic interactionism has also been used as a means of analyzing classroom interactions (Scott, 2007) and this aspect of my theoretical framework offered a way of thinking about how teachers reach out in their experience and grasp materials with which they can make

meaning and convey concepts to their students. Rapley's (2011) discussion of noting the rhetorical and organizational functions of texts also helped me consider the ways teachers prioritized content and interactions with film based on the information they included in handouts and materials, and multimodality was helpful in thinking both about how teachers used film and constructed these handouts (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). I noted both the way teachers used visuals, space, and the absence of content in their handouts.

As noted by Peräkylä and Ruusuvuoiri (2013), researchers who seek to analyze text often do not adhere to particular "protocol," but do "read and reread" in the search of themes (p. 278). In this case, I considered interview transcripts alongside handouts to seek out connections between what teachers said and evidence of how they practiced. I also discussed some of these handouts with teachers in the culminating interviews in the study. Just as I read and reread transcriptions of interviews iteratively, I considered handouts multiple times throughout this research process.

Teacher Instructional Logs

In addition to interviews and handouts, I sought to collect teacher reflections based on their pedagogical experiences using teacher logs. Classrooms are complex places where a variety of events occur. Rowan and Correnti (2009) implemented instructional logs in a study of elementary school reading strategies. These logs helped the researchers make sense of the "complexity and variability" of what was going on in teachers' classrooms (Rowan & Correnti, 2009, p. 121). Logs allowed me to step into teachers' classrooms repeatedly throughout the study, and I was able to do so in a way that immediately captured the teachers' thoughts and demonstrated how often and in what ways teachers used film in class. Over a timeframe of one

to two months, teachers were given the opportunity to pause after the use of film and record short reflections about their work.

These reflections were offered in written or audio-recorded format. By using teaching logs, I was able to collect data in the moment of teaching, inside the classroom, further highlighting the experience of the teacher. Some teachers expressed a preference for audio logs because they felt they could "speak" to the moment in action, rather than wait and open up an electronic document to quickly fill in as their students were entering. This method of data collection allowed me to collect first-hand experiences in a way that was not intrusive, but could be immediate, and in a way that could be implemented over time – daily, weekly, or bi-weekly, depending on how often the teachers used film. In this way, I could collect a wide range of data across four to eight weeks and throughout the teacher's instructional day (Rowan, Jacob, & Correnti, 2009). As Rowan and Correnti (2009) pointed out, observations account for a very small amount of data in research, or "a slice" (p. 124); the use of a teacher instructional log created an open-channel that I could stop by and collect periodically throughout the research process, and encouraged teachers to reflect in the moment about their pedagogy. I offer Figure 3.3 as an example of a teacher log, which appears with my initial comments as I worked through the analysis process.

time with my sub, so today in class I was working with my students to transform these narratives. We were looking at the setting and determining how a change in the setting would change the characters and their feelings. The setting and the plot, and also the conflict and theme. So, I discovered as we were working that my students were really struggling to remember the details of these little fairy tales. We used Pinocchio and Cinderella. Cinderella was set in New York City. Pinocchio was set in 2030, and the year 2030. And Little Red Riding was set in, oh goodness where was it set? I can't remember what the change in setting was. And then we had The Three Little Pigs set in their hometown and then they were to transform The Giver, the novel that we're reading, from its current setting to the Revolutionary War, which ironically is what we're studying in history right now. So, since my students were struggling to remember the plot, on my planning period I pulled up, after we did the Cinderella one together, I

Jason DeHart
change

Jason DeHart
Tying to popular, known stories. Seeing in new ways.

Supporting their work

Jason DeHart
"my students were struggling"

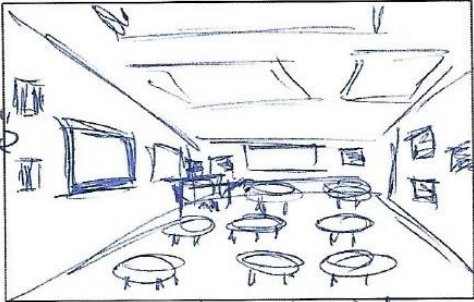*Figure 3.3.* An example of a teacher log transcript.

Furthermore, the use of teacher logs led to data that was teacher-created and included reflections from the individual teacher, rather than being filtered through the process of my own observations and interpretation. This data collection method allowed me to go directly to the source, thereby decreasing the assumptions I was making about the day-to-day activities teachers were engaged in.

Jottings from the Field

In addition to interviews and handouts, I maintained a field journal throughout the study (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). This journal served as a document station I can carry with me as I traveled, conducted interviews, and went through all stages of the research process. I would often sit in my car after an interview and make notes immediately following exchanges. At times, I sketched the research environments I entered to help me describe them more accurately as I wrote.

I recorded my experiences and thinking in this journal, and this text became an additional source of data. My jottings include first-hand experiences in the research field, as well as exchanges from others as I shared transcripts with my research group. My notes included descriptions, early interpretations, quotations from readings I was reviewing, poetic responses, "to do" lists for the study, and sketches of settings (Phillipi & Lauderdale, 2018). Figure 3.4 is a scanned page that offers an example of some of the work I completed in the research journal, including notes I made in the margin, as well as an image I composed on one of the first classrooms that I entered in the project.

Figure 3.4. A scanned page of the research journal used in the project.

The relationship between descriptions and interpretations is part of the work of maintaining rigorous and detailed field notes, a process I engaged in throughout my research. Such field notes lead to quality finished products (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011), and the notes I gathered in the field helped me recall events and places I experienced as a researcher. For this study, I chose a field journal that was arranged like cinematic storyboards and I approached this journal as a space for ideas, and even retreat when I was overwhelmed.

Analysis

As I have described, both symbolic interactionism and multimodality played key roles in helping me understand the experiences of educators using film. In terms of interviews, I turned my attention to the coding work of Saldaña (2016). Coding and the use of language as a source of data has a unique role in phenomenology, especially in terms of considering language (Freeman & Vagle, 2013). I completed the transcription process as a first step in reading the interviews and beginning to grasp at their contents. Once gathered and transcribed, I coded the data from interview transcripts, then categorized these codes into themes.

In order to capture experience with the specific phenomenon of film iteratively, my interview questions circled back to experiences with planning for film use and experiences with actually implementing those plans into the classroom, and I used a semi-structured interview guide to serve as a starting point in the interview process. Interviews were based on question stems related to the phenomenon under inquiry, and I iteratively interviewed teachers to gain and understanding of this phenomenon (Polkinghorne, 2005). Figure 3.5 shows an example of a coded manuscript. The connection to using the language of the participant in interviews aligns with my desire to use In Vivo coding as an analytic method, which draw on the words of participants (Saldaña, 2016).

47   then answer these three questions. So, by the time we get through the unit they've pretty much

48   read the entire thing.

Jason DeHart
"pretty much read the entire thing"

Engaging

Asking them to read without reading. Not overt.

49

50   I: That's smart.

51

52   JA: Nobody's caught on yet. Not every day, maybe one day out of the week, one class period

53   out of the week, I will give some actual notes. I'll lecture. When I do that, I provide for them an

Jason DeHart
"provide for them"

This is a teacher who steps in to help his students.

54   outline with blanks and they listen, fill in the blanks. I also have the information on the board,

55   the projector, and smart board, so they can see it, copy it from that.

56

57   I: I would love to get copies of one of the fill-ins.

Jason DeHart
"I'll break it up"

Pacing
Planning

58

Figure 3.5.   An example of interview transcript, displaying both In Vivo and Process Coding.

The In Vivo coding method aligns with "ontological, epistemological" inquiries that "address the nature of teachers' realities" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 70), all descriptions which seem uniquely tailored to my study. In Vivo Coding prioritizes the words of the participant, drawing codes from the very words of the teachers themselves. In this way, I hope to honor the experience of my teachers as the primary source of description in the study. As a second round of coding in studies focusing on ontological questions, Saldaña (2016) recommended "Process, Emotion, Values, Dramaturgical, and/or Focused Coding" (p. 70). I used Process Coding as a second-round coding method based on its relevance for pedagogical processes and its alignment with In Vivo Coding, as Saldaña (2016). This type of coding is gerundial in nature, a structure which I am expecting to align with the processes teachers go through as they plan instruction.

Once collected and coded, I "circled" back on the data, returning to transcripts throughout the process (Moustakas, 1994). These transcripts were valuable as I worked through the process of sidelining my own prejudgments and interpret the experiences of the teachers I talk with. Just as Rhodes and Smith (2010) suggested three rounds of reading and coding, I too completed a first round of transcript reading with In Vivo Coding, a second round with Process Coding, and at least one more reading to draw themes. In all, I returned to each transcript in total at least five or six times, and returned to smaller sections more frequently throughout the study. I shared five of my transcripts with a research group, which gave another opportunity for reading. I elaborate on the activities of this research group in the next subsection.

Research Group Support

Beyond the work I completed independently, I asked peers to examine my findings in the context of a group of scholars engaged in phenomenological study, drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty (1993). As an additional means of analyzing data, the support of the

Transdisciplinary Phenomenological Research Group (TPRG) on campus provided a valuable source for peer examination of my transcripts and was helpful in offering suggestions about how to complete thematic analysis. This group is housed on campus in the School of Nursing and provided a "dialogic community of support" (Sohn, Thomas, Greenberg, & Pollio, 2017, p. 124), working so that members can "discuss potential meanings and possible interrelationships among meanings" (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997, p. 50). This dialogue included listening in while the group read transcripts in assigned parts as researcher and interviewee, and taking note as group stopped throughout the table reading to discuss the transcript and note their thinking.

The TPRG has worked with over one hundred studies on campus and has already formed a basis for my understanding of phenomenological research. First, I worked with this group to consider my own assumptions in a bracketing interview, and then I shared five transcripts with the group as time allowed. Fortunately, I was able to discuss one transcript from each of the five teachers who participated. I shared themes with the group in two meetings during the final stages of the research process. I joined the group with the hopes of sharing my own data but, what is more, I have grown as a researcher while observing and participating in group interactions with others' transcripts. Members of the group shared important literature with me as I learned more about the methodology I chose. In addition, working with the TPRG helped me ensure quality in collaboration with others, including the ways I represented my final themes and considered data as either representative of the phenomenon under inquiry, or simply characteristic of one or two individuals in the study.

Moving to themes and maintaining focus. As I moved to categories and themes, I considered the notion of horizontalizing the data (Moustakas, 1994), a process in which every statement that speaks to the phenomenon is considered valuable in the study. Indeed,

phenomenology helped me make sense of data that might have otherwise been discarded had I been using another methodology, including information teachers shared about their personal lives.

From these statements, I categorized quotations into "meaning units," which were then collected into themes (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118). Of particular influence as I moved to these larger units of meaning was Saldaña's (2016) notion of a "touch test" (p. 276). This method is a recommended step after the second round of coding and involves considering the categories of data, moving from specific, tangible concepts and objects to more general, theoretical notions that might have implications for other studies. I asked myself when considering each theme if I was naming a particular feature of a single interview or a broader, more generalizable aspect of the experience. Drawing on Saldaña's (2016) ideas about forming these theories made sense as I sought to capture the essence of an experience, rather than focusing on the characteristics of individual teachers.

In terms of writing up my analysis, I followed van Manen's (1997) concepts of evoking and intensification in phenomenology. Van Manen (1997) includes both evocation, the vivid presentation of phenomena, and intensification, highlighting "key words" for "full value" in the text (p. 355). These concepts helped me when it was time to do something with my analysis in terms of a write-up. As I worked through transcripts in the later stages of my analysis, I paid particular attention to the notion of intensification, searching for key terms that spoke to the phenomenon of using film as a text. It is through this attention to evoking and intensifying that readers find "epiphany," the stirring "resonance" created when a reader encounters a fully-rendered phenomenon, and it is from this notion of a full rendering that I press for saturation in the data, a term used to describe my gaining of understanding of this phenomenon as a result of

the research process. From multiple sites and multiple teachers, I worked toward this sense of understanding and trace saturation, or the point at which in the study I stopped finding new codes (Mapp, 2008), in both narrative and visual form in my discussion chapter (Sohn, Thomas, Greenberg, & Pollio, 2017).

In order to share my findings and consider my themes, I created two visual representations, listing quotations that aligned with each theme directly from interview transcripts. This process led to yet another opportunity to read transcripts throughout the research process and has been noted a means of validating findings (Sohn, Thomas, Greenberg, & Pollio, 2017). I discussed these eight themes with the research group after having considered them and renamed them myself. Seeing the themes distilled, side by side with quotations, helped me properly name these aspects of the phenomenon.

In the next section, I discuss the other ways I worked to maintain quality in this study as I work through my design and theoretical framework in the field and in composing the final document.

Trustworthiness

As a qualitative researcher, it is my hope that maintain an ethical sense of authenticity and quality in this study. Merriam (1995) wrote that, in order to maintain validity and reliability in their work, qualitative scholars engage in a variety of methods grounded in the framework of the research method. Among these, Merriam (1995) suggested triangulation, member checks, "peer/colleague examination," subjectivity statements, and "submersion" in the research environment could offer steps toward validity (p. 55). As an ethical researcher, respecting the lives of the teachers who entrust me to voice their experience by maintaining confidentiality. I

established confidentiality by using pseudonyms in all documents and storing consent forms and other documents on a password protected computer (Angrosino & Rosenberg, 2013).

I collected data in a variety of ways throughout the study. Following Merriam's (1995) advice, I used triangulation as a means of establishing reliability, or consistency, in my findings, establishing a clear audit trail. Conversations and interactions in the study were recorded, transcribed, and stored on a password-protected computer throughout the duration of the study.

Returning to the Sources

As yet another way of understanding data, I made a well-documented effort to conduct member checks. When an aspect of an interview proved to be confusing, I checked with teachers prior to moving forward with analysis. For example, when I needed to clear up the role of a mentor with my first participant, I contacted him via phone and discussed this aspect of the interview with him. Later on in the writing process, I shared sections of the document with each participant, including each individual's narrative introduction and definition of film that I present in chapter four.

Keeping regular contact with teachers by collecting logs proved to be an organic way of "checking in" with teachers. When I needed to discuss how another teacher got started with film, I asked her to talk with me about this aspect of her experience during a classroom check-in. I engaged in my first round of member checking following transcription of interviews, and followed up once the second interviews and teacher logs had been collected and transcribed. In all cases, I sought the input of teachers prior to writing findings.

A Consideration of My Subjectivities

In keeping with both the larger methodology of phenomenology and in keeping with my reading on phenomenological approach in literacy work, I made use of bracketing (Fontaine, 2010; Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). Bracketing is a process that involves careful consideration of and intentional management of biases.

Fontaine (2010) similarly used bracketing in his study of pre-service teachers' experiences with watching a film. Moustakas (1994) defined bracketing as a process "in which the focus of the research is placed in brackets, everything else is set aside so that the entire research process is rooted solely on the topic and question" (p. 97). Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997) discussed bracketing as a process of identifying and correcting the researcher's interpretations. I engaged in this bracketing process by completing a bracketing interview prior to beginning the research.

Dahlberg and Ashworth (2009) pointed to "bracketing presuppositions" as a means of accomplishing quality in the work (p. 130). This use of bracketing helped me put my own assumptions and expectations to the side, focusing on the experience of teachers and analyzing descriptions of experience for underlying themes, while aimed for a reflexive management of my own experiences and biases. In this way, I attempted to sideline as many of my own biases as possible and ethically and faithfully represent what is shared by teachers in the study. As I have worked through this process, I have constructed a tentative interview guide and have completed a bracketing interview with a fellow scholar. This interview was the first transcript that I shared with the TPRG.

In April 2018, I shared my tentative interview protocol with a follow phenomenological researcher and recorded a bracketing interview, which I then shared with my research group. As an ethical researcher, I used this experience as a way of building understanding of my own presuppositions so that I could interpret data thoughtfully, seeking to understand my own subjectivities first (Nyström and Dahlberg, 2001). I made note of my presuppositions throughout the research process in my field journal. I did this by completing a subjectivity statement prior to the project (Peshkin, 1988), as well as a bracketing interview, which was analyzed with a group of phenomenological researchers As I worked, I strived to maintain a multifaceted consideration of my biases and subjectivities, creating detailed accounts of my experiences through the use of field notes.

As modeled by Peshkin (1988), I engaged in robust consideration of my own subjectivities throughout the research process to consider my personal history, my own pedagogical practices, and the role of media in shaping my literacy habits. My final written product was my ultimate attempt of an interpretation of educators' experiences when using film to make literacy connections.

Subjectivity Statement

In order to craft what I hoped would be an ethical and reasonably complete research project, I endeavored to consider my subjectivities before beginning the data collection process. In order to do this, I completed a bracketing interview in April 2018, early enough to help me keep my assumptions in mind throughout the research process (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). The TPRG then helped me analyze and process the contents of this interview in June 2018, four months prior to the beginning of data collection. This group approach to analysis of my assumptions followed the process outlined by Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997).

In order to bring these subjectivities into light, I modeled my organization from the work of Peshkin (1988). This consideration of my subjectivities could reach into a variety of areas of life and, indeed, could be its own autoethnographic research exercise. In order to make the most of time and space within this document, I have briefly commented on four dimensions of my prior experience and, during the process of data collection and analysis, have returned to this document to consider and reconsider my authenticity in writing.

The rural I. The teachers in this study served in rural school settings and worked with adolescents. Like many of these students, I too came from a rural background. I grew up in the mountains of West Virginia and went to school in a small town where it was difficult to escape from the same twenty or so young faces that I grew up with. The town was not especially diverse, and my experience with other cultures and ethnicities only came into focus when I began my high school and college education.

Without acknowledging my own views, including the way I felt teachers and other adults perceived me, it would be easy to place my story over the narratives of these teachers and the students they work with. Maintaining a sense of deliberate naiveté, I chose to enter these research settings with the idea in forefront of my mind that my personal way of seeing rural education might not transfer to these places and people. I chose to become a listening ear, ready to accurately represent what teachers said in our interview and reflection process.

The pedagogical I. Like the teachers in this study, I too was and am a teacher. I worked with students in rural settings for almost ten years. With this in mind, I note that in my bracketing interview, I expressed the hope that teachers would be pushing their pedagogy beyond holiday and free Friday rewards with films. These assumptions were based on my reading of

Hobbs's (2011) consideration of nonoptimal uses of film, but also on my experience of passively viewing film in school without much discussion or follow-up activity.

When I chose to begin incorporating film in my own classroom, I never intentionally directed my practice away from this passive viewing and, indeed, had not discovered this strand of research. My intense interest in improving test scores, maintaining professional credibility with my students, and reaching all of the state standards moved me, at least as far as I was aware, into a more active use of film and film clips. My first few years of using film were less reflective. As I heard teachers telling this story, I chose once more to be more of a listening ear. It would have been easy to start telling my own story during the interview process.

