

An Argument for Young Adult Literature in the University ESL Classroom

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Table of Contents

Abstract	4
Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review	
Reading Attitudes.....	8
Use of Literature in the ESL Classroom.....	9
Extensive Reading.....	10
Reader-Response Theory.....	11
The Many Benefits of Literature.....	12
Engaging Content	
Authentic Language	
The Experience of Other Cultures	
Transfer of Skills	
The Benefits of Young Adult Literature.....	17
Engaging Content	
The Language of Young Adult Books	
Conclusion.....	21
Chapter 3: Methodology	
Research Methodology.....	23
Participants	
Reading Attitude Questionnaires	
Student Journals	
Researcher's Observations	
Teaching Methodology.....	29
Guiding Principles	
Extensive Reading	
Reader Response Theory	
Chapter 4: Data Analysis	
Research Question 1.....	31
Questionnaire Data	
Student Journal Data	
Attitudes Toward Young Adult Literature	
Research Question 1 Discussion	
Research Question 2.....	38

Student Journal Data	
Value of <i>The Wanderer</i>	
Value of Classroom Activities and Homework	
Qualitative Analysis of Questionnaire 2	
Research Question 2 Discussion	
Research Question 3.....	44
Student Journal Data	
Research Question 3 Discussion.....	45
Conclusion.....	45
Chapter 5: Course Overview and Learning Outcomes	47
Chapter 6, Book Selections	
Book Selection.....	51
Class Novel.....	52
Book Club Selections.....	53
Chapter 7: Book Clubs	
Book Clubs.....	56
Teacher Reflections on Book Clubs.....	58
Chapter 8: Materials - <i>The Wanderer</i>	
<i>The Wanderer</i> Response Journal.....	61
<i>The Wanderer</i> Introduction.....	64
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 1.....	66
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 2.....	70
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 3.....	75
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 4.....	78
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 5.....	81
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 6.....	85
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 7.....	89
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 8.....	92
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 9.....	96
<i>The Wanderer</i> Day 10- Last Day.....	99
Chapter 9: Conclusion	102
References	104
Appendix A: Student Schedule	107

Appendix B: Syllabus	111
Appendix C: Book Club Books – Quick Looks	114
Appendix D: Book Club Book Presentation!	117
Appendix E: The Wanderer Reading Response Journal	118
Appendix F: Journey Map	119
Appendix G: The Wanderer Day 7, “The Lotus-Eaters”	121
Appendix H: The Wanderer Day 8, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”	122
Appendix I: Reading Attitude Questionnaire 1	125
Appendix J: Reading Attitude Questionnaire	128

Abstract

The main focus of this project is to design and implement a reading course that works towards inspiring ELs to want to read in English. In my project I design and implement an intermediate reading course that uses young adult literature as a primary source of input for the students. Materials and lesson plans are designed with young adult texts, using the research behind Extensive Reading and Reader-Response Theory. Students read one novel as a class and a second novel of their choice. The young adult novels are the bulk of the material taught and are used to teach both reading fluency and reading skills. Throughout the course data is gathered by questionnaires, reading journals, and instructor observation notes. The data analysis suggests that students enjoyed the class and found the materials motivating and interesting. Data also suggests that students were encouraged to continue reading on their own after the class was finished.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In my limited experience teaching in Ball State's Intensive English Program (IEI) I have noticed a pattern with international students. When I teach reading, I always ask students if they enjoy reading in English or if they do any reading for fun in their leisure time. The answer for the majority of students is usually "no". I see this as a huge problem for two reasons. First of all, reading is essential to a students' success in the University. International students who wish to seek a degree at an American university will have high reading demands placed on them, no matter what their major. And research has shown that reading for pleasure is one of the best ways to improve one's reading fluency and comprehension (Krashen 1985). Second, the lack of enthusiasm my students have towards reading for pleasure in English strikes me as a problem because they are missing out on an excellent resource not just for improving their reading skills but for learning about and exploring different aspects of American culture. This observation has inspired me to work towards developing a reading class that will be motivating and enjoyable for English Learners (ELs). My course focuses on not just providing interesting material in the classroom, but also instilling in students a desire to read for pleasure on their own. Arguably, young adult literature (YAL) is an excellent resource for ELs and has the potential to be used to meet these goals.