The viewing I. Like many of the teachers in this study, I love film. As noted in my introduction, film proved to be a meaningful avenue in my own literacy development and I drew on the textual nature of film in my classroom instruction. To this end, when participants spoke of film as a lesser text in any way, I made not of my verbal and nonverbal responses, making sure to keep in mind that van Manen (1997) has suggested tension is essential for a rich phenomenological study. The tension that exists when considering what counts as text is one that has formed a professional basis for this research, and my goal has been to represent that tension in the words of my participants and in the existing literature on film, at all times as unencumbered by my own preferences and opinions as possible.

The researching I. Lastly, I recognize that I am the researcher conducting this study, and that my dissertation acts as the culmination of four years of reading and scholarly activity. As such, I have a vested interest in completing this work. In response to this truth, I have followed my sampling methods and located teachers who have direct experience with this phenomenon. These teachers work in rural settings, spending each day engaging with

adolescents in textual activity, and each of them uses film in classroom instruction, either as a text for reading or a text to compose. In most cases, teachers in this study have done both of these activities. In short, I worked to ensure that teachers were right for the study and that I considered their words in my analysis process, rather than simply reifying my existing narrative. What is more, I have recognized that I am a growing researcher and have developed as a phenomenological scholar with the help of the TPRG. As van Manen (1997) suggested, the only way to become a phenomenological researcher is to do phenomenological work.

By way of a concluding summary, I offer a brief recap of this chapter and what I did in this study.

Summary and Conclusion

In order to complete this project, I utilized a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, particularly drawing on the works of Merleau-Ponty (1993). In addition to phenomenology, I made use of symbolic interactionism (Denzin, 1992; Mead, 1926) and multimodality (Bezemer & Kress, 2016) to analyze the interactions of teachers with materials. Data consisted of iterative phenomenological interviews, documents, teacher logs, notes in my field journal, and member checks. Once interviews were gathered, I transcribed and coded the data, using In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016) as a first-round method and Process coding as a second-round method. I read and reread documents, working through my theoretical framework and interview transcripts for a triangulated understanding of teachers' experience with the phenomenon under inquiry. I also labored to maintain quality in this work, gathering data from multiple sources, including member checks, and considering my own subjectivities. Finally, I made use of a phenomenological group of scholars (the TPRG) to serve as a place where my work was shared and discussed.

Chapter 4

What It Means to Use Film as a Text

The research question that served as a guide for this phenomenological study has been: How do educators experience using film as a resource for literacy development when working with rural Appalachian adolescents? In response to this question, I gathered two rounds of interviews from five teachers, as well as classroom logs, handouts, and teaching materials. Hermeneutic phenomenology was an especially helpful methodology for considering teachers' experiences as this approach helped me be actively aware of the central focus of the study, and informed my conversations with teachers. In particular, Merleau-Ponty's (1993) concept of "deforming" was helpful in thinking through the findings of this study. The theory of multimodality supported my understanding of the ways teachers used the diverse elements contained within films (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). Bridging between the materials and experiences, symbolic interaction (Denzin, 1992) helped me consider how teachers were reaching out to these materials in their classroom practices.

Using this theoretical framework, I considered these data sources and located eight dominant themes. In this chapter, I will first introduce each of the teachers who participated in the study and I will then name and describe the themes that I have drawn.

Locating the Right Voices

In many ways, this study felt as though I was constructing a showcase of five teachers who use a number of strategies, including their utilization of film as a text. As the study progressed, I grew more and more to appreciate the work these teachers did as they shared with

me from the beginning of November 2018 to the beginning of January 2019. I will now introduce each of these teachers, starting with the two educators who formed a network sample (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017) and proceed to introduce the teachers I located through a snowball sampling method (Noy, 2008).

Tom Wahlberg

Tom Hanks and Mark Wahlberg formed the inspiration for Tom's pseudonym, as these actors are two of his favorites. Although he is the first teacher I introduce, Tom was the last person I was able to contact and talk with formally in the study. We met in his wife's elementary classroom during a busy holiday week. Tom is a husband, father, teacher, and coach who is often called upon to speak at local events. All of these relationships and responsibilities make for a packed schedule, but this teacher is upbeat and positive about all of the moving pieces in his life. I became aware of Tom's film-based practices through a presentation he did at a national teaching conference.

Tom is a philosopher who can share the story of his favorite films with ease. In many ways, our first interview was a learning experience for me as he recounted some of the movies he uses most often. He talks about his practice in terms of an environment creator and a facilitator. He began as a middle school related arts teacher who was given free rein to create dynamic learning environments with students at the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels. He then taught social studies at the eighth-grade level before moving to a rural high school, where he teaches courses in American history, world history, and journalism. In all, Tom has been teaching for seventeen years.

Tom's classroom is a place of many books, with a screen for projecting text. He arranges the books on his shelf by length and topic of interest. Most notable in the classroom environment was the surplus of projects created by current and former students that lined the walls, turning the classroom into a kind of gallery. Tom defines film as an essential text that opens up unknown narratives, as well a text that creates opportunities for his rural students to encounter other cultures and stories. Film is also part of Tom's personal literacy practice when he is not at school. He is a self-described lover of film who started using the medium because of his personal interest in it. Tom described himself as the kind of person who can sit through a bad movie and not feel like he has wasted his time.

Tom completed both interviews with me and provided five typed comprehensive logs about films he used. He also provided an example of the kinds of questions he uses when working with students.

Violet Mayfield

Violet Mayfield is the second teacher in the study who formed an essential network. I became aware of Violet's film-based practices in her English class through a presentation she did at a regional teacher conference. She is a middle grades teacher with a passion for reading and a drive to reach all students in her classroom. When I stopped by to meet this teacher, I noted that much of her classroom is built around her attention to two content areas. Violet has taught English for ten years, but has also has had one year of experience as a social studies teacher in middle grades.

Like Tom, Violet's classroom is a place of reading, with a screen for text and several rows of books, including popular novels, graphic novels, and nonfiction resources for students to

read. A Marvel comic book was spread out at one of the student's desks, and instructional

posters created in Violet's own handwriting were hung on the walls in bright colors. Violet's

classroom also featured a document camera, which was her way of seizing the screen at the front

of the room to model writing for her students.

Violet's use of film includes both viewing and creating. Her use of research was evident

as, behind her desk, she kept a collection of professional resources so that she could keep abreast

of strategies and structures to bring into her classroom. Violet is a person who describes herself

as one who loves graphic organizers, and her description of supporting all of her students,

regardless of their achievement level, through the process of viewing, reading, and writing

brought to mind Mills' (2010) discussion of scaffolding when making films.

Violet completed both interviews with me and provided one audio-recorded log, as well

as seven examples of handouts she uses.

Cedar Anthony

Through Tom's recommendation, I found Cedar Anthony. When I first entered Cedar's

seventh-grade classroom, I noted that it was like many others I had been in – beige and

fluorescent, with one window generously taking up a third of one wall. This was planning time,

and all was a quiet. Rows of seats faced a wall where a screen returned the seats' empty glances.

I have seen some teachers use these screens as projection boards for PowerPoints or

working spaces for images of worksheets, while others have used them to explore the Internet at

the front of their classrooms, and still others barely turn them on, preferring the white board

space to the left or right of the flickering image. Cedar uses his white board space, as well as the

screen.

In fact, when I entered the first item of note I saw was a cartoon explaining the day's content. In all of the districts I have visited and worked in, teachers are required to post a variety of learning targets, essential questions, and "I can" statements. The mix of what is required depends on the district and sometimes on what the school administrator wants to see up on the wall. Cedar prefers the creative route and renders his instructional object as a visual image. He has also encouraged students to take notes with doodles, rather than throwing their hastily drawn images into the trash.

A group of stones sat in front of Cedar's desk and I had to ask about them. He informed that they were for an excavation that his students would do later in the year. Images of inspirational figures, most notably Gandhi, were on all four of the walls, even peering at me as I was leaving after our interview.

A cardboard cutout combining words and images in a kind of pedagogical hieroglyphic displayed the "rules of the room." A cartoon eye was combined with the words "on your own paper." I thought about all of the money poster companies make printing prefilled lists of rules and regulations for classrooms across the nation. Apparently, Cedar is a teacher who likes to invent his own materials, rather than buying someone else's – unless the content is something he really wants to convey.

In what might be termed an interactive approach, Cedar has taken the popular character of Indiana Jones and transported him into his classroom, not with the performance of Harrison Ford, but with his own unique invention. I will also note here that Cedar is a one-time collaborator with Tom, the first teacher I have introduced. This relationship of mentoring provided for the basis for Cedar's interest in making films. They are now at two different schools, working with students from rural areas, but at one time created films together. Cedar is

a teacher who defines film as an active and engaging text that keeps him fresh and cutting edge, and builds enthusiasm for his class. Film is also a powerful venue to help students in Cedar's classroom see the world around them in a variety of ways that I will expand on later in this chapter. He has been teaching for thirteen years.

Cedar completed both interviews and provided fifteen audio-recorded logs about his teaching. He also provided one page of example questions that he uses with videos.

John Adams

Like Cedar Anthony, John Adams uses film to help students embrace the content of middle grades history. John has taught seventh and eighth grade and, at the time of our interview, was teaching eighth grade American history. He has also had the opportunity to teach a split class for two years, and has some experience in all subjects at the middle school level, except for English courses. One year, he taught both seventh and eighth grade history, and another year he taught science and social studies in eighth grade. Prior to working in these subjects, he was a seventh-grade math teacher. John has managed these challenges and changes with positivity, along with the task of covering a large number of state standards for his subject area.

In his personal literacy practice, John describes himself as a visual learner and a comic book reader. In our second interview, we discussed that he not only reads comic books but still maintains most of his collection from his younger days. John watches many of the films he shows in class as part of his personal practice, as well. He is a self-described lover of film.

I discovered John through Violet's recommendation, and found a teacher who uses film in a variety of ways in his classroom. John is still considering the process of making films in

relation to his content, and has practiced with composing them with students, but his primary use of the medium is clips that include image and song. For John, film is a text that acts to support his content and serves as one of many ways of introducing concepts. It is also a source for what he called the "cool factor," a term I will explain further as I discuss the themes present in this study (J. Adams, Interview 1, November 12, 2018).

John completed both interviews and provided four hand-written logs, as well as five examples of handouts and materials he used in class.

Beulah Fitzgerald

For the final teacher in the study, I followed Violet Mayfield's recommendation and contacted a 7th grade English teacher. Beulah Fitzgerald is a busy person who acts an instructional leader at her school, as well as a leader on her team. In addition to these responsibilities, Beulah leads her school's academic intervention program and occasionally acts in the role of administrator. Moreover, Beulah is a mother who has to make sure her son makes it to football practice on time. In the midst of all she has to manage, this teacher was still kind enough to participate in the current study. For both of our interviews, we met in another empty classroom because Beulah's classroom was in use during her planning.

Beulah has taught all three grade levels in middle school and has had the opportunity to travel this year with some her students from 6th grade to 7th grade. She spoke in our interviews of engaging students, sparking their interest, and creating a welcoming environment for them to explore their personal stories and improve their writing skills. One of the ways that Beulah defines film is as a creative text, and she uses a variety of platforms to help her students explore their personal narratives.

Charged with reaching a wide range of standards and also keeping to a set curriculum pattern, Beulah puts the students at the center of her focus in the classroom and maintains her positivity by remembering that they are the most important part of her work. Beulah views film as part of her own literacy practice and also defines film in terms of its narrative structure. In all, Beulah has been teaching for thirteen years. She got started using film because it was a medium she encountered the medium in a college course and because she is a film viewer when she is not at school. Bella completed both interviews, but did not share any logs or handouts with me.

In many ways, my study acts as a showcase for these teachers and their practices. In the next section, I will discuss the themes that proved most salient from interviews and logged reflections, as well as from the documents these educators shared with me.

Findings

In order to work toward findings, I read through transcripts from each interview, as well as transcripts of teacher reflections. I considered teacher handouts as an additional source of data in my writing, as well as my own field notes. As I described in chapter three, I transcribed the interviews and reflections myself, which gave me a first read-through. I then returned to the words of my participants to find In Vivo Codes and read through them a third time to find Process Codes. I shared a total of five transcripts with the Transdisciplinary Phenomenology Research Group (TPRG), which served as an additional opportunity to read through and consider data, as well as an opportunity to discuss and finetune my approach to interviewing. The TPRG was instrumental in both reviewing my transcripts and thinking about the shape of my findings. Upon reflecting on the final themes of the study with my research group, I returned yet again to each of my transcripts, as well as the handouts, logs, and jottings from the field.

Figure 4.1. A visual representation of the figure in the ground and four themes from the study.

As noted in the image above, the background image shows an example of the standards teachers were required to cover. From this background image, four themes stand out. A dialogic icon represents the narrative that infuses the first theme, "Part of the Human Story." A clock-like circle with a piece missing represents the energy teachers used in the process in "The Thing is Finding the Time." An uneven shape represents the boundaries of routine and recycled practices that teachers transgressed in "Out of the Box," while an eye-like shape represents the power of seeing that became evident in "I See You Today." I used the color green as a background for these themes to indicate their function as aspects of this lived experience. I will explain each in full as I unpack these findings. Before I delve into the four themes present in the study, I will discuss one feature that permeated all of the themes and was reflected on by all of the teachers.

The Figure in the Ground: Standards and Curriculum

Merleau-Ponty's (1993) concept of the figure in the ground came into focus in this study as I discussed transcripts with the on-campus phenomenology group. Standards and curriculum permeated each theme in this study, and became part of the dialogue with teach of the five teachers. Educators were required to balance creative approaches with the standards and curriculum they were responsible for sharing with students. For teachers in the social studies courses, in particular, standards had been changed within the past three years. Content area connections were rooted in the wide range of standards teachers had to cover, as well as the curriculum that teachers were required to implement. For some teachers, meeting standards meant finding ways to show historical events. For others, this connection to standards was accomplished through highlighting language arts concepts in filmic texts. This use of film brought to mind the notions of how readers and writers work differently in content areas (Lent,

2016). Indeed, educators used film to meet standards, but also felt at times that they could not use as many films and creative approaches due to the volume of standards they had to cover.

Tom discussed the freedom he felt as a middle school related arts teacher tasked with what he called an "exploratory" course that led him in a number of directions, and how this approach changed when he was asked to become what he referred to as a "core area" teacher. He talked about the standards in a positive way, calling them a "destination." With no standards in place initially, he was given free roam to create and assemble a number of classes that worked with his students in a given year. Once he was moved to the "core area," he had a large number of standards to meet, and a test to ensure they were all met. In our second interview, Tom used the word "obligation" to describe his requirements about keeping the content in class aligned with the state standards (Interview 2, January 25, 2019).

John described the process of trying to meet 95 standards with his eighth-grade students, and how he felt that, by the end of the year, he was barely "skimming" the surface. There was clearly little time to spend on texts that did not speak directly to the content required in the course. John went on to suggest that he wanted students to go beyond the "cool factor" and see accuracies in the texts he shared, bringing to mind Toplin's (2003) focus on careful management of the representations of film when studying history. In our second interview, John lamented not having enough time to show all of the film clips he wanted.

For Violet, the state standards were a system of measure, and her work in the classroom was defined as in alignment with these standards. Even a "reward" film like *The Giver* (Noyce, 2014) became an opportunity for reflection and activity for her students. Violet intended to complete a stop motion animation project with her students, but could not do so because of a "stringent curriculum map" (V. Mayfield, Interview 2, January 21, 2019). This is a teacher who

simply feels that her students have time for free time later; her classroom is a place of inquiry and work, and the use of standards and curriculum resonated in her recorded log, in which she discussed using short YouTube clips to convey ideas about characters, setting, and plot.

The teachers all commented variously about the utility and strictures that accompanied standards. John described the standards as helpful, but also said that he did not understand why all of them had to be tested when teachers were given a limited timeframe. Cedar talked about the standards in terms of content that his students sometimes struggled to understand, and his use of film was a way of making this information more palatable. For Beulah, standards and curriculum formed the basis for classroom work, something she was required to cover.

Handouts were another source of data that spoke to this need to meet content area standards and align teaching to curriculum. Both Violet and John shared examples of *Flocabulary* handouts, a filmic material that has been embraced by their district. These handouts included multiple choice question sheets, featuring identification questions from the clips and fill-in notes pages. Both historical and language arts concepts were featured in these handouts. Cedar shared a similar set of questions which he had composed to match up with the content of a video about Eastern religions. John incorporated comics, as well as films, and shared an example handout with me that included similar content-based questions.

In short, these teachers had clearly-written standards-based demands placed on their shoulders, and those standards were a firm feature of their pedagogical choices and practices. No single teacher in the study expressed a comfort or sense of ease with covering their standards, and very often these standards were tied to particular curricular demands in schools. In spite of these demands, or because of them, teachers turned to film as an additional textual resource in

their pedagogy. What follows are discussions of the four themes from this study of five teachers, considered and reconsidered as I haunted these data sources.

<div align="center">

Theme One: "Part of the Human Story"

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Even though teachers had a figure in the ground (Merleau-Ponty, 1993) that formed a common basis for their experience, they expressed a desire to move beyond surface-level content connections to standards and curriculum and express larger truths about the human story to their students. In some cases, teachers wanted students to see others like themselves in film, and in other cases teachers expressed a desire for students to see those who are not like they are. In this way, the educators in this study helped bring larger, global questions into focus for their students. Confronting these questions was important enough for teachers to take up, in spite of their curricular and standards demands.

Connections to Personal Story

Sometimes teachers used film as a means of conveying to the students the value of the individual student's stories. For Violet and Beulah, this process was much like creative writing, and these teachers made connections to narratology by exploring the stories presented in films. In this section, I will describe specific examples of when teachers used film to help students explore their own narratives.

Dealing with trauma. In viewing *A Wrinkle in Time* (DuVernay, 2018) as part of her curriculum, Violet described how a group of students moved from making fun of a film to being silently engaged with the images of the screen as Oprah Winfrey's character described the pain that is found in the world, with images of the screen on people in the world going through traumas. For Violet, this shift in perspective was palpable as students considered their own

stories of trauma while viewing the film. At the beginning of her description, Violet talked about how her class was initially critical of the film. She said:

> It kind of frustrated me and I knew that this was not a hill I wanted to die on. So, I just let them watch. They had lots of commentary that was just, they were missing the forest for the trees. Until it came to a part when, I can't remember which Missus that Oprah Winfrey plays, but she was talking about all the pain in the world and it showed these different scenes of different struggles that people go through in life, and especially children. And the kids that I teach, a lot of them have had various and sundry traumas in their young lives and so to see their change, I mean they went from making fun of it to quiet and listening. I mean, it drew them in. It was pretty amazing to see these kids who one minute were making fun of the film to the next minute, just so engaged and so that was pretty powerful to me. Just to see them identify with the film. (V. Mayfield, Interview 1, November 21, 2018)

Rather than attempt to seize control of the class or shut down this initially frustrating experience, Violet chose to release the reigns of pedagogical control and step back. I am especially struck by her decision to just allow her students to watch. In this case, allowing the film to do its emotional work through the portrayal of a relatable life experience proved to be transformative for the class.

In our second interview, Beulah discussed her own difficulties, mistakes, and personal traumas and explained that in her class, creative writing, both with paper and film, was a place for students to explore what hurts. She described this process of sharing life events as one that helps her shape a positive, respectful, and trusting classroom environment, and as a private means of getting to know her students better. Beulah said, "It's a way for you to get it out

without it all staying inside, and you don't realize the impact that can have on just your

wellbeing. Just not keeping everything inside, or you know even if it's just to me. That

somebody knows your story" (B. Fitzergald, Interview 2, December 13, 2018).   This educator

talked about her classroom as place where she experienced occasional frustrations, like Violet,

but also as a place where care and concern (she used the term "love") could be and needed to be

expressed. Film was a venue for exploring life events in compositions, alongside traditional

typographical narratives, and teachers used a variety of means to make sense of events and build

connections, bringing to mind the Heideggerian sense of place and the multitude of activity that

exists in classrooms.

Social media and creative writing. For Beulah, film was a place where barriers could

be broken down in misunderstanding between human beings, as well as a place where fiction and

nonfiction could mingle.

Beulah faced her own challenges with a mandated curriculum, as well as managing the

expectations of other stakeholders in her teaching. She mentioned that there were moments her

creative choices were "frowned upon" (Interview 1, November 12, 2018). This was evident

when Beulah used a popular social media platform, Snapchat, as a creative outlet for a student to

complete a personal narrative. The prioritized use of some materials over others created a sense

of tension for this teacher (van Manen, 1997). As I mentioned earlier, Beulah also prefers

Snapchat a medium for communication, and sends messages to her own network using the

platform, forming her own ideological practice (Street, 1993). She explained in our second

interview that students can edit and insert digital props in Snapchat, and that she films team

building activities with her students at the beginning of the year. She elaborated on this process,

stating,

Some of them actually know how to do coding and stuff, and that's great but there's also

ways that you can create clips. One thing I let a few students do last year, which was

kind of frowned upon but I got the idea from a professor, was kind of along the lines of a

personal narrative, but they did it with Snapchat stories throughout the day and it created

one storyline that they were able to save using it. (B. Fitzgerald, Interview 1, November

12, 2018)

Students wrote about the day's events, including,

an important day, and the girl did her birthday and she would just record herself at

various moments and her thoughts and things, and by the end with Snapchat you can put

it all together as one story, so it created this loop and it was actually really interesting.(B.

Fitzgerald, Interview 1, November 12, 2018)

This use of film was questioned by school administrators, and Beulah went on to say, "I wish it

was something I could use more and people understand that it's not just social media. That it can

be used for other aspects" (Interview 1, November 12, 2018). The use of social media to create a

digital film project lined up with Bull and Kajder's (2005) description of similar practices,

although Beulah's use of social media for this kind of work with students adds an additional

layer.

I followed up on this response by asking about the social media nature of the project and

probed to see exactly what aspect of the project was frowned upon. Beulah affirmed that the

social media aspect of the project was what was called into question. Nevertheless, she restated

the value of the platform and acts in a variety of leadership roles within her school. She equated

this use of social media with a traditional creative writing experience: "I would call it creative

writing because there is a writing process to it, to incorporate something along those lines" (B. Fitzgerald, Interview 1, November 12, 2018).

Beulah took risks in allowing students to use film creatively. Sometimes these risks resulted in her practices being questioned. In this case, she pressed some boundaries in her school by using social media and cites misunderstanding of the platform as a source for this conflict. Although school districts embraced some forms of filmic material, including Flocabulary, others like social media were less encouraged.

Relating Self to Film

Sometimes watching a film created relatable human connections, as well. When talking about layers of human depictions in the film *Hidden Figures*, Tom immediately connected the relationships in the film to those of the students in his class:

> But when we get into Hidden Figures, we're talking about women's studies, we're talking about the Civil Rights movement, and we're talking about the space race, but we're also, every single time, just talking about just human interactions, because you see friendships in there. You know, you see a bit of a lovely story in there. Um, you see mommas raising their babies in there. You know, I just had a student come back and bring her baby yesterday, and I got to see her. And she's finishing school, and she has a vision for her future and I'm proud of her. But it's hard right now. She has a three-month-old while she's trying to finish high school, but those dynamics are still embedded when we pick these movies that are rich and have some depths. (T. Wahlberg, Interview 2, January 25, 2019)

Another example from Tom's teaching was the film *Cinderella Man* (Howard, 2005), which he referenced in both of our interviews. There is a particular scene in which the main character, who has been wealthy, has to ask for government assistance. Tom addresses this scene as a person who has, at one time in life, been on government assistance and talked about the silent interactions with students in his classroom who shared this common experience.

Still, there were other times that teachers used films to show students people and places very much removed from the students' context. I will describe this kind of interaction with film next.

Connections to the Story of Others

In addition to having students consider themselves, teacher used film to display stories of the other, or those not like some of their students. In some cases, these narratives were completely removed from the context of the students' lives. In other cases, films created opportunities for students to see the stories of those among them that they had not considered. As part of using film, teachers described the extremely positive feelings they had about using film to make these discoveries with their students.

Teachable moments. Chief among Beulah's film choices was *Temple Grandin* (Jackson, 2010). Using this film in class was a moment she described as one where the required curriculum provided a teaching victory for her. The story focuses on the titular character's life and work as a person with autism. At first, Beulah said her students were confused by the main character's behavior and were not sure about the film, but the use of the movie opened up a powerful dialogue and allowed students to begin to consider others in their own lives who have autism.

I was curious about how the film impacted any students with autism in Beulah's classroom, and she stated, Well, actually, I had some. They were open to me about their autism when we talked about it, and they were actually, this one in particular was so excited because Temple was very much what he had experienced as far as like the noises and only seeing things in black and white, having difficulty with figurative language and the fact that his classmates were interested in it. He felt more welcome, he felt like he could talk to them about it. He felt like before they didn't understand, so it was just like *(laughs)* Temple states, "A door opened, and I went through it." So, it was a door opening for him, and so that was something powerful to witness as well within a classroom. A turning point in that student's life. (B. Fitzgerald, Interview 1, November 12, 2018)

Clearly, this film choice was one that was somewhat unexpected for this teacher, and yet one that provided an opportunity for powerful content connections, as well as connections with the human beings these students interacted with in their everyday lives.

In a similar vein, John talked about his approach to teaching history as "trying to tell stories, it's all about stories instead of the dates and the names and things like that. So, you know, seeing that video makes it, to me, more real, helps them understand it is a story, you know, these people really lived, these things really happened" (Interview 2, December 19, 2018). In this way, John encourages his students to see the narratology present in the content, and advises them that history is a way of ensuring people in the now do not make the mistakes of the past. Violet echoed this concern that students learn from the past so that they could make a better present reality.

Sometimes teachers spoke directly to a concern not just about recognizing the value of the narrative history provides, but in recognizing that there is a wider world of human experience. Cedar talked about using film to help students question what is typical as a way of seeing the stories of others, recording, "The video goes into what it means to be typical, how it is relative but in our world, if you look at the population, the most typical person is a 28-year-old right-handed Han Chinese man" (Log 5, November 12, 2018). In a school where typical often means Caucasian, Cedar makes use of film to shape up assumptions about the rest of the world.

Other examples of expanding on the human story came through my interview with Tom, in which he shared the story of *Boycott* (Johnson, 2001), an HBO film, and how this movie showed his students an element of the story of Martin Luther King, Jr. that was rarely explored in their traditional textbooks. This film allowed Tom to move beyond what he called the "poster" representation of the historical reality of King's life, answering the question of "who influences the influencers" and how students might become influencers in their own lives (Interview 1, November 23, 2018). For example, Tom talked about a scene that depicted King's early process of learning about nonviolent resistance:

> So, [Bayard Rustin]'s writing for the *Guardian* out of New York City. Hears about the
> bus boycott and comes to Montgomery, just walks straight into town. Walks straight to
> Dr. King's house and, like, at the time King had armed guards, even though he's claiming
> nonviolent resistance, the people surrounding him are armed. So, Bayard Rustin just tries
> to come straight to the door and he's by these guys with guns, and King finds out Bayard
> Rustin is there. Now, Rustin has already been doing nonviolent resistance up north and
> kind of teaching and mentoring how to do this. He has come to the south to be that for
> King if he will allow. Coretta knew more about Bayard Rustin than Dr. King did because

remember both of them educated up north, and they both decided to come back down south to help because they knew just the struggle in the south was where they wanted to come and preach and raise their family. So, Bayard Rustin ends up being this guy who says, 'Hey, if you're going to be nonviolent, this isn't a tactic, this a way of life.' (T. Wahlberg, Interview 1, November 23, 2018)

 This film segment gave Tom the opportunity to show King as a learner, adding nuance to his depiction as a leader. By showing examples like this, this educator felt that the story elements of history were more accurately and fully portrayed. As Tom said:

That's why I push play. But it's also showing, like, even if we try to perfect the wrongs, it's still not going to happen. Like humanity and mess still gets in the way, and so we've got to keep our heroes human and I think that's one of things that film sometimes allows us to do. If a producer or a director does it right, I can use it. (T. Wahlberg, Interview 1, November 23, 2018)

In another example, Cedar shared about the experience of showing a Muslim girl's story of a treacherous path to school each day. Cedar talked about film as a text that could be used to show students a reconsideration of who their neighbor might be, and John echoed this desire that students see films as examples of human stories. Many of Cedar's students were familiar with the story of Jesus, but part of their classroom learning focused on gaining knowledge of other faiths and traditions. Film became a venue for asking students to consider their preconceptions about other faiths and locations around the world, including an "Around the Town" video in which Cedar asked adults in the community questions about Africa and showed students their responses.

Tom discussed his role as a teacher in a rural school where many of his students are white and middle class. Film served as a means of considering counternarratives for students' cultural experiences, including real-life implications for issues like immigration. Tom chose a film that detailed the story of Latino students who worked to go an out-of-state competition, even while risking their citizenship status, pointing out that this gave his high school class an opportunity to see actors of similar age level, dealing with a struggle in life in both the form of academic competition and the fear that a threat of deportation can create.

For teachers, this relatability reached into the stories told at home, as well. Cedar, in particular, advocated for conversations at home to take place after his class so that students could talk with their parents about how and why they viewed the world as they did. For these educators, considering the sources of information and opinion in classroom discussion was key in facilitating productive dialogues with their students. One step of this process was engaging the quiet students so that all voices could be heard. Once ideas were expressed, these teachers went even further by considering where these strands of thought were coming from to create a dialogue that was not only about the content, but about the social and cultural roots of the dialogue itself. In his third log, Cedar recorded:

> I showed some video clips of some of the candidates, their campaign ads. We kind of broke those down looking at the language they were using, how they're talking about people in their party, people in the other party, just the divisive rhetoric. And then that led into a discussion about what it means to be an educated, responsible citizen, a critically conscious citizen. How we need to see past all these 30 second video ads and really think about, Well, hey. Being respectful to people that disagree with us in this, in our culture. In our communities. (C. Anthony, Log 3, November 5, 2018)

In this way, these two teachers drew on the information contained in filmic materials to make a variety of connections, again bringing to mind the symbolic interactionist approach (Denzin, 1992).

When discussing civilizations and cultures, Cedar calls upon his students to engage in inquiry with the adults in their lives, as well as one another. This means that rather than calling and responding in all of his classroom practices, adhering to the typical question, answer, respond approach, Cedar has his students engage in what he calls a "dance party" to discuss their understanding of the world around them. This "dance party" practice involves playing music, and then "when the music stops, you slap someone's hand and share what your person, what your conversation was like" (C. Anthony, Interview 1, November 2, 2018). In this way, Cedar steps back and removes himself from the center stage, allowing his students to discuss their ideas and perspectives.

Cedar's assignment includes a film where he goes around the town and asks local people what they know about different cultures, and then asks students to conduct similar interviews. In this rural classroom, differences are valued and Cedar asks the students to consider who their "neighbors" are, and pushes students to see the overlaps between Christianity and Islam. His use of film includes the Nobel Prize acceptance speech of Malala Yousafzai, and he points out her self-sacrificing nature for the purpose of education. This valuing of education is underscored by another video in Cedar's class, which shows a young girl braving dangerous elements in the Himalayan Mountains so that she can attend school.

As a final summary of this theme, I will offer Tom's account of how he uses film, captured from his first log entry:

The main objective when we view films in class is to catch a glimpse of two things: a

protagonist or a crew of them who students can relate to and be inspired by; the second, a

cast of characters they cannot relate to but can sympathize with. Being able to relate or

not relate to is connected primarily to socioeconomic status and race, secondary

connections being age, gender, and geographic locations. (T. Wahlberg, Log 1, 2018)

For teachers in this study, relatability proved to be a foundational element of using film. Teachers wanted students to see others who were like them so that they could process their own lived experiences. Moreover, teachers wanted to students to see representations of people who were not like them. Tom's comments show the power of not just finding films that acted as mirrors for students on a surface level. His desire was for students to see humanity in other like themselves and unlike themselves. Both Beulah and Violet took what could have been a passive viewing experience and instead seized upon the possibilities of the filmic material to give students an opportunity to process their own lives and think about those like and unlike themselves. They not only took the time to use the text – they also noticed what was happening in their students' responses. Cedar, in a similar path, chose to open up dialogues about representations of people and historical ideas, asking his students to talk with others as a way of responding.

Theme Two: "The Thing is Finding the Time"

Both Violet and John expressed the idea in their second interviews that there "is never enough time." In spite of this lack of time, teachers found themselves drawn to using filmic materials, given its power for both meeting standards and making the kind of human connections teachers were interested in. These ideas reflect time teachers spent in class, as well as outside of class, even at home in bed, preparing for their lessons.

Whether they were making films or just projecting them, educators discussed the process of using film in the classroom as one that involved spending time in specific ways. From their discussion, I have gleaned three elements of how teachers spent their time (Curating, Pruning, and Acting) which I will describe in this section, drawing on teachers' words and experiences.

Curating: Finding the Right Films

Each teacher in the study described a process of looking for and finding appropriate filmic texts. Teachers made use of online resources and took time to search out clips on the Internet, including films created by students in other areas. They also noted film clips and examples in their own viewing. I chose the term curation, in line with O'Byrne's (2014) concept of effective pedagogy, designed to help students become "curators and ultimately 'constructors' of media" (p. 103). Teachers in this study endeavored to curate meaningful resources for their instruction, and this was a process that involved searching and notetaking.

For example, Beulah describes herself as a teacher who is keeping up with what is popular among her students, looking for what might "spark" their interest, as noted by Smilanich and Lafreniere (2010. She talked about the narrow and delicate line she walked when discussing some controversial film choices, like *13 Reasons Why*. If students went there first, she would discuss the film, but was careful not to initiate these conversations, bringing to mind the edgy topics that often accompany discussions of young adult reading preferences (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). Even when watching film recreationally, Beulah is on the hunt for narratives that can be transported to her classroom and notes when stories work in engaging and unexpected ways so that she can share these examples with students. She said, "I am notorious for taking notes in my phone. If I see something that I feel like is applicable in the classroom, I'll make note of it. In this part, in this movie, there's a good quote or a good scene that can really help students

understand various plot elements, or just characterizations and things" (B. Fitzgerald, Interview 1, November 12, 2018). In our second interview, Beulah expanded on this by discussing how, at the end of a long day of teaching and answering parent emails, she will search on her phone in bed to find clips to show in her classroom.

Sometimes this concept of searching and curation led to cross-curricular connections among teachers. Violet discussed how she reached out to the science teacher on her team to locate a clip that could be used to meet the science teacher's standards, as well as conveying the importance of argument writing for her students, recalling the work of Fluitt-Dupuy (2001). For Violet, this process appealed to what she called the students' sense of justice, a concept she referenced three times throughout our initial interview and cited from the middle school document, *This We Believe*.

Tom described the process of spending hours, trying to find the clip that fit his needs, and used the words "frustration" and "treasure hunt" to sum up this experience:

> I'm just picking up breadcrumbs that someone left along the way, that I could connect this, and so the frustration is, I know what I'm looking for, but I don't know what clip I'm needing right now. You know? That's more of a frustration, not even being able to put it into words. But that's the treasure hunt, as well, because what you do find is, like, I try to convince myself, that was worth your time. Even though it's like 1:30 in the morning right now and you started at 10:15, but yet you were able to make this brand-new playlist and you put it in this order that, man, it just flows really well. You know, that's most often worth, you know, a much bigger cup of coffee in the morning. To start my day. But I try not to do that too often because YouTube, really, I get lost and time doesn't exist, but like that's the research. (T. Wahlberg, Interview 2, January 25, 2019)

Once teachers had decided on what they needed to show, the next step was deciding how much time they could spend on the film.

Pruning: Choosing What to Show

To borrow a word from Tom's first interview, teachers are engaged in a process of "pruning." First teachers find a film, but then they take the personal and professional time to decide how much of the film will be used for classroom time. Tom described the experience of realizing that 45 minutes of a film he was showing was failing to connect with his students. Rather than continue with the plan as conceived, Tom chopped off that 45 minutes to get to the impactful moments in his second group of students and made adjustments for the following day for the first group of students. In addition to his description of finding the engaging moments of film, he described how he handles resistance to some types of film:

> I showed a black and white film. I knew that there's Isabel: 'I don't like black and white films.' I was like, 'How many have you watched?' 'None.' I was like, 'Well, let's try.' 'Okay.' You know, and I didn't expect the okay, but in the end, I didn't show the whole film. It's 2 hours and 15 minutes and the first 45, you've got to be a lover of movies to understand that sometimes the first 45 minutes sets it up. I didn't show the first 45 minutes after first block because I could tell first block, it wasn't, they weren't, it wasn't connecting just yet. So, second block I went straight to minute 45 and went from there. And it was a scene where you see Sergeant York as this country bumpkin who is this phenomenal shot, which you have to know once we he goes from a conscientious objector to what he will say: I'm going to kill to save lives. In the end, that is his kind of conversion experience, but he is a sharpshooter and you've got to see it. And that very first scene grabs their attention right away because it's humorous and it's showing off his

skills, and it's pretty neat. So, that dynamic of, Do you stay true to watch a full feature film, or do you just do clips, which I sometimes do clips? But I wanted to them to get the feel for this, so I just chopped off 45 minutes and we still watched an hour and a half of it, and it served the purpose much better than, because sometimes in my mind I'm like, I want them to persevere through this, right? I want them to appreciate it. But sometimes that's just, it does more than harm than good, I think. (T. Wahlberg, Interview 1, November 23, 2018)

Tom chose the part that he emphasized students really needed to see within the film, and made decisions about his teaching based on the experience of showing the film to his first class. In a similar vein of discussion, John talked about how he found that a clip that he had used successfully in the past failed to maintain interest with his current group of students. He said, "I've done for the last several and the kids usually respond to it well. This year for some reason, the kids didn't like it. That's just their personal preference, I think. I think it's still a good video clip" (J. Adams, Interview 1, November 12, 2018).   I asked John about how he reacts in these kinds of situations, and he said that he chose to move on as quickly as possible. I then asked if there was ever a time John might consider disposing of a segment of film that had proved successful in the past. In response to this, John said, "I won't discard" (Interview 1, November 12, 2018), indicating that he would continue to try the clip with new audiences...