There are several reasons why YAL has the potential to be motivating and enjoyable for students. First of all, there are many reasons why literature itself meets the needs of ELs. To begin, Krashen (1985) asserts that the best way for students to improve reading skills is simply by reading as much as possible. In other words, encouraging students to read more books is exactly what they need to improve their skills. Using Extensive Reading (ER) and the Reader-Response Theory (RRT), to be defined in the next section, students are asked to experience the

text and relate to characters and themes in an engaging and meaningful way (Amer, 2003). It is also argued that literature is a good resource for teaching because it is an authentic text (Reid, 2002). In addition, researchers believe that students improve their writing, critical thinking skills and reading fluency all by reading literature (Collie & Slater 1987, Oster 1989). Moreover, these skills can transfer to other kinds of reading such as academic texts (Oster 1989, Gajdusek 1988).

Carefully selected young adult texts carry not only the advantages mentioned above, but several others unique to its genre. Although YAL is described as readings for individuals between 12 and 18 (Bucher and Manning, 2006), I argue that there are several core reasons why young adult books are a good choice for university ESL students. First of all, the language of YAL is appealing because it is authentic, common everyday speech. The language in young adult books is sometimes more suitable than classic texts for many ELs because it is less difficult, yet still high quality writing. Not only that, but the texts are less intimidating and can be more relatable than the classics or canon. For example, YAL often focuses on American culture which most students studying in the United States find interesting. Lastly, YAL is a good resource for students and teachers because there are so many genres and styles of books to choose from. A student is bound to find something that interests them and meets their needs.

Realizing the potential benefits for YAL in the classroom, I decided to create a reading course based on carefully selected young adult texts in hopes of motivating students to read on their own while also providing them with a reading class that is dynamic and effective in helping them improve their reading skills. Ultimately, this creative project aims at creating and implementing lesson plans and materials for a level 3 (high-intermediate) reading course in an Intensive English Program (IEP) at Ball State University. The IEP program, called The Intensive English Institute (IEI), offers courses that run for seven week sessions. A second goal of this

project is to test the effectiveness of my approach by analyzing student journals, reading attitude surveys and by noting my own observations. In this paper I first review the literature on reading attitude followed by a discussion of the research on two approaches to teaching reading; ER and RRT. The literature review also focuses on why literature, and specifically YAL, is an appropriate source of input. Next I outline my data collection methods, and my teaching methodology. Subsequently, the data is presented. In the following chapters I discuss the novels chosen for the course as well as the lesson plans and materials. And finally, I conclude with a discussion of further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The goal of this literature review is to demonstrate how students' attitudes towards reading can influence their success in reading comprehension and the acquisition of reading fluency. The purpose is also to evaluate how two current trends in teaching reading (ER and RRT) might have a positive influence on students reading motivation and attitude. In connection with these trends, this literature review also strives to identify how using literature in the classroom can benefit students and lastly why YAL is a valuable source of input.

Reading Attitudes

Reading is an important topic in second language acquisition. And one of the contributors to success in reading is students' attitudes towards reading. Reading attitude has been defined differently by various researchers. Mathewson (1994) created a well accepted model of reading attitude which includes three components- (a) overall feelings about reading, (b) willingness to read and (c) beliefs about reading (Yamashita, 2009). For the purpose of this study, we will use Matthewson's definition.

At this point we could question why learners might have negative attitudes towards reading. To begin, attitude is closely tied with anxiety. Naturally if a task creates anxiety, a student is likely to have a negative attitude. According to Saito, Thomas, and Horwitz (1999), many people often associate language anxiety with speaking (p. 202). However, they assert that reading can also cause anxiety for students. In their study, Saito et al. found that students with a higher level of reading anxiety tend to have lower grades. They go on to assert that, "(a) unfamiliar scripts and writing systems and (b) unfamiliar cultural material" can both be threatening to students (Saito et al., 1999, p. 203). Clearly reading anxiety can have huge

consequences. If students reading anxiety could be reduced, perhaps this can lead to better success in reading.