Just as artists must improvise on a canvas, so too did these teachers reconsider content, chop moments that did not work, and reshape as they needed to. In our first interview, Violet described the response of her students when she had not carefully planned as "tyranny" and reified her commitment to make sure to do the work ahead of time so that the classroom experience was as well-planned as possible, suggesting that teachers "think two or three weeks, a

month ahead to your next unit, and start planning that way" (Interview 1, November 21, 2018).

In other words, using film was not a free and easy way for teachers to shirk their duties. Instead,

film served as a moving part of a reflective and forward-thinking pedagogy.

Tom echoed this careful process of doing his work ahead of time so that he could

properly tell the stories in his content area, while noting that it was also acceptable at times to

admit that he did not know the answer to a question. Tom said this comfort with admitting gaps

in knowledge and the need to do research was a process that took him six years of teaching to

reach.

As noted earlier, in addition to considering the time they could spend on using film in

class, teachers were also faced with judgments about the appropriate use of film, including those

kinds of materials that were acceptable in their districts.

Acting: What to Do with It?

Making use of analytical processes was important in some way for each teacher in the

study, regardless of their content area. To make judicious use of their classroom time, teachers

made decisions about how students respond to filmic materials. For John Adams, this analytical

processing meant that students needed to have clear content connections both when seeing a film

and when making films. In fact, John had experiences of struggle with having students make

films, and this again reminded me of Mills' (2010) notion of using scaffolding when making

films. John said, "To me, I didn't feel like it was as useful for the kids. I feel like it was fun for

the kids, but I didn't feel like it was helpful for them or the content" (Interview 1, November 12,

2018). He added that he saw that making films was less helpful, in this case, based on the

content represented in the students' final products. He said, "I would love, I've always had an

interest in maybe getting the kids to make some of their own videos. I've tried it a time or two. The problem is finding the right, I guess the right process. I guess I'm nervous as to how that will go. But I would love to be able to have kids make their own videos" (J. Adams, Interview 1, November 12, 2018. Despite John's reluctance to have students create film as he worked through finding the right process, he practices the use of showing films and having students respond in written and visual (illustrated) prompts. Moreover, he continues to express a strong desire to have students explore composing their own filmic products.

Violet expressed a similar initial struggle with balancing the need to supervise young adolescents with the desire to allow creative play in the creation of films. For Violet, this meant that she would refine the learning environment and ask students to complete projects in new spaces and new ways. In some cases, Violet had a writing assignment planned and used film as a way of sharing visual stories to act both as a refresher for the writing assignment, and as a mentor text for elements of stories to include. She said, "it was really, really helpful for them to have that visual reminder when they were going to transform this [narrative], and it was kind of a spur of the moment "(Log 1, November 27, 2018). Violet used film as both a product to create and as a text to demonstrate elements that would lead to creation of traditional texts. She used graphic organizers to help guide her students through the process of analyzing films critically, stating, "I love graphic organizers, and so I use a lot of graphic organizers to scaffold my students as they analyze text" (V. Mayfield, Interview 1, November 21, 2018). In this way, Violet used a visual scaffold to help students interpret and critique a visual classroom material. Cedar used film to spur conversation with students based on political ads, focusing on "a discussion about what it means to be an educated, responsible citizen, a critically conscious citizen," (Log 3, November 5, 2018).

In John's classroom, students view films, often including parody songs, and translate these films and concepts into storyboards of their own design. This practice aligned with the storyboarding practices of Bruce (2011). A self-described visual learner, John reaches asks students to reach into curricular and movie material to render images on a handout that he frequently uses. The handout is a series of six boxes, mirroring the appearance of celluloid, and students are encouraged to use both text and image to represent their understanding of film and textbook reading.

This active use of film echoed Hobbs's (2011) discussion of the optimal uses of film, including the elements necessary for meaningful media instruction. It was not enough to find and show a powerful film – teachers recognized that their students ultimately had to do something with the film. Seizing on materials and using them for their own sake was not enough. Teachers in this study engaged in the additional process of making film meaningful and active by asking students to carry the experience forward into a variety of assignments, building a theoretical connection between their own experiences and the filmic products. Some of these tasks were responses to the films, and some were filmic response to other texts. Examples included:

1. A visual project that related to *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, drawing on text evidence (Violet).
2. A set of six questions, with students sometimes answering all six and sometimes answering three of the six in a film guide approach (Tom).
3. A classroom discussion with the teacher as facilitator (Tom).
4. A stop-motion animation film product related to Noyce's (2014) film *The Giver* (Violet).

5. A fill-in notes page for curriculum-related film clips (John).

6. A discussion of self and others in response to Jackson's (2010) film *Temple Grandin* (Beulah).

7. A written argument essay in response to science videos (Violet).

8. A report on reading done through student- created film (John).

9. Student-created films about a poetic interpretation of the meaning of life (Cedar).

10. Student-directed dialogue about cultural assumptions in response to film clips (Cedar).

11. A comic strip response to review films and lecture, as seen in Figure 4.4 (John).

12. An interactive walkthrough of a historical home, with audio and video segments embedded (Violet).

As teachers decided what to do with film, sometimes this led them to create their own examples. This was an equally time-consuming process. Cedar, in particular, described his process as time-consuming and lamented not having more time now that his life has grown more complex with family. For Cedar, creating films and including them in class has been an iterative process, and one that presents a challenge when other life events are happening. The steps of making the films including brainstorming, filming, and editing. Nevertheless, he described the process as positive:

So, filming the thing, coming up with the idea, filming the thing, and then all the working on the editing and stuff like that So, but again, like I've told other teachers when I've just kind of presented a little bit about this is, once you do it, you have a video to use for that topic for the rest of your life. My challenge now is to, I've got two little daughters which has kind of put the brakes on my after-school time. (C. Anthony, Interview 1, November 2, 2018)
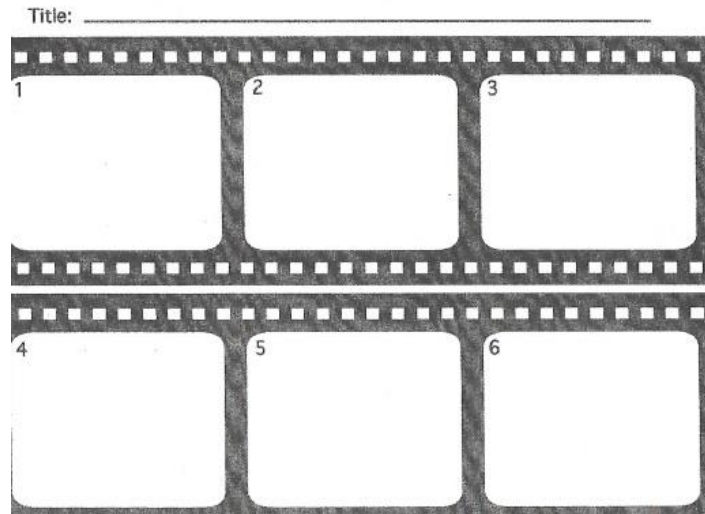
Figure 4.4. The film strip template used by John Adams, retrieved from

https://imgs.edhelper.com/clipart/teachers/org-filmstrip.pdf

Making films was not a simple or complete process for Cedar, especially reflected in his desire to keep including students on screen. Deciding what to do with film led to acting in the filmic sense as Cedar created and edited multi-player performances and even created an alter-ego for his class films. In our second interview, this teacher advised that more teachers should consider creating an alter-ego as they think about how to include films in the classroom.

As teachers in this study demonstrated, the use of film as a text is not a simple one and done process, nor did they treat it as an easy excuse for a lack of lesson planning. Using film meant that the lines between personal time and professional time blurred as teachers worked hours to find the right materials. Then, teachers had to decide what material was appropriate for classroom use, as well as where to trim and expand content for their purposes. All of this processing took place prior to the actual viewing experience, although sometimes adjustments took place after an initial viewing. Teachers then had to decide what they were going to ask students to do with the films in a range of responses that included writing answers to questions on paper or engaging in a film composing process. I will now discuss the third theme from the study, the concept of both seeing and being seen as part of a filmic pedagogy.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Theme Three: "I See You Today"</h2>

Interestingly in this study, sight and seeing took on a number of uses and approaches. Sometimes, teachers talked about the process of allowing students to see themselves. Other times, there were examples of teachers talking about letting students know that they were seen in the classroom. What is more, there were times in the study when teachers talked about the process of watching their students watching.

Positive Embarrassment

Moving beyond seeing the concepts mandated by standards, Cedar discussed the need to include all of his students when he created videos for class. He talked about how he could see the students' responses when they saw themselves on screen, and how this was sometimes an embarrassing and yet positive experience for his students. This concept of seeing themselves added an interesting dimension to the discussion of our voyeuristic tendencies when watching a film, as noted in Denzin's (1992) writing about symbolic interaction in film. As Denzin (1992) suggested, we do not ask permission to view when we see films. We assume the role of watchful eye, as if it is our right and privilege, often taking on aspects of the gaze of the main characters.

The concept of seeing selves led to some embarrassment for students, but simultaneously led the students to want to be involved. It was not enough to include one class in the process; Cedar had to find a way to include all of his classes each time he created a video with them. When a student with a particular talent or skill who was not already being celebrated by the wider school culture comes into Cedar's class, he invites the student to showcase his or her talents in a film. Tom takes a similar approach, asking students to discover areas of interest and then closing his semester with a panoply, in which students take the classroom stage and share their learning. He is a teacher who challenges his students to risk vulnerability as indicated in his teaching log after viewing the short film *Butterfly Circus* (Weigel, 2009):

> This poignant short film speaks to overcoming physical obstacles but even more so the opportunity and the capability of an individual to dismantle the lies that so intensely entangle. Insecurities flaring up and sending folks, young and old, into mental and relational tailspins were brought up and even processed collectively for those students

willing to take the healthy risk of sharing of their more authentic and vulnerable selves. (T. Wahlberg, Log 5, 2018).

In this log, Tom shows how using film not only means he is showing someone else's story. He wants students to know that they are seen as he recognizes that his students deal with insecurities and sometimes very mature and emotional processes. In a similar way, Cedar has taken on the role of filmmaker, while allowing himself to be supplanted as a background player in many student-created films. In this way, he puts students front and center. In our second interview, he talked about the ongoing nature of the films as mementos to help him remember students, friends, and family members from his life, and spoke positively of how he would return to his films for decades to come. He said, "That's the cool thing, I've brought so many friends and family into these videos. You know, they'll always be there. So, it's just cool to look back and be like, man, these are, who's been in my life. It will be cool to see that ten or twenty years down the road" (C. Anthony, Interview 2, December 21, 2018). What began as part of pedagogy for Cedar led to the creation of a more personal and reflective material.

I will now discuss how teachers with filmic pedagogy expressed to students that they (the students) were being seen and acknowledged.

Seeing and Being Seen

Just as Violet described her students and knew the traumas in their lives, so too did Tom discuss the need to let students know that teachers see them and recognize them as part of the classroom community. For Tom, this was a personal experience, as he related his own story of moving to several different schools, remembering the tension of wanting to blend in and yet be seen and be a part of what was happening around him.

Sometimes, Tom said, he will recognize the students in his classroom that are showing that they have having negative experiences and he will simply say, "I see you today," and the students will nod in recognition and understanding (Tom Wahlberg, Interview 1, November 23, 2018). Also, in our first interview, Tom described the mundane process of handing out graded papers as an organic opportunity to "go eye to eye" with all of his students. In a similar process, Beulah wanted her students to know they were regarded through the stories they shared, and through her willingness to share her own mistakes and tragedies.

For these teachers, showing the powerful stories found in film proved to be one layer of their pedagogical experience. Yet another layer was recognizing, reaching out, and welcoming the students that filled their classroom seats each day. Beulah added an additional wrinkle to this experience, considering the ways that teachers construct their identities in social media platforms, allowing parents, students, and other stakeholders to only view edited versions of teachers' lives. I asked Beulah is she felt that this identity construction was made more difficult by her role as a teacher and she affirmed that it did, saying:

> You know you're in constant comparison when you have social media. You see
> everybody's quote perfect lives, which that's another conversation I had with my
> homeroom. Our first, starting with the first day was, you know, people observing. Do
> they really know you? And, I said, they were all like, 'Yeah, yeah. People can really
> know who you are.' I said, 'What about the fact that I only show you what I want to
> show you?' I said, 'Have you looked at my [Instagram]' some of my students, I allow
> them to follow Instagram. I don't care about that, I don't post anything negative, or you
> know. Or at least I don't think so, but I said, I only allow you to see what I want you to

see. You don't see the moments of sadness. I purposefully never put if I'm feeling down

on social media. (B. Fitzgerald, Interview 2, December 13, 2018)

This discussion brought to mind the notion of how the self or body is viewed in

phenomenological studies (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). This notion of embodiment for

teachers speaks to the way educators think through the presentation of themselves. For Pollio,

Henley, and Thompson (1997), presentation included the appearance, "dress," and "posture" of

individuals (p. 75). Beulah expanded this presentation in another way as she shared about her

choices in a digital space. This consideration of the self or body as viewed created additional

tension for Beulah.

Adjustments with Sight

Like pedagogical optometrists, teachers in this study watched films, but also watched

their students watching films and made adjustments based on what they saw. Violet described

this process in our second interview. She used a short film called *The Wave* (Gansel, 2018) for a

Holocaust unit in her English class, and discussed how the teacher in the film began enacting the

practices of Hitler in his classroom.

> **Violet:** And so, he started acting, he started acting like Hitler. Which the students,
>
> obviously they didn't catch that yet.

> **Interviewer:** Your students?

> **Violet:** The students in the video. Actually, as an aside, as he was, as the teacher in the
>
> video was walking through his requirements, as he was taking to the next level, he made
>
> up a salute, and a slogan that the students should recite. My students started doing it too
>
> in class as we were watching it on the video, and they thought it was kind of funny, and

so they would do it. As they were doing it in the video. But then, as they see, like these

students taking it to the next level, just like what happened in the Holocaust where they

started their own, kind of like a club, called the Wave. And that's the name of the

film. And they started excluding people that were trying to be individuals, and they

started listening to people's conversations, and kind of reporting these interactions with

people that weren't a part of the Wave and what they were doing. Then they started

getting in fights and mistreating their peers in the video. My students got quiet. It wasn't

funny anymore to them. I mean, they, really all students there were watching it, all of my

students really started to get the point of what was happening. I mean, they could really

see it as something that wasn't a positive.

Violet again recounted here the experience of making observations in class while

showing a film. In her practice, she noted her students' initial reactions to the text, and then

noted the changes and responses her students make as they watch. Just as Denzin (1992) pointed

out, there is a particular role of observer that is acted on when viewing, and this plays out for

teachers as viewers of the film – but also as observers of their students.   In this way,

understanding of content was captured by the notice of teachers as they watched their students

watching. As educators, seeing and being seen, decisions had to be made about when to step

aside and when to press play. Tom discussed the nature of the pause button in our second

interview and advocated for its use with younger students, while advising that he felt it was best

to step out the way with older students who could process and reflect more independently.

Filmic pedagogy not only included the portrayals of humanity found in the materials.

Teachers were mindful of the humanity of their students, as well as their own humanity. This

sense of concern for students took on a variety of meanings, such as including students in film

projects, ensuring that students knew that they were valued parts of the classroom community, and noting how students were changing while viewing. In the next section, I will discuss the final theme, the way teachers used film as a way of keeping fresh by getting "out of the box."

Theme Four: "Out of the Box"

Arriving at fresh ideas and teaching in new ways acted as a fourth theme of what was essential to teachers' experiences of using film as a text. In some cases, this approach meant that teachers were doing something that was outside of what had become normal for them, changing up their practices to increase their own engagement and interest. This increase in engagement and interest resulted in a similar payoff for their students, as well. In other cases, teachers expressed a desire to adopt a pedagogy that was different from their own school experiences.

Staying Fresh

In an effort to stave off burnout, Cedar described film as a cutting-edge approach that helped him feel fresh and relevant. I will elaborate on this description of this experience first, and then briefly discuss how other teachers saw this "out of the box" approach as a way of engaging students. This sense of being "out of the box," for Cedar, meant that he was doing something that both engaging to his students and that was different from what he saw others teachers doing in their classrooms.

For Cedar, keeping up with creative methods in his pedagogy was an ongoing and positive process. This is an example of a reflective and constantly questioning educator who wishes to push his students to further dialogue and conversation. At the onset of the project, Cedar expressed a strong desire to reflect more on his teaching through this research project,

even leading him to request the opportunity to continue working in the study for two months instead of only one. For Cedar, creative outlets are ways of staving off stagnation:

> It was just really exciting and fun to learn a new skillset, and kind of felt like I was cutting edge. So, it was kind of encouraging to me that I'm doing something out of the box that the kids are really enjoying. It was fun." (C. Anthony, Interview 1, November 2, 2018)

For Cedar, using film meant that he had found a kind of text that was mutually engaging for both himself and his students. He arrived at a sense of being "cutting edge" as he discovered that he was using film in a way that many other teachers were not. This statement from Cedar also speaks to the kinds of skills that students (and teachers) in a New Literacies classroom are required to possess, as noted by Kist (2000). In response to one of his assignments, called "Ask a Human," Cedar removes himself from the dialogue and stages what he calls a "dance party" (line 54), where students walk around while music is playing and then stop and find a discussion partner when the music stops. Cedar constantly presses to this "human" narratology, asking students to consider others. In this way, Cedar is not the only speaker in the classroom. Instead, he becomes a facilitator and creates opportunities for new conversations and an open exchange of ideas. In his first log, Cedar recorded, "Education gives you options to find something you can do every day and be psyched that you're doing it" (November 2, 2018). For this teacher, using film and other creative methods was a way of maintaining his enthusiasm. In a similar approach, Tom describes himself as the "spider in the corner" (Interview 1, November 23, 2018), facilitating dialogue and drawing quiet students into his web of discussion. He described this process as a way of developing meaningful response:

So, finding a way to find an Amy. I'll throw that name out without a last name. Because she is always on it, and always asking me questions after class, but never in class. Right? But whenever she does speak in class, it's gold. And so, I want her voice to be heard, so it's the written assessment, but it's that public dialogue that you go watch a movie with anybody and then you go to Waffle House afterwards. I mean, you usually don't wind up talking about anything but that movie if it was a good one. I want to kind of recreate that, which means the stuffiness of what school has turned into of, Alright, we're going to watch something. We're going to do the movie guide. And then we're going to move on. (T. Wahlberg, Interview 1, November 23, 2018)

This activity follows from Tom's use of film and how he chooses to have students respond to what has been seen. By engaging with students in this way, part of Tom's process of staying fresh includes facilitating and involving fresh, new voices in the classroom. Rather than creating a complicated project, which some might see as cutting edge, Tom seeks to reenact his typical response to seeing a good movie – talking with his friends about it.