Use of Literature in the ESL Classroom

Because reading anxiety can have such a considerable influence, my goal is to conduct class and design materials in such a way as to reduce anxiety for students. In the rest of this chapter I will discuss how young adult literature combined with extensive reading and reader-response theory helps me to achieve this goal.

First of all, in order to explain why young adult literature would be advantageous for college age English learners (ELs), we must first understand the status of using literature in general and why it is beneficial. The research in support of using literature in the EL classroom is abundant. Despite this fact, some claim the use of literature is still surprisingly not very common (Wu, 2008, p. 4). While using literature might not be the norm everywhere, we can say that it is gaining popularity. Amer (2003) states, “There has been an increasing awareness of the significance of integrating literature in EFL/ESL curriculum” (p. 63). Instructors are beginning to realize how literature can meet the needs of international university students. They are also starting to teach reading differently. Wu (2008) says that, in the past, literature was taught to ELs in the same way that it was taught in traditional secondary school (p. 27). Teachers were expected to present the text by focusing on the author and genre; students were expected to do little analysis. Instead, the students were required to learn information about the text and remember that information. Another traditional approach was to work strictly with reading textbooks, which often only contained short segments of actual reading and focused mostly on reading skills. This is not to say that focusing on individual reading skills is not valid.

Nonetheless, teaching individual reading skills is in vain if students are not asked to read longer texts. ER and RRT advocate for a much different approach.

Extensive Reading (ER)

As mentioned above, a popular approach to teaching reading is to promote Extensive Reading (ER), or reading for pleasure. In its broadest sense, ER means that students read as much as possible (Day & Bamford, 1998, pp. 7-8). Students usually select what they wish to read and the readings are well within their language ability. In other words, students have a choice in what they read and that the text is just at or right below their reading ability level. Hafiz and Tudor (1989) define ER as “the reading of large amounts of material in the second language (L2) over time for personal pleasure or interest, and without the addition of productive tasks or follow-up language work” (p. 4). ER is promoted based on the belief that the more students read the better. According to Krashen (1985), the amount of reading done by learners directly relates to their success in acquiring vocabulary and writing (p .90). Mikulecky (1990) agrees, acknowledging that Krashen’s (1985) “survey of methodologies led him to conclude that simply allowing students to read more books will result in improved reading just as often, if not more often, than any instructional program” (p .11).

Further, Cummins (2003) writes about ER for K-12 ELs saying that ER plays a huge role in developing a student’s reading comprehension ability. He believes books are the perfect source of input concluding that, “a diet of engaging books works much better than a diet of worksheets and drills in developing reading comprehension and academic language” (p. 3). Not only that, he echoes Krashen arguing that the main factor in students reading achievement is the amount of reading they carry out (Cummins, p .28). In other words, it is imperative that students read as much as possible. They cannot improve their reading skills unless they practice.

Nation (2009) believes that ER should focus on the meaning, not on learning language features. He goes on to say that ER can provide both fluency development and meaning-focused input (p. 49). Fluency is developed when students encounter very few new words in the text whereas meaning-focused input comes from reading that is more challenging (Nation, p. 49).

Despite this evidence, reading is often taught using the traditional methods described above. Students focus on reading textbooks that do not ask them to read more than several paragraphs, or pages, of text at a time. For example, a typical chapter from a reading textbook might ask students to read one short article or excerpt from a story (depending on the textbook) but students are not required to read a large amount of text. Moreover, in programs that have short sessions, teachers must make choices between focusing on having students read textbooks versus actual books. There simply is not enough time to cover an entire reading textbook and ask students to read a novel. At some point something is sacrificed. Unfortunately what is most often set aside is the novel, when according to the research above this in fact could be the key element in improving students' reading ability.

Reader-Response Theory

Another approach that is popular and well researched is Reader-Response Theory (RRT). RRT is based on the belief that readers create meaning by reflecting on their own experiences. Many critics credit L. Rosenblatt as being the founder of RRT (Booth, 1995). In her book *Literature as Exploration*, first published in 1965, Rosenblatt explains that, "A novel or poem or play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them unto a set of meaningful symbols" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 24). In other words, meaning is created by the readers' interaction with the text. In teaching reading to ELs, therefore, Amer (2003) describes the main goal of RRT as getting students to respond to literature (p. 67). In addition to acquiring language

skills, students are encouraged to study “literature for literature’s sake” (Amer, 2003, p. 67).