Making it Amusing

Beyond staving off their own burnout, teachers also described the experience of film as one that was humorous for them and allowed them to use humor and amusement in the classroom. This kind of humor required teachers to engage with their students in noticing how messages were communicated through words, images, and sounds. For example, John showed parody music videos, in spite of his lack of familiarity with some of the source material, because his students enjoyed them and sang them repeatedly. For John, this use of music and image provided another opportunity for students to rehearse content they were learning. Beulah also used social media apps to make film more amusing. She talked about how props and additional

editing features could make videos on Snapchat short and entertaining, and how she gave herself cartoonish qualities, like a llama face.

This use of humorous video was completed in an effort to add energy to routine moments in the classroom, including sharing the daily objectives, which Beulah described as necessary for outsiders coming into the classroom to observe. She talked about the yearly barrage of new acronyms in education and how creative methods, like film, helped her create engagement and interest in the classroom. Moreover, this use of film drew on social media, including platforms that students used and were familiar with, and contained the additional requirement of using editing and visual effects features:

> I probably Snap more than I text. My friends and I are in group conversations. It's a way for us to send quick videos of what's going on. So, you know, even like if I'm in the car, I can just hold down a button and not be on my phone looking at it, and they can even hear my voice. Or we will, you know, put a filter on it that's funny and tell a story of something that's happened that day. So, I do use Snapchat. I actually use Snapchat, you can download, you know, the stories that you make and I can even show you something I did. Like, I'll send it to either my teammate or I'll put one up on the screen. And, like, it's, it makes me look like a llama. And the kids crack up and I'll, you know, it's a video of me explaining what they're going to do. And, you know, it's a laugh. It's fun. (B. Fitzgerald, Interview 2, December 13, 2018)

Even what might seem to be a simple process of adding humor to a routine classroom procedure involves a teacher's own ideological literacy practices, a myriad of creative design choices, and a sense of narrative about what is happening in the teacher's day or in the life of the

classroom. Beulah is using a platform that is familiar to her students in a way that adds humor and conveys needed information.

In our second interview, Cedar talked about this desire as stoking a "creative fire." As part of his logs, Cedar described one of his Indiana Anthony videos and the experience of showing it in class:

> Captain's Log. This is Cedar Anthony recording. 12/10. Today I showed, to review Japanese Samurai warrior culture, a video of Indiana Anthony and the Lost Secret Samurai Sword. In the video, Indiana Anthony travels to the island of Fiji, AKA a local mountain, and he has to scale the mountain to get to the top because he's heard rumor that there is legendary secret samurai sword that needs to be found and displayed in museums all over the world. So, he gets to the top of the mountain and immediately there is a member of the Secret Society of Samurai Warriors guarding the samurai sword, and he has to do battle with him where he ends up getting beaten up and tied up, and then questioned and quizzed over the history of the island of Japan. Thankfully, Indiana Anthony is incredibly knowledgeable about said island, and measured and weighed and found worthy to be given the sword from the guardians of the Secret Society of the Samurai Sword. So, he then receives the sword and he, before he takes it to the great museums of London and Paris, Moscow, he decides to see what the sword's power can really do and begins to slice through mangos and apples and oranges and pineapples that are thrown into the air by the member of the Secret Society of the Samurai Sword. So, the students were engaged throughout the whole video. I have introduced this character throughout the year and I always introduce him with, you know, "Guys, I know this is a difficult topic" (whatever it is we're discussing) "but thankfully I have a good friend who

is very, a lot more knowledgeable than I am." And normally he just happens to be traveling in whatever part of the world we are discussing at the time. So, the students really, really enjoyed that. Even the ones that don't focus during lecture kind of pipe up for those videos. So, Anthony out. (C. Anthony, Log 11, December 10, 2018)

What is fun and amusing for the teachers as they set up their practices leads to positive, enjoyable experiences for students. Given the time that teachers spend when incorporating film into the classroom, if the results were not positive, enjoyable, and effective, they would likely visit other media options for their pedagogical needs.

Teachers as Filmic Artists

Two teachers in the study, Cedar and Tom, talked about how filmmakers had given a part of their life to making film. Tom stated that when he used a film in class, he wanted to honor what the director had done, and even called on directors to make more quality films for classroom use toward the end of our first interview.

In spite of requirements and constraints like standards and curriculum maps, teachers in this study made the time to implement creative and artistic practices in their pedagogy. As Tom suggested in our first interview, physical environment matters, including sights, sounds, and even smells. Violet described her careful and meticulous process of backwards design and planning, as well as the ways she created models of the filmic products she wanted her students to experience, including stop motion animation. Both Violet and John talked about a desire to teach in a way that was beyond what they had been taught. Beulah discussed the responsibility of closing the door to her classroom and focusing on what was important, rather than becoming enraptured with the latest educational acronym. Cedar described how he took students to various

places in the school building to construct environments, and how he dressed up and gave himself an alter-ego, later adding that he played a substitute with a wig in another video. In speaking about the artistic nature of his filmic pedagogy in our second interview, Cedar had this to say:

Interviewer: So, it's kind of like a personal keepsake?

Cedar: Yeah, exactly. Definitely. I just see like the classroom as like, it's almost like my medium and a teacher's an artist. You know, they are. Just for several years I just have this like creative fire in me. I felt like I was cutting edge, you know, like really doing some cool teaching stuff. No one knew about it. You know, outside of my school. A lot didn't know. But like in my own little world, I was like, man I'm really being creative here. A "kids are getting good experience" type of thing. Teaching is, like just an amazing profession. It's so ancient, and so powerful. (Cedar Anthony, Interview, 2, January 4, 2019)

In short, these teachers worked as artists, noting the work of directors and screenwriters, as well as speakers in nonfiction clips and TED Talks, and they went so far as to step into the role of classroom directors. While none of the teachers in the study called themselves directors, even Cedar who was making his own films with friends, family members, and students, each of these teachers participated in an artistic process of representing content and, even at times, self, in an effort to engage their audience.

Summary and Conclusion

In order to answer the research question of how teachers experience using film as a text when working adolescents in rural, Appalachian settings, I interviewed five teachers both at the

beginning and end of the study. Additionally, I collected recorded logs in which teachers reflected on their experiences using film, as well as handouts and materials teachers used.

In sum, I identified four themes that were prominent in teachers' experiences. These themes included the human story that teachers wanted to share with students, the time-consuming process of thinking about how to use film pedagogically, the role of seeing and being seen when using film, and the use of film as a creative "out of the box" text. In the final chapter of this project, I will elaborate on the implications of these findings in terms of practice, policy, and further research.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to discover how teachers experienced using film as a textual resource when working with adolescent readers in rural, Appalachian settings. The question that acted as a guide for this research was: How do educators experience using film as a resource for literacy development when working with rural Appalachian adolescents? In this final chapter, I will begin with a brief summary of the findings from this study. I will then draw recommendations for research, policy, and practice from these findings and the process of going through this research study.

In order to make sense of my data, I used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, relying on Merleau-Ponty's (1993) theory of "deforming," as well as van Manen's (1997) work on constructing a phenomenological project. Furthermore, I used Denzin's (1992) approach to film using symbolic interactionism as a means of understanding the relationships of teachers to the materials, and the theory of multimodality (Bezemer & Kress, 2016) to understand the materials themselves.

Following from an initial In Vivo coding process, which allowed me to consider words of participants *ipsissima verba*, I completed a second round of Process codes. From these two sets of codes, I formed a table and collected them to distill major themes from the project. I drew on Saldaña's (2016) touch test to consider these final themes as overarching theories, rather than specific features of individual interviews. In the next section, I will provide a statement on the

significance of this study, and then I will elaborate on these findings and delve into the themes that emerged from the data I collected.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to a growing body of research into New Literacies practices, which reach back to the early workings of the New London Group's (1996) discussion of multiliteracies. New Literacies focuses on both the changing nature of practices and texts as reading and writing occurs on screens and in other digital spaces (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). What this study contributes is a Merleau-Pontian framed view into the practices of five teachers in a region that has not been given wide prominence related to digital reading practices.

Furthermore, this study focuses on work with film, a particular medium, and showcases how these teachers used film for both reading and composing. The roots of defining film as a text have origins in the auteur theory that gained prominence in the French New Wave movement. By drawing on Astruc's (1948) notion of the camera as pen, I align this view of film with Merleau-Ponty's (1993) description of the experience of the artist representing life, as well as the teacher's artistic role in conveying content to students. I will now briefly highlight the findings of this study.

A Summary of Findings

In sum, there four themes that were part of teachers' experiences. These themes included:

1. "Part of the Human Story." The name of this theme stems from Cedar's first transcript. In addition to curricular and standards-based demands, it was important

for teachers to reach into the potential for film to convey notions of the human story so that students could see others like them (and not like them) represented in media.

2. "The Thing is Finding the Time." Borrowing from John's words, teachers were pressed for time. In this study, time included the idea of class time, as well as personal time. For teachers, there was very little distinction between the time they spent planning and the time they spent in personal activities. This process of finding and spending time included locating films, deciding how much of the film to show, and deciding how students would use class time to respond to the materials.

3. "I See You Today." The notion of seeing and being stems from Tom's first transcript, and includes the idea that a filmic pedagogy means students are seeing themselves, as well as knowing that they have been recognized in class by teachers. This theme further includes the idea that teachers see students while students are watching films.

4. "Out of the Box." Using Cedar's words, teachers use film as a way of breaking outside of the box. It is an approach they consider innovative and includes affinity, amusement, and fun for the teachers, as well as for the students. In this way, teachers make artistic decisions and act as classroom auteurs.

In the next section, I will discuss the choices I made in this study which acted as limitations on my findings, followed by a discussion of these findings.

Limitations

The choice to limit the timespan on the study was one that allowed me to conduct my research in a timely manner so that this report might be completed. Deadlines and timeframes

account for some limitations, as I gathered data during a focused period of time in order to present a written record in a timely manner.

What is more, my own biases may have affected this study. Although I worked to be aware of my subjectivities by completing a bracketing interview prior to collecting data, as well as maintaining a field journal to make note of my biases, it is difficult to account for the ways ideas are communicated in tonal and nonverbal ways, with the possibility of creating misunderstandings or unspoken expectations. Even though I did not note a particular example of this within the study, I admit the possibility here in the interest of constructing an ethical and complete report.

Finally, including a small number of teachers in the study was a specific decision on my part to come to a deeper understanding of these educators and their experiences, with data including two interviews, as well as the artifacts I have just mentioned. Teachers in this study saw themselves as a relatively contained network of individuals, but I also note that other teachers in other schools may have been incorporating similar practices. How and when I would have accessed those teachers would have led me beyond the scope of this study. My desire to delve into these teachers' experiences required that they spend a considerable amount of time both in talking with me and in logging additional reflections in their teaching. A small number was appropriate for a study of this kind as I probed the experience of using film.

In the next section, I will discuss the delimitations that were more beyond my control than the limitations I have just described.

Delimitations

Although I endeavored to construct a reliable and thoughtful study of textual film use, a number of limitations beyond my control were present in the study. Not the least of these is the potential for individuals to only speak of their best practices. This phenomenological study was aimed at discovering teachers' experiences, meaning, for the most reliable and valid results to occur, teachers had to be honest about their pedagogy. As a means of delving into classroom practice, I collected handouts and teacher logs that were used during the timeframe of the study. In some cases, teachers provided multiple teacher logs, and in some cases only a small number were shared. This is also true for handouts. These additional sources of data, where and when they were available, helped to triangulate my findings and serve as a visual and textual representation of what teachers were experiencing throughout the one to two months I worked with these teachers.

I could sum up an additional limitation as "life happens" (Cedar Anthony, Interview 2, January 4, 2019). Time in this study was further limited by the additional responsibilities and roles teachers took on while working with me. These roles were both professional and personal, including grade-level team leadership roles, school-wide instructional roles, and the additional responsibilities placed on some teachers, including academic interventions, occasional administrative duties, attending after-school events, and coaching. Personal obligations included parenting roles and I will also add here that each of the five participants in my study either experienced illness during the study, or had family members, including children, who were ill. All of these conditions beyond my control led to more constricted time for some teachers.

Moreover, I note the nature of the study as one contained within a particular rural setting. Later in this chapter, I will elaborate on the further research that might be most helpful in order to create a more complete picture of what is happening with film in other contexts.

In the next section, I will begin delve into a discussion of my study, first in terms of practice. In order to frame my discussion, I will begin with a pedagogical model I constructed based on the findings in this study, as seen in Figure 5.1.

Discussion on Practice

In this section, I will discuss the findings of this study in relation to practice, policy, and research. I will then conclude with a statement about possible directions that future research may take. As I talked with teachers, I gathered data that might be helpful in considering how practice can be transformed and improved. When it comes to practice, I will first discuss a reconsideration of what counts as text when working with adolescents, and then turn my attention to the concerns of analysis, time management, and reflection that can serve to enrich a filmic pedagogical framework. As noted in the model, taking time is part of the process of using film, including curation, pruning, and then deciding on a student response. In most cases, using film in class meant that both teachers and students completed a journey from being a viewer to a maker of film. I will first expand on how these teachers used film as a text and then discuss the ways they incorporated film in ways they saw as meaningful.

The Textual Ontology of Film

Present within this study is the tension of how thoughtful and intellectual film is as an educational text. In order to teach effectively, educators saw literacy practices as a central element of their classroom practice. This centrality of text required a process of curation.
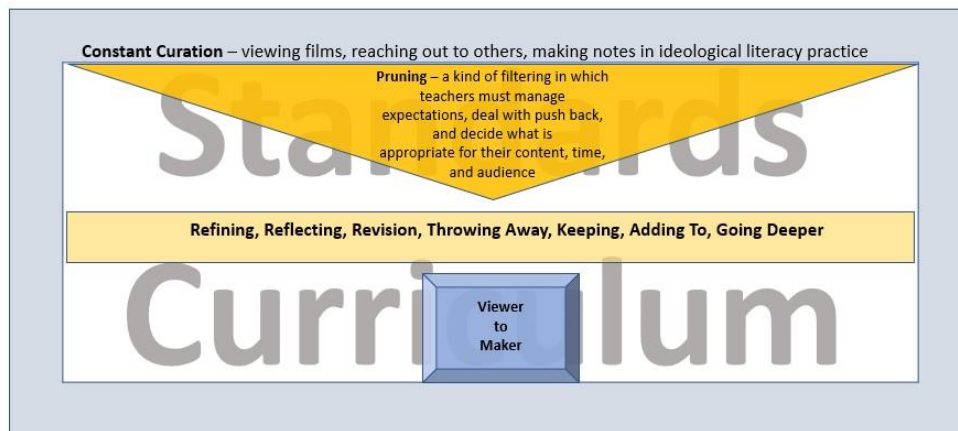
A Pedagogical Model for Using Film

Figure 5.1. A pedagogical model for using film, drawn from the study's findings.

Teachers expressed the insight that film and other forms of media are not going to disappear, and, as Bull and Kajder (2005) pointed out, film has affordances for layers of storytelling. As Violet pointed out in our second interview, she is teaching a "YouTube generation," adding "for over a hundred years, we've had this thing called film that people, we're visual creatures. We like to see beauty and we like to see other people's ideas" (Interview 2, January 21, 2019). So, the choice for educators is whether they will ignore these media or utilize what they have to offer in classroom practice, an idea echoed in Jolly's (1998) work, as well as Turner's (2009) comments about the widespread nature of film and the prevalence for the medium within culture.

Storytelling, as Beulah pointed out, is a creative writing process whether completed in the form a traditional written assessment or on the flickering canvas of a digital screen. Educators drew on the narrative features of film to share what they considered to be a depiction of the human story. What is ironic about this finding is that, upon reviewing these teachers' state standards, there is no mention of sharing what it means to be human. This human narratology was an essential and embedded feature of the filmic pedagogy these teachers incorporated in their classrooms because they found the message to be valuable as humans in charge of other humans. For Beulah, there is a pedagogical concern in incorporate as much text as possible in her classroom, as well. In our first interview, she said, "I don't feel like it gives us enough to read. I feel like we should be reading much more (Interview 1, November 12, 2018). This desire to increase text exposure reaches to nonfiction and fiction, as well as digital and traditional text.

Some teachers in this study used film willingly as a way of gaining students' attention, while pointing the central focus on traditional textual reading experiences. For example, Beulah spoke of using film to "spark an interest" in our first interview (Interview 1, November 12,

2018). John described the "cool factor" films afford in our first interview (November 12, 2018).

No teacher in the study failed to connect viewing with some form of reading or writing process,

either on paper, in word processing, or on screen. What makes these educators unique in the

teaching landscape is their willingness to extend their use of text beyond these traditional

processes and incorporate film in meaningful ways that do not diminish the value of the medium.

O'Byrne (2014) has commented on the empowering nature of writing in digital spaces. Teachers

in this study used a range of materials, from stop motion animation to social media, to help

students explore the power of their individual stories, as well as to see the stories of others.

Violet described the emotion and power bound up in the film *A Wrinkle in Time* (DuVernay,

2018) as her students were first critical of the text, but then began to respond with more empathy

for the characters they were observing as they began to see themselves more clearly represented.

Film, in this case, was not only serving a cognitive purpose for meeting a standard, but also

became a space for students to consider their own humanity.

There was a contradictory and careful balance of what was privileged, even in terms of

film, and what was considered too controversial for the classroom, calling to mind Street's

(2005) explication of literacy practices that are often valued at home versus those that are taken

up as part of educational structures. I sum up the range of materials teachers used in Figure 5.2.

Beulah shared about the push back she felt from administrators when she used social media

platforms that contained film components, as well as pointing out that her department mandates a

prescribed curriculum. Within the boundaries of this curriculum, Beulah finds ways to include a

variety of texts and makes use of media to encourage her students in their creative writing

process.   If films were presented within a supplementary curricular program or through a state or
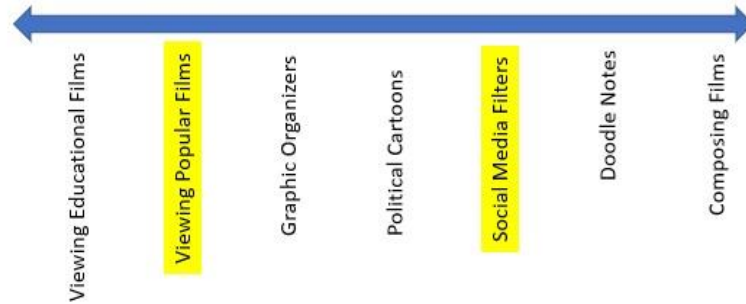
A Continuum of Visual Practices

Yellow Highlighting Denotes Ideological Literacy Practices versus Autonomous Practices

Figure 5.2. A continuum of visual practices, including film, that teachers talked about using in the study. In some cases, teachers used these materials at home, as well (as noted by the highlighting).

district-approved venue, they were more readily encouraged than viewing popular films or encountering filmic products contained within social media platforms. Teachers reported positive experiences with some district-approved film resources. For example, John reported positive responses to the educational video program, *Flocabulary*. Yet, sometimes curriculum stifled other parts of teachers' planned pedagogy, as when Violet reported not having enough time to complete a stop-motion animation project with her students because of a "stringent" curriculum map (Interview 2, January 21, 2019). For teachers, all of this means that effective pedagogy begins with a consideration of what films to use, how to use them, and even what film means for individual teachers, classrooms, and districts. For example, Tom spoke about the need to trim a two-hour film by about 45 minutes to accomplish what he wanted in class. John spoke about the desire to replay short clips multiple times based on student requests. For teachers in some departments, a preset curriculum was a consideration, including Violet and Beulah, while other teachers (Cedar and Tom) resorted to hours of YouTube searches or even creating their own films to use in class.

As noted by Hamel, Shaw, and Taylor (2013), drawing on home literacy practices in pedagogy can be difficult because it necessitates "thinking outside the box, beyond programs mandated in schools or taught in our university programs" (p. 436). In this vein, Cedar spoke of the need to be cutting edge and think in this very fashion, and Beulah, reached into a type of social media interaction that was not completely understood by all stakeholders. These practices hold implications for reconsidering what we mean by text, as well as how literacy practices work at home and at school. Sometimes what is meant to be a support for teachers, like a pacing guide, curriculum map, or even a set of standards, becomes more of a stressful hindrance. For example, Tom spoke of the standards as a guide in our first interview. In our second interview,

Tom used the word "obligation" (Interview 2, January 25, 2019). Given the prevalence of film, as well as its complex visual construction, these texts hold possibilities for engaging students in what Hobbs (2011) would call "optimal uses," including analysis and critique. What is missing at times is the sense of access at school, as educators work within the boundaries of what is prescribed and what is considered acceptable in terms of text.

Active Use of Film

Once curated, teachers had to decide how much of a film to use, how to use the film, and how students would respond. In this study, teachers held up film as a text that could be analyzed, and this process was seen as vital for adolescent literacy development. Moreover, teachers engaged students in the process of creating films. Sometimes these products acted as personal narratives. Other times, teachers created films to infuse life into otherwise mundane aspects of classroom procedure, like explaining expectations for an assignment. Even these infusions of energy and creativity involved a process of drafting, editing, and revising. In our second interview, Beulah described the use of a filter to create humor in class. This led to a discussion of her own ideological literacy practices, but also included the kind of editing work she had to do in order to create the effect, as well as the work she needed to do in order to broadcast the image to her class. The use of humorous filters to create film was more than just entertainment, as Beulah explained, "I love doing so because it amuses them, and I feel like if they're laughing, then they're probably put it more in long-term memory" (Interview 2, December 13, 2018). In all, the uses of film were varied in nature, but if film was used as a textual material, it was not wasted or included as a distracting entertainment feature. Violet eschewed this diminished way of using film, suggesting that when a movie was shown for her

class, it was done with a sense of purpose, aligning once more with Hobbs's (2011) notion of using films optimally.

To echo Postman's (1985) call for critical viewing that I quoted in chapter two, "The problem, in any case, does not reside in *what* people watch. The problem is in *that* we watch. The solution must be found in *how* we watch" (p. 160). In an age of fake news, and with a polyglot of voices clambering for attention in digital spaces, one of the chief roles for teachers is to help students be critical, analytical, and thoughtful in their viewing and reading experiences. To echo Cedar's third log, "we need to see past all these 30 second video ads and really think about, Well, hey. Being respectful to people that disagree with us in this, in our culture. In our communities" (November 5, 2018).   A variety voices will sound off in the classroom. Part of the teacher's role in today's society is to trouble, question, and filter this barrage of sounds so that meaning can be distilled. Cedar accomplished this work through films shot around his home town, asking members of the community about their single take on a given culture or group of people. Students in Cedar's class then responded to the videos in conversational dyads. Tom described a similar process in our first interview, comparing himself to a spider spinning a web of conversation after viewing. This was his way of soliciting student voices, including those who were sometimes reluctant to speak.

Moreover, the process teachers went through of guiding students in viewing and reading, as documented in this study, form a number of overlaps. To think of reading and viewing as completely separate processes is problematic, as teachers wanted to encourage students to be active in their viewing experiences, engaged in close watching as well as close reading. For Violet, using film worked as a mentor text at times for written products she wanted her students to complete (Log 1, November 27, 2018), and she sometimes created her own films as mentor

texts for animation projects her students would then complete. She referred to this use of filmic

mentor text as sharing a "recipe" (V. Mayfield, Interview 1, November 21, 2018). When it

comes to using film textually, the recipe is reciprocal. Students write about what they read, they

read about what they will write. They also watch what they will compose, and compose based

on what they have watched.

As noted by Hobbs (2011) and confirmed by teachers in this study, a meaningful

pedagogy using film will not only include passive viewing, but will press toward meaning

through a variety of activities, ensuring that students have access to the filmic text as viewers,

but also as thinkers. In all, teachers used a range of approaches to having students respond to

films. Teachers had students discuss what they saw, as when Tom compared his classroom

conversations to the kind of talk he has with friends at a local Waffle House after watching a

movie (Interview 1, November 23, 2018). They also had students compose films in response to

readings, as when Cedar asked his class to film themselves responding to a poem about the

meaning of life. In this case, Cedar removed himself from the center stage of the film and

allowed students to take an active role. I will note, as well, this was a project he completed after

the summative test at the end of the year. This echoes a concern about how teachers find time

amid their responsibilities to uphold content and curricular demands.

Kist (2000) noted the need for active and critical interaction with media in the New

Literacies classroom, as well. Teachers shared a total of eleven post-viewing practices with me,

but the emphasis that they placed on their filmic practices was that using this text in instruction

must be purposeful. Simply pressing play was not enough as teachers asked students to complete

written responses, dialogical interactions, graphic organizer-based reflections, and even their

own films in response. Tom talked in our first interview about the great need to set up the story

of the film before showing clips. By doing so, Tom was able to create relevance and connection for the films, rather than allowing them to become passive experiences that failed to have a place to land for the purpose he had set.

A passive use of film is tantamount to reading a story with no set purpose, no engagement, and an absence of discussion. It is merely a way of passing time, and teachers in this study were already pressed for time. Active use of film means that dialogues continue after the screen has finished flickering. For example, Cedar used dialogue as a vehicle to bridge literacy practice at home and literacy practice at school, just as Bulfin and North (2007) suggested. In terms of his practice, this meant that Cedar encouraged conversations about what students saw about other cultures in his classroom both within the school walls and at home. I was curious about any pushback Cedar might have received for sparking these conversations within families, but he said:

> It ranges from, maybe they just didn't want to do it. Sadly, often times parents didn't want to do it with them, or didn't have time. But most of the time, the majority of them, it's very positive. My thing is getting kids to engage with parents on a deeper level. And to get their parents thinking of a more critical, deeper level, as well. And then they get to hear other parents' and adults' responses and kind of talk about that. Getting them to appreciate different voices. (C. Anthony, Interview 1, November 2, 2018)

Within the rural context of these classrooms, teachers used film to consider the standards that were required as part of their courses, but they also went to the length of considering how films connected to students' sense of social justice (AMLE, 2019), including the presence of counter-narratives and the possibility for encountering multicultural representations. Violet talked about picking up on the sense of social justice in her students in our first interview,

saying, "They have a very strong sense of justice" and later "That sense of justice again came out" (Interview 1, November 21, 2018). Tom talked about addressing social topics like immigration through the use of film:

That's the part that film gets to teach. So, you take a fantastic actor like George Lopez and these young actors who do a really job of just presenting what, what this life is like, what this day to day is like, but you're also chasing a dream. Now this, we study legislation and the Dream Act was introduced through this story, so this one kid was brought here and this is, this is, you know, DACA in a nutshell. (T. Wahlberg, Interview 1, November 23, 2018)

In this way, interactions with film began with what Brass (2008) referred to as a local knowledge, but then expanded to take in a wider view of the world. As Cedar described:

One thing I say is the problem with the stereotypes is not that they're not true, but the problem with the single story about somebody or someplace isn't necessarily that it's not true, it might not be true, but that it's an incomplete picture of the story. So, no a little over a billion people are not terrorists. Some are, of course, but here's an example of this girl. So, after that, they see that video, they're just like amazed and blown away that a twelve-year-old girl would be willing to get hurt, be killed, to go to school. That this Islamic girl is even being very Jesusish in terms of how she's wanting to treat her enemies. There's a clip that I show where she says I was thinking about when they come to kill that I would fight them, but I'm not going to treat someone that way. I'm going to tell them that I'm fighting for your daughter's right to be educated. Do whatever you want to me. And that really is like, Wow. Kind of stops them in their tracks. Anytime I

can get kids to appreciate the world they live in, see people that they share the planet with in a different way, is a win for me. (C. Anthony, Interview 1, November 2, 2018)

The teachers in this study wanted students to see themselves and consider their own stories, but they also wanted to encourage students to reconsider what they knew about those who are ostensibly not like them. Teachers like Cedar and Tom wanted to trouble notions of what otherness means and what embracing other stories means for living in the world.

Engaging in Reflective Filmic Practice

Using film, as is the case with other teaching practices, was far from being a one and done process. As noted in the model, reflection is an aspect of filmic pedagogy. Teachers in this study described themselves as reflective practitioners, noting the difficulty of finding time to reflect when balancing other expectations and responsibilities. Violet, in our first interview, used the word reflective to talk about her practice and discussed what she would do differently in her filmic projects in the coming year. Having completed a film-based stop-motion project, she was thinking ahead to improving the process in the coming school year.

Cedar chose to engage in this research project for two months instead of one in order to reflect on his practice. Tom demonstrated his reflective practice when working through the total amount of time he wanted to show a film, and then pruning off 45 minutes that did not seem to work well after an initial viewing. This kind of reflection not only occurred after the teaching process, but through the course of classroom interactions. To echo this educator's own words:

It's 2 hours and 15 minutes and the first 45, you've got to be a lover of movies to understand that sometimes the first 45 minutes sets it up. I didn't show the first 45 minutes after first block because I could tell first block, it wasn't, they weren't, it wasn't

connecting just yet. So, second block I went straight to minute 45 and went from there. And it was a scene where you see Sergeant York as this country bumpkin who is this phenomenal shot, which you have to know once we he goes from a conscientious objector to what he will say: I'm going to kill to save lives. In the end, that is his kind of conversion experience, but he is a sharpshooter and you've got to see it. (T. Wahlberg, Interview 1, November 23, 2018)

Tom, in negotiating his time, had to engage in a pruning process *in media res.* This kind of continuous reflection and reaching out to other materials was about time, an issue I will explore more fully in the next section, but it was also about maintaining energy and creativity. Teachers in this study were well aware of the high attrition rates among educators and talked about maintaining their passion. Cedar described the experience of being isolated from collaboration and reflection as one that "doused" his creative fire (Interview 2, December 21, 2018). Using a variety of materials, involving themselves in the materials, and reflecting on these experiences in logs were all forms teachers noted for staving off a sense of burn-out. The use of teacher logs not only acted in a functional way in maintaining reliability and validity for these study data; logs, in fact, were an additional benefit from participating in the study, as noted by some teachers in second interviews.

In the process of completing this study, responses to my request for teacher logs varied from no reflections to more than ten. When I talked with teachers who only shared a small number of logs, they cited the busyness of their schedules, the multiple demands placed on them, and a number of unexpected challenges, including illness, as reasons why they did not record more reflections. Participating in this study did, however, create the opportunity for further reflection through audio-recorded or handwritten logs, and some teachers seemed to appreciate

the logs. Cedar noted in our second interview that the teachers he knows often find a base of materials, develop a routine, and then find it difficult to escape from that routine. Cedar is perhaps a prime example of reflection here, echoing Miller's (2009) observation that New Literacies provide "wired" opportunities for educators to consider their practice (p. 6). In our work together, Cedar not only had the opportunity to think about his teaching. He had the opportunity to watch himself on screen and reconsider his experience of filming himself and people close to him in his life. Moreover, he chose to document his reflections in eleven logs that were audio recorded in his classroom. Concentrated reflection served as a space for teachers to share materials with me, and to consider their classroom practices.

In our second interviews, some teachers talked about the benefit of having someone to share ideas with, the helpful nature of collaboration, and the benefits of reflection. In our second interview, John talked about how writing reflections made him think about how "effective" his practices are, as well as to "to think about what you're doing and why you're doing it" (Interview 2, December 18, 2018). In our second interview, Cedar stated:

> When you're several years into teaching, you know, you can, it's just very easy to kind of become complacent, you know, so to be really be forced to analyze and think about what works, what doesn't, what are some new ideas you can have. That was helpful for sure, so, but, you know, I have been doing these for like four years now, so there weren't like crazy surprises. But it did get me thinking about, you know, the value of each clip I show, really observing the students more and things like that. So that was definitely helpful. (Interview 2, December 21, 2018)

Although Rowan and Correnti (2009) posed teacher logs as ways of discovering the practices of teachers, the individuals in this study who used them most frequently reported positive feelings about their own stance in the process. Most notably Cedar and John spoke about how the logs kept them thinking through their teaching practices. Two participants described the use of teacher logs as forced, yet positive, opportunities to think about the kinds of materials they were using, as well as how they used these materials. Even as teaching logs were helpful for me in obtaining a clearer picture of what was happening in classrooms, using these logs proved to be important for teachers to consider and reconsider their practice. They also formed another valuable source of information for me about what the daily experience of using film was like for these teachers.

Taking the Necessary Time

As I was quickly reminded in my data collection process, teachers are busy people. They are required to meet the demands of curricula and standards, as well as the expectations of administrators and other stakeholders. For example, in our second interview, Beulah described her role as mother, team leader, department chair, and teacher, all within the same academic timeframe. Violet talked about how a quarter of her group of students became ill and missed record numbers of days, causing her to rethink her pacing. As Jewitt (2008) noted, educators make important decisions about how knowledge is represented in their classrooms, and these decisions are constant and ever-changing. This decision-making process, both for Jewitt (2008) and teachers in this study, included making choices about the media that would be used for conveying ideas. Teachers had to find creative ways to maneuver among their standards and expectations, and some educators did not even feel they could participate in the study because of their curricular demands and extra-curricular assignments. Ironically, the medium of film, seen

by some as a material that has been diminished (Hobbs, 2011), necessitates a great deal of time and thoughtful integration to function in the purposeful way teachers required.

The stress and tension revolving around the use of film exists, even as teachers talked about standards as a positive framework for helping them obtain direction in what to teach. Most of the teachers in this study expressed a concern that they would not cover all of the material they wished to cover, and some lamented not being able to spend more time with concepts in film. As Violet stated, "Absolutely not. There's never enough time" (Interview 2, January 21, 2019), and as John said:

> You kind of have to move on. I think those are important ideas but I guess if there's a regret, I wish I had more time. And I have taken, I have in the past taken more time to cover those concepts and ideas and then of course I get behind and I don't get to finish by the end of the year. I've gotten better at kind of keeping myself on track with the standards and what I have to cover. Yeah, I guess I wish we had more time. (J. Adams, Interview 2, December 18, 2018).

When using videos and clips, teachers had to make decisions about what to cut and what to keep, rarely using entire films for classroom viewing. In addition to the tension created by the standards, two teachers in the study were required to meet the demands of a curriculum that was assistive at times, and at other times created a hindrance. Beulah discussed the curriculum as one that sometimes "got it right," but still came with expectations and requirements (Interview 1, November 12, 2018). Violet talked about how the curriculum map required her to move on more quickly than she had planned, eliminating an entire digital film project that she had planned on completing with her students. Teachers emphasized that effective practice meant doing what

was best for students, and as has been pointed out in research literature, effective teaching means taking the time to experience texts. Beulah described this as:

> …focusing on what matters, because there's going to be new trends in education that come and go, and sometimes I think it's very important that you have to just be able to say, Okay. Sure. Yes, sir. No, sir. Yes, ma'am. No, ma'am. You know, and then you go in your classroom and you just do what's best for your kids. So, that may not be what they want to hear, but it's the truth. (B. Fitzgerald, Interview 2, December 13, 2018)

Working in this avenue of thought, both Beulah and Violet had to decide how to shut the door on some plans and aspects of their instruction, given constraints of time and district requirements. This struck me as an uneasy process of negotiating competing demands and state and system-level requirements.

I have gathered all of these elements, while considering the findings of my study, and synthesized them into a pedagogical model in which standards and curriculum act as the figure in the group, offering guidance or constriction, and also demonstrating the constant framing of curation teachers are involved in, the sifting and filtering that happens during the pruning phase, the additional layers of reflecting that became part of this study, the possibilities for fueling a creative spark through mentoring and collaboration that using film can open up, and the move that many teachers in this study made from viewers who loved film ideologically, showed film autonomously, and then began making films in a literacy practice that included their own home practices, as well as school-based concepts.

Discussion on Policy

In this section, I will first discuss the implications of this study regarding academic state standards, and then move on to discuss how these standards are reflected in curriculum. These implications are established based on the pedagogical framework I have shared, as well as the experiences educators shared with me. I will conclude this first discussion section by commenting on an unexpected finding within my study, the use of social media platforms for classroom purposes, including the affordances social media contains for creating film.

Standards in a Multimedia World

There were times when teachers spoke about how standards actually helped them be better, focused educators, as was the case with Tom. He initially spoke of his experience as a related arts teacher who had to create his own curriculum from scratch, with the standards serving as a guide once he migrated to core area instruction (Interview 1, November 23, 2018). In other cases, teachers talked about the high number of standards they were required to cover, and lamented not having enough time to explore content-rich concepts as fully as they needed to, both through the use of film and in their general practice. This was the case for John, who expressed the desire to show more films and even have his students create films, even as he struggled with the tension of meeting content expectations.

In our second interview, John discussed the way he had reconsidered and shaped his practice to get through some concepts quickly so that he could finish up all of his material by the end of the year. He suggested that, while the standards were helpful, he did not understand why an end-of-the-year assessment needed to be focused on all the standards in his content area,

especially given the lack of time in the academic year that is needed to make sure all of these standards are adequately addressed.

Moving from his present number of 95 standards to 70 in the following academic year gave John a sense of calm that was underscored by the still-high number of 70 standards to cover. The concept of "covering" a standard failed to align with teachers' desire to dig into content richly, deeply, and with relevance. In this study, education seemed to be a kind of race, and teachers often had to decide when it was time to move on to the next standards-based topic, regardless of whether or not everyone in the classroom was ready or not. It is conceived as a race to the end, with the top being a nebulous concept, out of sight at the end of a string of many standards. In terms of this study, this race often meant that teachers had to find alternate routes to ensure students received the instruction they needed, and these routes included filmic practices. At the same time, the race to the finish line of completing all content by the testing date meant that projects had to be scrapped (as was the case with Violet) or relegated to an after-test activity (reflected by Cedar's experiences). This placement of filmic practice at the end of the year affords the possibility of incorporating creative activities, while at the same diminishing the power teachers found in these texts for the purpose of building literacy skills. As both Violet and John pointed out, many students respond well to the visual. This use of visual text can be a scaffold, but has also been used by teachers in this study as a central text for analysis and discussion. Film is not simply a candy reward that students receive for a job well done on the summative test. These teachers make the case that film is a complex array of many communicative elements that has the power to convey complicated ideas. Moreover, students can compose film and engage in the writing process in a way that lines up with New Literacies practice and which sometimes mirrors their own ideological literacy practices, as well.

In short, teachers simply have too many standards to cover. In order to cover this wide range of standards, they sometimes have to adopt the policy of moving on, regardless of what they had planned for students to accomplish or master. While academic standards proved helpful in some ways for teachers, the stress and tension that revolved around "covering" them all far outweighed the value of their guidance. Policymakers might consider the ways in which assessments are designed, which assessments are purchased, and, indeed, the true purpose and utility of summative assessments.

This reconsideration of the value and intent of standards goes beyond simply incorporating media into the standards; there is also a very real notion here of making time within a school year so that teachers and students actually have time to build and practice the skills needed for learning to take place, as well as finding time to develop enriching curriculum. Dialogue and interaction, alongside filmic and multimedia representations, require time – and teachers are already pressed in terms of the academic year. The ways in which these standards are assessed depends greatly on the kind of information policymakers really want to know about what is happening in classrooms. Berliner (2013) has noted that more than half of the variables that are part of a student's test score stem from factors outside of a teachers' control, and Hatch (2015) has elaborated on the number of challenges teachers face in terms of summative assessments and state-mandated standards. As John indicated in his second interview, students "are tested on all of the standards when we just don't have time to cover all of the standards" (Interview 2, December 18, 2018). It is a dilemma worthy of a Kafka novel. There seems to be little rhyme or reason at the level of policy for creating a mad dash at the expense of true and deep learning. This is true of education in general, but also true for those educators who wish they had time to explore alternative presentations of context, including visual texts. All of this

suggests that policymakers can consider a more effective and comprehensive, even qualitative, way of keeping teachers accountable for teaching related to standards.

Curriculum in a Multimedia World

In an ideal world, curriculum would flow from the standards as a support system for energetic and creative use in the classroom. In this way, both standards and curriculum would act as resources and guides to help accomplish a meaningful education. Teachers, in this ideal world, would be able to tailor their curriculum to meet the needs of their students. Allington (2002) pointed out that an exemplary teacher is essential for literacy development to occur, and one of the chief elements of exemplary teachers' characteristics that he highlighted was their use of time with authentic literacy tasks. Text, in today's world, includes the traditional written form that is still popular in classroom practice, as well as engagement with a variety of reading experiences, including film, digital projects, as well as social media and other web-based platforms. As Beulah noted, writing using film and social media is creative writing too (Interview 1, November 12, 2018). To this end, authentic literacy tasks in classroom practice subsumes these reading and writing practices, as well.

At times, teachers in this study talked about their curriculum in terms of a constricting system of compliance, constructed and implemented by people who were outsiders in the world of education. Beulah noted this concern most clearly as she described the makers of curriculum as individuals who are not in the classroom (Interview 2, December 13, 2018). For her, teaching meant doing what worked for the students in her classroom, rather than practicing the most recent educational acronym or seemingly flashy idea.

Busy schedules and strict curriculum maps proved to be barriers for some potential participants. One teacher, also recommended based on his use of film and media at the high school level, declined to be part of the study and cited strict adherence to a prescribed curriculum as a deciding factor in choosing not to participate. Another high school educator known for media practices had too many after-school responsibilities to commit to working on the project. Additionally, as noted in chapter four and echoed in this chapter, one teacher in the study was not able to complete a filmic project due to her district's "stringent curriculum map" (V. Mayfield, Interview 2, January 25, 2019). It seems there are moments in a teacher's experience where what has been deemed as acceptable classroom procedure supersedes visual texts and alternative approaches to literacy. State standards already call for the integration of "diverse media" at both the middle school and high school level in English/Language Arts (Tennessee Department of Education, 2017, p. 35). Perhaps a thoughtful integration of a wide range of materials might also take into account the time teachers spend on finding and using these materials. This means that teachers can expect to take time curating and pruning resources as they find them, but it might also mean that schools and districts take these planning needs in to account as they consider pacing guides, curriculum maps, and the number of standards teachers are required to cover. There is also an underlying theme of busyness here that speaks to the need to maintain self-care as teachers work through personal and professional responsibilities, but that is likely an entirely different area for study.

To be fair, there were times teachers spoke of curriculum as a challenge to navigate, with occasional successes. Carefully chosen curriculum had the possibility for opening up new filmic texts for students, including the film, *Temple Grandin*. Finding and seizing these moments of success, in terms of locating and highlighting what works within a curriculum, might be strongly

considered to be part of the role of the classroom teacher. Although districts implement curriculum, pacing guides, and curriculum maps, policymakers can consider how to create opportunities for teachers to use a variety of materials, including film, in their pedagogy. In this way, a considerate approach to managing standards and curriculum can allow for breathing room in planning and instruction. This situation may play out as a reconsideration of how many standards teachers are required to cover, as well as how strictly curriculum is adhered to, as well as a more flexible understanding of what it means to pace instruction. Tightening the reigns of instruction in order to increase test scores may prove problematic for encouraging creative uses of text in classrooms, and this lack of innovation may ultimately accomplish little, other than a tired work force of teachers whose understanding of pedagogy relies on following a mandated procedure rather than creating meaningful connections and authentic tasks for their students. A pacing guide or textbook fails to compare to the power of a creative, inspired, and caring educator.

By viewing curriculum as a resource that can shaped, reviewed, critiqued, and implemented with professional intent by classroom teachers, schools and school districts might alleviate stress and tension and create positive approaches to curriculum instead. Regardless of whatever curriculum is prescribed, the teachers in this study have demonstrated that the most important element of a successful and engaging classroom is a highly-trained teacher who is willing to take the time to find the right resources and bring a creative sense of enthusiasm to their work. Cedar spoke in both of our interviews about this sense of collaboration and the creativity he felt as he was allowed the space to find new textual practices. Violet spoke of the desire to teach in a different way from how she was taught, and how using film allowed her to see her students being transformed by their viewing and responding. Beulah talked about the

power of finding filmic materials in social media platforms, even when she received pushback from administrators, in order to help students see the power of their own story. I will expand on this last example briefly in the next subsection.

Social Media Platforms in School

The presence of social media within this study, which I did not anticipate as a means of sharing film, presents an issue to consider. It was an avenue of filmic expression that was questioned by those in decision-making positions in some cases, and this tension suggests the need for discussions about a meaningful policy or set of policies aimed at the ways in which administrators view filmic practices, what media will be made available in school districts, to what degree teachers can access these materials, and which types of media representation are considered more acceptable within schools and districts. I am again thinking of the dynamic between Street's (2005) ideological literacy practices that are valued at home, but misunderstood or undervalued in their translation to autonomous literacy practices at school. For example, Beulah drew on Instagram to create a personal narrative with her students. This project resulted in pushback form her administrators who saw social media only as a controversial medium with negative aspects, or as a superficial one that could not be used in educational ways. Policies should, in effect, be aimed at helping teachers make meaningful, appropriately filtered, and analytical use of any material that holds value for literacy development. I will now discuss how my study has added to the existing New Literacies research before concluding with a section focused on future directions other scholars might consider.

Discussion on Research

In addition to implications for classroom practices and forming policies, research can be informed by what took place in this study. In this section, I will first begin with a discussion of the nature of the materials in this study, after which I will briefly discuss the importance of the study's methodology.

The Deictic Nature of the Materials

As Leu et al. (2011) have noted, New Literacies practices are deictic, or always changing and on the move. In using this term, I think of the way a screen can be refreshed in a digital space and constantly be filled with new information. New platforms and examples occur often, and the present study contributes to the conversation about how multimodal ensembles affect literacy practices. Teachers in this study, as well as voices from literacy research (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Kist, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) indicate that there are textual affordances that can and should be explored within film so that possibilities for literacy connections can be capitalized on for students who are reluctant readers, as well as students who struggle with reading concepts. As Tom stated, "Film can teach" (Interview 1, November 23, 2018). Indeed, in Tom's case, he used film to find lesser-known stories. For Violet, using film means having a scaffold that students who are more intrigued by visuals can reach out to. In a reciprocal fashion, Violet uses graphic organizers like Venn diagrams to help her students then turn the analysis around and work together to deconstruct how the films work that she uses in class. Image works with image and leads to quality reading experiences for this English educator.

Moreover, film and media might be considered a kind of text that can be used in the classroom for engagement with students who are already actively engaged readers, but who can

benefit from exploring textual connections using a variety of linguistic and semiotic pathways. As Lankshear and Knobel (2011) noted, reading occurs across a variety of modes now, and within a variety of platforms. This notion of a complicated assemblage occurring within filmic texts is supported by both film scholars (Bordwell, Thompson, & Smith, 2017) and those writing in the literacy field (Golden, 2001; Serafini, 2014). Our understanding of the research process must be considered in light of these new and ever-changing materials.

The notion of what counts as text has implications not just for practice and policy, but for continued examination of the ways multimodal texts work. This study has shown that a teacher's experience with using film as a text is multifaceted, and takes on notions of sight and viewing in a variety of ways, including both the pedagogical and personal. The term film was used loosely to describe a wide range of literacy practices, both ideological and autonomous (Street, 2005), as materials were encountered as part of packaged curriculum and even within platforms that were challenged by stakeholders. Bezemer and Kress (2016) have advanced a multimodal framework for understanding materials, in which they advocate that terms like visual literacy be subsumed. This study is an application of that framework when considering film as a text with adolescents in rural settings.

Literacy has moved into a post-typographic world (New London Group, 1996), and film has been considered as a vital and layered text in this study. As Violet suggested, analysis is an important aspect of the kind of work her students are required to do, and this focus on analysis again lines up with using film optimally (Hobbs, 2011). As John pointed out, film certainly has a "cool factor" (Interview 1, November 12, 2018), but also contains the concepts that he wants his students to understand, including historical representations. These representations include a sense of the importance and relevance of his class, as well as moments of accuracy in retelling.

Cedar lines up with this way of thinking as he has used film to convey content, as well as the power of the human story. For educators in this study, content was not enough. They saw themselves as humans teaching humans, and recognizing moments of empathy and understanding worked hand-in-hand with opportunities for exposing students to other cultures and ideas. There is a cognitive aspect to the way these teachers used filmic materials, but there is also a moral fashioning that goes beyond the writ of the standards. The teachers in this study have made this case through the stories they have shared in interviews, documents, and logs. Notions of how films are constructed, reaching back to the origins of the medium (Bordwell, Thompson, & Smith, 2017; Ferster, 2016), can lend themselves to a deeper understanding of both how films have changed over time, from basic forms (Mead, 1926) to complex semiotic textual products.

All of these remarks have led to a consideration of how reading occurs for students who struggle and students who are reluctant to read in traditional ways. Film can act as a new way, a new kind of text, and a New Literacy (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) to develop a greater insight into the psychology of reading, as well as how reading occurs across media. There is much left to explore in what Violet has described as the moment her students "got it" based on viewing (Interview 2, January 25, 2019), and how these experiences compare to reading traditional texts. In the same way, the process of crafting an essay can be compared to the way Beulah describes drafting, editing, and revising her digital representation of herself in social media and in her classroom teaching.

Indeed, given the deictic nature of multimodal texts, there will likely no shortage of supply in terms of textual resources that researchers can consider, including platforms in which

films can be viewed, created, and critiqued. Beyond the ontology of these materials, further

research implications point to the ways these texts are used.

Affordances of Multimodal Texts

Working from a definition of film as a text, teachers used terms like movie, video, and

film fairly interchangeably within the study. I used the theory of multimodality (Bezemer &

Kress, 2016) to come to an understanding of how these materials worked, and teachers spoke of

a variety of modes that films incorporated to convey meaning. For example, John spoke of how

music and image worked with helping his students when navigating social studies content.

Beulah spoke of the portrayal of autism in a Hollywood film and how this opened up lines of

dialogue for her students. Tom spoke of how Hollywood films portrayed multicultural issues

and experiences of poverty to show his students stores of those like and unlike them, and went on

to discuss the affordances film offered in sharing the untold and little-known stories that exist

behind the surface representations of major historical figures. Ironically, a medium that is seen

as surface and passive, for Tom, has been drawn upon to share new stories and actively develop

insights. Chief among these were the visual and auditory. Implications of these findings may be

focused on how learning occurs across this communication modes and formats, and even within

platforms that do not yet exist.

Just as practice requires a reconsideration of what counts as text, so too does research.

Hull and Nelson (2005) contended that notions of text are changing, and that the affordances of

multimodal digital texts lend themselves to this textual shift. As Violet pointed out, we are

visual creatures who have had a medium at our disposal for over a century. To discount visual

reading experiences, or to assume that reading practices have remained the same in spite of new

platforms and technologies, does little to address an authentic and ideological notion of what text means and what literacies students (and teachers) are required to negotiate.

New Literacies is drawn on as a framework as Hull and Nelson (2005) suggested that multimodal texts not only make use meaning made by individual modes, but actually "increase the meaning-making potential of text" (p. 225). Portrayals of human experience, using image, light, sound, and even silence, served as examples in this study. In particular, Tom talked about the power of silence in conveying our response to others in need in *Cinderella Man* (Howard, 2005). For research in education, these potentials can be located, explored, and richly described. An entire study, for example, might focus on the way teachers use silence in media to convey meaning or create classroom environments. With more recent attention on sound by Wargo (2018), this approach may prove to be an intriguing direction, but serves as only one example of the kind of attention that researchers can direct to the way one particular mode works. In the present study, I have attempted to add to an already-existing conversation about media and New Literacies practices in teaching by focusing on educators working with adolescents in rural settings. The conversation must continue. Additionally, the ways in which teachers use filmic materials may be a consideration for other researchers.

Representation is one aspect of the use of film that teachers noted in this study. In particular, Cedar talked about using films to help students reconsider who their "neighbors" are around the world (Interview 1, November 2, 2018). Kress (2005) contrasted the concept of author in terms of a traditional book and the concept of author in terms of a screen representation. Ironically, Cedar used the concepts of authorship to create a film in which he was able to enter ancient religious texts and talk to popular historical figures. Representation, then, is one of the goals of utilizing these modes and media, and the representation points back to

aspects of living. In this study, I used the Merleau-Pontian (1993) term "deforming," originally

used in a discussion of painting and art, to consider teachers' experience with representing ideas

in the classroom. The ways in which representation occurs in the process of education is of note

in this study, and can be explored further in other classrooms and settings, as well as other levels

of education. In particular, further work can be done with concepts of social justice and

adolescents in rural areas. The ways that members of outside communities are represented by

medium can be further explored and served as an underlying aspect of this study's findings.

Building on this human story is both moral and pedagogical.

Moreover, the kind of representations that were present and forefront for teachers in this

study were based on human connections and interaction – beyond the role of standardized

content. While analysis is critical for engaging with media (Hobbs, 2011; Kist, 2000), so too are

larger questions of what it means to relate texts to the rest of the world (Golden, 2001). Content

literacy has been considered previously (Lent, 2016; Unrau, 2008), but the findings of this study

indicate that sociocultural discourse revolving around otherness, including considerations of

culture, ethnicity, and ableness, is a noticeable element of rural filmic practices across content.

Such use of film has been seen with preservice teachers (Fontaine, 2010). In the present study,

discussions about seeing others with equity were taking place among adolescents. Even when

not directly addressed in the standards, teachers using film wanted their students to see relatable

characters, as well as stories that challenged their previously-constructed views. Gainer (2010)

noted that schools are places where society can be reconsidered and reshaped; film was one

avenue for this kind of reshaping activity drawn on by teachers in this study.

Just as researchers noted the use of film as a means to reach into aspects of argument

writing, storyboarding, and representations of adolescent identity, so too did educators in this

study use film for each of these purposes. All of this suggests a textual potential for film as a content-based text, as well as a human one, in the classroom. This means that there is still work to be done, which I will elaborate on as I close this chapter.

The Phenomenological Method

A further implication of this research has been the importance of phenomenological methodology, specifically, and a qualitative approach, generally, in gaining an understanding of lived experience. The methodological underpinnings of this study have allowed me to go beyond surface-level, functional examinations of classroom materials, and have given me the ability to reach into teachers' lived experience to form a written account. Indeed, when teachers spoke about personal aspects of their lives, phenomenology allowed me to "go there" and include these details as part of the data. For example, Beulah's discussion of her own traumas and how she recognized these lived experiences contributed to a more complete understanding of who she was as a person and as a teacher, rather than constituting extraneous data. Likewise, Merleau-Ponty's (1945) consideration of perception allowed me to think through Beulah's concerns about her digital presentation in social media, and Denzin's (1992) work on the nature of the viewer in film underscored the roles she had to fill. van Manen's (1997) admonition about including the tension in phenomenological work helped me think through John's reluctance to engage in composing with film. This formed part of his story as an aspect of his experience, rather than being treated as an outlier.

As deMarrais (2008) noted, phenomenology empowers researchers to examine daily lived experiences in "close, detailed" ways (p. 56), and Rowsell (2014) served as an example of how phenomenology can be utilized to study literacy work with screens in the unfolding present of classroom interactions. What this means for my research is that I have been able to share not

just characteristics of individual teachers, but a series of themes that provide insight into the larger experience of filmic pedagogy in other words, going from the "particular" to the those features of the experience that are more essential (Sohn, Thomas, Greenberg, & Pollio, 2017, p. 35). By sharing their lives and stories with me, as well as member checking parts of my final writings, teachers acted as co-constructors in the study. When I presented their backgrounds and definitions of film, I checked these elements with each teacher. Finally, when it came time to draw together themes, each educator was supplied with an electronic copy and was invited to comment about the accuracy of the results of the study. I did not want to act as a mouthpiece for another person without first doing a full check with the original voices I encountered.

The ways in which teachers were taught and the events in their lives that have shaped them have necessarily transformed (even, to borrow the Merleau-Pontian term, "deformed") the way culture is created and learning takes place within these teachers' classrooms. In a quantitative study, these data might have become misunderstood outliers or, worse yet, been discarded entirely because of their potential for being seen as messy or irrelevant.

What all of this means is that researchers must continue to strive for continuing descriptions and interpretations (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997) of what is happening in schools and classrooms within the world of research. Once more, van Manen's (1997) admonition that good research embraces tension and conflict allowed me to faithfully recount the experiences of teachers who worked in different ways, even when it came to what kind of material teachers embraced and what kinds of filmic practices they employed. The use of bracketing (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 2007) allowed me to consider my own biases so when an educator did not use film in a way that aligned with my preconceived, I could report honestly and responsibly. Indeed, I came to see these seemingly disparate elements as dimensions of the

same story. Phenomenology enabled me to tell this story in the way that it needed to be told, focusing on a particular phenomenon and allowing teachers to share their experiences.

Just as Spiegelberg (1994) noted that phenomenology allows us to reach into the ever-changing dynamic of life and capture overarching themes, so too did this methodological approach allow me to accomplish what I intended to in this study – that is, the telling of another's story. As much as possible, I used the words of participants to both form and justify my findings. In this way, qualitative work allowed me to co-construct a research document that is, I hope, a chronicle of five teachers' work in advancing the literacy field.

Sifting Through Voices

The notion of film as a cultural construct (Turner, 2009) and the ways in which film draws in student voices have been two ideas of note within this study. I am reminded again of Postman's (1985) prognostication that televised and digital media would not go away; he insisted that the difference would be marked in the approach we take when we view.

This viewer/reader stance led teachers to engage in critical dialogue with students in this study. Even though there are implications here for practice, these findings reach further into considerations of how worldviews can be shaped by the ways in which media is accepted, prioritized, and unpacked in ideological and autonomous literacy practice (Street, 2005). Ideas of power are wrapped up in film and media (Fairclough, 1995), and this implies that educational deconstruction of media (as well as responses to media) is an important component of literacy work. As Fairclough (1995) has noted, language in any text, including media texts, "is always simultaneously constitutive of (1) social identities, (2) social relations, and (3) systems of knowledge and belief" (p. 55). As Tom reflected:

The main objective when we view films in class is to catch a glimpse of two things: a protagonist or a crew of them who students can relate to and be inspired by; the second, a cast of characters they cannot relate to but can sympathize with. Being able to relate or not relate to is connected primarily to socioeconomic status and race, secondary connections being age, gender, and geographic locations. (T. Wahlberg, Log 1, 2018)

Awareness of this aspect of language use in media connected media literacy in my mind with the work of Gee (2013). Film was not just about academic content, but about considering identity and sociocultural issues. These concepts of power can be political in nature, and inform the ways readers interpret materials – and form their own identities. Cedar also reflected on these concepts:

Today we did a mock vote as it is the elections for senators and governors, and we talked about the candidates and, you know, we talked about the problems with our political system. How divisive it is. I showed some video clips of some of the candidates, their campaign ads. We kind of broke those down looking at the language they were using, how they're talking about people in their party, people in the other party, just the divisive rhetoric. And then that led into a discussion about what it means to be an educated, responsible citizen, a critically conscious citizen. (C. Anthony, Log 3, November 5, 2018)

These political explorations serve to help students consider their own thinking and sources of information, as well as the role media plays in shaping their views. There are also possibilities inherent in this use of media for considering the ways people groups are presented, including singular ideas about what it means to Appalachian.

Mead's (1926) initial assessment of film was that the medium was rather crude and banal. Later, Denzin's (1992) work, focused on the role of the viewer, would take into account the more complex and artistic product that film has become. In short, films are now sophisticated sites for meaning-making and, as Hobbs (2011) has noted, messages can be contained in films and clips. The ways in which students and teachers engage in dialogue can lead to critique and analysis, including the role of the viewer and the assumptions of the filmmaker. Teachers in this study, like Beulah, Tom, and Cedar, incorporated such dialogue into the classroom. For John, stopping at the image was not enough. He wanted to delve deeper and make sure his students also saw the importance of the historical narrative. At other times, both Violet and Tom talked about the roles they took as watchers of film, but also classroom observers who wanted to make sure their students were both seeing and being seen. Beulah, Violet, and Tom also discussed the representations of others contained in films, and how these representations opened new possibilities for considering self and even culture.

In a time when the information shared on popular news media is called into question by powerful figures, these findings suggest that educators have additional work to do in sorting through the voices they find in classrooms. In terms of research, making sense of these voices has meant that qualitative work is essential in digging deeper into classroom experiences so that stories can be told with attention to their roots. From the findings of this study, as well as the literature I have considered, I have drawn the conclusion that there is not "one Appalachia." Considerations of the nature of how power within and alongside media, within the Appalachian, rural context of this study, entailed an examination of the lives of others, those not like students that were part of these classrooms. Indeed, teachers in this study found that film has the power to call into question assumptions made about the experience of those not like us, including

cultures and ethnicities that are outside of our ordinary boundaries, providing a kind of window into understanding experiences. This response to film is necessary, but it is also essentially ethical. In this next, penultimate section I will provide some strands that may be collected by future researchers so that this conversation can continue.

Implications for Future Work

What I have co-constructed in this study acts as a kind of showcase of the pedagogical practices of five educators in a rural setting. Further research might consider individual teachers in more detail, including the variance among new and seasoned educators, as well as pre-service teachers' use of filmic pedagogy. The degree to which educators are phenomenological in their own work can also be considered.

While there have been case studies of classrooms and students in research literature when it comes to using media, more examples of teachers and students can be considered in other rural settings, and more work can focus on filmmaking practices of teachers in these locations. A conversation that has been posed here phenomenologically may issue into other methodological and theoretical considerations of what filmic pedagogy means in a wide range of geographical locations.

This study, along with the others I have cited here, focused on the use of film with adolescents. Further research work might consider the use of film in preschool, elementary, and even post-secondary settings, both within rural areas and in other geographical and cultural contexts. Furthermore, there were creative practices that these teachers engaged in, including podcasts and illustrated notes, that have been documented as an aspect of their practices, with more attention given to film for this study. Future studies may focus with more detail on the use

of other visual and digital practices that teachers implement alongside films, including social media platforms. Given the research question in this study, I chose to focus much of my review of the literature on the use of film exclusively.

Researchers might consider focusing future work in the Appalachian region. By using films to consider counternarratives and a wide range of cultures, perhaps the single view of Appalachia can be troubled further. Opinions and voices have origins, and it is my hope that this study furthers the conversation about how researchers can question, critique, and sometimes disrupt these semiotic representations. The notion of representation, especially in terms of showing students the experience of those not like them, forms a moral and pedagogical bedrock in this study. Future work can expand on this notion of allowing students to see experiences that are less common in their daily lives, as well as the moves teachers make in sharing these concepts of social justice.

The moral, social, and geographic dynamics of literacy practices represented in this study might be considered with further study. Chisholm and Trent (2014) provided a single case study of a rural adolescent's practice and Kist (2005) provided an example of a rural school in Canada that implemented media practices; other stories are yet to be told. My study considers the teacher side of New Literacy practices, examining the professional and sometimes personal lives of educators working with adolescents. Interestingly, the ideological practices of these educators made their way into the classroom as part of instruction, and sometimes the process of viewing spilled over into personal time. I wonder what other home-based practices of teachers who are working with New Literacies also make their way into pedagogy. As Beulah said, "I usually, if there's something I want to show, the wondrous thing about technology and probably a bad thing is I can look for it on my phone as I'm sitting in bed, and add it quickly to send a link to my

email, or put it in my Google drive" (Interview 2, December 13, 2018). Moreover, this study has taken up an explication of the affordances of one type of media – the film.

Finally, this study examines the decisions and processes educators experience when using film as medium for representation. This use of Merleau-Ponty's (1993) ideas about representing concept in artwork informed my thinking not only about the aesthetic nature of films, but the creative and innovative choices teachers made. Further work can highlight and examine this artistic nature of teaching. Teachers in this study worked in the English and history content areas. It would be interesting to note how film is implemented in other content areas, and how these practices line up with those documented here.

Conclusion

As has been said, I set out to explore the experience of teaching who used film as a text when working with adolescents in rural, Appalachian settings. My research questions revolved around notions of what this experience was like for these educators. In all, five teachers were kind enough to open up their busy schedules and talk with me. For me, this study has been both a personal and professional, reflective exploration of what reading practices mean. I myself am an avid reader of traditional texts, including novels and nonfiction, but have connect film and reading from an early age.

The engagement and enthusiasm teachers in this study displayed led me to a variety of conclusions about how practice, policy, and research might be impacted by the work I have completed. First among these is a recommended pedagogical model for using film, which includes the possibility for mentoring and collaboration among teachers. The rural nature of this study influenced these findings in terms of showing the importance for opening up other cultural

ideas and practice, indeed other worlds, for students. As one of my participants said, "Oh, my word. Film has done this for me" (T. Wahlberg, Interview 1, November 23, 2018). Film, in Tom's case, was not a secondary consideration or lesser text, but an essential part of instruction that was inviting and equipping for this educator. The affordances of this educational text were wrapped in newly opened possibilities.

Policies should be carefully crafted, including reasonable and humane attention to both standards and prescribed curriculum in an effort to bring balance into secondary classrooms. Policymakers might consider how standards are measured, as well how many standards are actually used to form assessments. In all cases, transparency with educators would be helpful, including the number of standards that are part of the summative assessment, the ways in which these assessments are truly constructed, and the places where teachers can spend their time most meaningfully. Perhaps an approach focused on what is of greatest importance might reduce the number of standards by eliminating redundancies and carefully considering what is doable for educators in a given academic year.   Districts should also consider the ways curriculum shape learning environments, and at times revisit the role of teacher as decision-maker, tailor, and auteur when it comes to implementing curriculum for students. One size, unfortunately, does not fit all. In the classroom, this means that sometimes, in order to be effective, a teacher might visit a standard multiple times through multiple texts – even including digital and filmic representations of content. Likewise, some ideas can be treated lightly, while others require deep exploration, represented through the modes film allows. This hearkens back to Cedar's use of film to show elements of culture and to reconsider what it means to respectfully disagree. Setting up the educational enterprise as a race or as a venue for the textbook industry fails to

speak to the interest of building informed and thoughtful students who truly know what it means to read in traditional as well as new literacy spaces.

Finally, further research can be completed to explore the use of film in other rural, Appalachian contexts. While I talked with all of the available educators that existed through this initial network sample (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017) and snowball sample (Noy, 2008), other cases surely exist. Further research may point to specific use of types of film, as well as the experience of students who are in rural, Appalachian classrooms, both in terms of viewing and filmmaking.

When it comes to teaching with film, the educators in this study have demonstrated that creative and alternative routes are essential to meeting the needs of students for reading and writing in relevant and meaningful ways. At times, teachers surprised with me with the wide variety of materials they were using in the midst of very busy schedules. Filmic pedagogy, for teachers in this study, has included attention to how self and others are represented, a multi-step process for optimal uses, a sense of seeing students and self for teachers, and a sense of maintaining creative energy. We will view, so the question that remains for teachers is how.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Teacher Recruitment Email

You are invited to participate in a study about your use of film as text in your teaching. If you choose to participate, I will be conducting two interviews with you, one at the beginning of the study and one at the end. You can determine what time and place will be most convenient for you to complete these interviews. I will also be asking that you keep audio-recorded or written teacher logs throughout the study, and I will contact you during this time to gather these logs, as well as any handouts or lesson plans that you use.

The study will last for one to two months, allowing time for you to complete any projects that use film. I look forward to meeting with you in person very soon. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the study. I have also attached the study consent form, which explains this process in more detail.

Appendix B

Study Consent Form

Introduction and Purpose

Hello, I am a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education. You are invited to take part in a research study of teacher experiences considering the use of film as a text when working with adolescent students in rural settings. This study will serve as my dissertation at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and I value your participation. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Involvement in the Study

If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct an audio-recorded 45 to 60-minute interview with you at the beginning of the study, and a brief interview of 45-60 minutes at the end. During the course of the study you will have the opportunity to reflect on your teaching practice with film using a written or audio log. I will check in with you periodically (3-4 times) in person or via email during the study to collect your reflections. Both interviews will include questions about your job, your lesson planning process, and specific activities that you use in your classroom. I estimate the total time for involvement in this study to be approximately 1-2 months. During this timeframe of 1-2 months, you will have the opportunity to teach lessons on your own schedule and briefly reflect on your experience either in written or audio-recorded form when you use film as part of your lesson. Audio files will be used for transcription purposes only. I expect to conduct only the two interviews; however, follow-up conversations may be needed for further clarification. If so, I will contact you by phone at a number that is most convenient for you. If you have any questions about the nature of the interview, you are encouraged to ask at any time. I will also provide opportunities for you to review the transcribed interview data to verify its contents for accuracy throughout the course of my research project. In addition to the interviews and logs, I will ask for copies of relevant handouts, lesson plans, and information that you use when planning your lessons.

If you feel uncomfortable at any time during the interviews, you can stop the interview, and I can turn off the recorder at your request. If you choose to withdraw from the study, I will immediately erase all audio files and discard any written reflections you have shared with me.

Risks

Some questions about working with students or performing aspects of your job may be uncomfortable for you to answer. In addition to this, breach of confidentiality is a possible risk for involvement in this study. Most studies involve some risk to your confidentiality and it is possible that someone could find out you were involved in this study or see your study

information; however, the study investigator believes this risk is unlikely to occur because of the procedures in place to protect your information.

Benefits

While there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this interview, the information gathered may help to improve literacy programming in future schools. It is also possible that while discussing your practice, our conversation may lead to beneficial reflection about your lesson planning.

Participation

Your participation is voluntary. You can decline to participate or end your participation at any time with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Confidentiality

Interview and reflection data gathered from this study will be kept on a password-protected computer, accessed only by me and my supervising research professor. The data will only be made available to me and my supervising research professor, Dr. Stergios Botzakis. All audio recordings and study data will be destroyed by me at the end of the research project.

Contact Information

If you have questions about the study, or about your rights as a participant or have experienced any adverse effects as a result of participating in the study, please contact me or my research professor. If you have questions or concerns about your treatment in this research or your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Tennessee IRB Compliance Officer.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Participant's Name (printed)_____

Researcher's Signature _____Date _____

Researcher's Name (printed) _____

Appendix C

Interview Protocols

Initial Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Overarching questions:

Tell me about using film as an educational text.

Tell me how you got started using film in the classroom.

1. What courses and grade levels do you teach?

2. What are your students expected to accomplish with reading for class?

3. What are your students expected to accomplish with writing for class?

4. Why do you use film in class?

5. How do you define film?

6. How do you choose a film to use in class?

7. How do you use film in class?

8. Please tell me about a time you used film in class.

9. How did you start using film?

10. How did you use film early on?

11. How do you use film now?

    a. Is there a difference that you notice?

12. Tell me about a time when you used film with reading.

13. Tell me about a time you used film with writing.

14. Tell me about your planning process when you use film.

Final Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

1. How did your teaching go with film?

2. Did the use of film turn out as you expected it would?

3. Were there any benefits you found with using film?

4. Were there any challenges you found with using film?

5. Did anything surprise you about using film?

6. Tell me about a time that film seemed to influence classroom activity.

7. Did you use film as you intended?

8. Would you use film in this way again?

9. What would you change about your teaching, if anything, based on your use of film during this process?

Appendix D

Thematic Table

Theme	Representative Quotes
Part of the Human Story	I ended up showing the entire movie because of their interest in it and the fact that they were waking up to realization (laughs) of the fact that there are students like that around them. I feel like it helped them understand those students more. While I was using it in class for state standards, what really came out of it more was an understanding of their classmates and they took it to heart. So, it was one of those teachable moments where it wasn't anything about the curriculum. At the end, it was more so humanity. (Beulah, Interview 1) So, I always call it the human story, so subtly get them to think, Hey I'm a human. Maybe

| | I'm part of this story. Maybe it has some effect in my life. (Cedar, Interview 1)

So, you know, seeing that video makes it, to me, more real, helps them understand it is a story, you know, these people really lived, these things really happened. (John, Interview 2)

That's why I push play. But it's also showing, like, even if we try to perfect the wrongs, it's still not going to happen. Like humanity and mess still gets in the way, and so we've got to keep our heroes human and I think that's one of things that film sometimes allows us to do. If a producer or a director does it right, I can use it. (Tom, Interview 2)

The main objective when we view films in class is to catch a glimpse of two things: a |

	protagonist or a crew of them who students can relate to and be inspired by; the second, a cast of characters they cannot relate to but can sympathize with. Being able to relate or not relate to is connected primarily to socioeconomic status and race, secondary connections being age, gender, and geographic locations. (Tom, Log 1)
The Thing is Finding the Time	I usually, if there's something I want to show, the wondrous thing about technology and probably a bad thing is I can look for it on my phone as I'm sitting in bed, and add it quickly to send a link to my email, or put it in my Google drive, or just something easy like that. (Beulah, Interview 2) My challenge now is to, I've got two little daughters which has kind of put the brakes on my after-school time, but you know continuing to be innovative, and being creative with coming up with new things. But once you do it, it's there.

	(Cedar, Interview 1)
	It is fun for the kids, but the thing is finding the time. We're so pushed now with having to cover every standard. By the end of March now, because testing starts in April. Really now it's a time issue. I just don't really have the time to put into it. Maybe that's an after-testing project or something. (John, Interview 1) That's more of a frustration, not even being able to put it into words. But that's the treasure hunt, as well, because what you do find is, like, I try to convince myself, that was worth your time. Even though it's like 1:30 in the morning right now and you started at 10:15, but yet you were able to make this brand-new playlist and you put it in this order that, man, it just flows really well. You know, that's most often worth, you know, a much bigger cup of coffee in the morning. To start my day. But I try not to do that too often

	because YouTube, really, I get lost and time doesn't exist, but like that's the research. (Tom, Interview 2) There's never enough time. (Violet, Interview 2)
I See You Today	I'm still human, but the image I want to uphold is carefully tailored. (Beulah, Interview 2) So, but I think that's very valuable because they love to see themselves in the videos. (Cedar, Interview 1) So, it had been so ingrained in me, don't let a day go by that a kid doesn't know they've been seen. Sometimes, and you can see it, you know when you learn how to really take care of people, you learn how to see them. And I'll just say that to a kid. I see you today. (Tom, Interview 1)

	My students got quiet. It wasn't funny anymore to them. I mean, they, really all students there were watching it, all of my students really started to get the point of what was happening. I mean, they could really see it as something that wasn't a positive. (Violet, Interview 2).
Out of the Box	So, I definitely encourage people to do it. It's a little out of the box, it's fun, and even if your thing isn't making an alter-ego for yourself. (Cedar, Interview 1) And I, you know, I just see like the classroom as like, it's almost like my medium and a teacher's an artist. You know, they are. Just for several years I just have this like creative fire in me. (Cedar, Interview 2) The physical environment does matter. I always thought that it did. I didn't have my own classroom for 12 years. I roamed, which

	was to my advantage, whether I realized it or not as a young teacher because I was seeing how physical environment does, when you walk into the door, I mean. Like, there's an atmosphere created. There's a vibe that you almost can just feel. Smell matters in a classroom. Right? So not only what you see, what you sense, but what you smell. The physical environment matters. (Tom, Interview 1) I always tell, when I share with faculty and colleagues, I always tell them that I don't necessarily teach how I was taught. I teach how I would have liked to have been taught. (Violet, Interview 1)

Vita

Jason D. DeHart is originally from Princeton, West Virginia. He has always been a reader, and has always loved words. He completed a Bachelor of the Arts in Pastoral Ministry at Lee University in 2002, then completed a Master of Arts in Teaching (2008) and an Education Specialist degree (2014) at Lee University, as well. He taught middle school English for eight years prior to attending the University of Tennessee, where he served as a department chair and was nominated for system-level Teacher of the Year (2014). During his time at UT, Jason published articles in *The Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *The Reading Teacher*, *AMLE Magazine*, and *The Qualitative Report*, among others. He also had the opportunity to support graduate and undergraduate students in courses focused on teaching reading in elementary and middle school classrooms.

Jason has served as a representative for the Graduate Student Senate for two years, and has presented at a number of national conferences, including The Literary Research Association (LRA) Conference, The Qualitative Report (TQR) Conference, and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Conference. He has served as an editorial assistant for The American Reading Forum (ARF) Yearbook for four years and as an ad-hoc reviewer for The *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* for one year. Jason has also served as a conference proposal reviewer for The Association of Middle Level Education (AMLE) Conference for one year.