This means that they have the opportunity to read for enjoyment and to develop their own thoughts and opinions about the world around them, via the text.

Gajdusek (1988) had the same idea describing reading as, “an active, two-way process of matching incoming data with our existing knowledge, not only of the language system, but of the world” (p. 231). Therefore students first decipher the language within the text, and then they bring in their beliefs and prior-knowledge about the world in order to create meaning. She goes on to say that with literature, more than with other texts, the goal when teaching is not simply to communicate information, but for the reader to experience the text in some way (p. 229). In other words, students are not simply gathering facts to fill in on a quiz at the next class. Rather they are being asked to analyze and think about what they have read, what it means to them and how it applies to their life and the world around them. In my opinion, this is a meaningful learning experience that students can value and appreciate. Because of their deeper connection to the text, students are more motivated and interested in the material. Collie and Slater (1987) use the term “personal involvement” to describe the way a student interacts with the text. They say that focusing on literature allows learners to switch from “mechanical aspects of language”, which can seem superficial, and engage analytically and emotionally with what they read (p. 5).

The Many Benefits of Literature

Having explored current methods for teaching reading, we must still answer the question of what makes reading books a better choice for students over other texts? The key reasons include:

- Engaging Content
- Authentic Language
- The Experience of Other Cultures
- Transfer of Skills

Engaging content

One argument in favor of teaching literature is that, if chosen wisely, it is engaging because of its universal themes, deep issues, and captivating stories and characters. Collier and Slater (1987) claim that literature contains themes that transcend time. For example, look at the novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. This book might have been written in 1847, but today it is still a popular favorite because of its mystery and romance. Just this year a new film version of the book is being made. This is not to say, however, that canon texts are always the best choice for language learners. It is important to keep students proficiency level in mind when choosing a text. Non-native speakers who are not at a very high proficiency level will find it difficult to relate to the classics considering the challenging language that is often used and the in-depth cultural knowledge sometimes required to understand a text. Ultimately literature outside the canon, such as young adult literature, can also offer the same provoking themes and characters that one can find in classic texts while offering an appropriate level of difficulty.

Authentic language

Literature also meets the needs of students because it provides authentic language (Reid, 2002). “Authentic” refers to texts that are not written for the purpose of language learning. According to Mikulecky (1990), the materials used in the language classroom are often considered to be unauthentic (p. 13). She claims that unauthentic material is not as motivating for students because they do not have an invested interest in the content. Also in these materials language is not used at its “fullest sense” (Mikulecky, 1990, p. 13). This is not to say that textbooks do not have their place in reading instruction, but rather that students need authentic language as an essential source of input (Mikulecky, 1990).

According to Reid (2002), literature is a “convenient” way to provide such authentic input (p. 14). Amer agrees saying that, “a syllabus that is based, or that draws heavily from authentic stories, provides a motivating medium for language learning while fostering the development of the thinking skills that are needed for L2 academic literacy” (p. 63). Therefore, authentic material can be very motivating for language learners; it can also help learners develop the critical thinking skills they need at the university level. Moreover, the authenticity of quality literature exposes learners to complex grammar and new vocabulary in context (Gajdusek, 1988, p. 229).

The experience of other cultures

Another important benefit of using literature in the ESL university classroom is that it exposes students to different cultures (Amer 2003; Gajdusek 1988; Goshn 2002; Oster 1989; Reid 2002, Collie & Slater 1987). As Goshn (2002) puts it, “Literature can also act as a powerful change agent by developing pupils’ intercultural awareness while at the same time nurturing empathy, a tolerance for diversity, and emotional intelligence” (p. 172). Oster (1989) echoes this idea saying that using literature can be a tool in the ESL classroom to encourage students to imagine situations from a different perspective (p. 85). Through reading, students can be exposed to the target culture as well as the many cultures of their fellow students. Ultimately students, “begin to see how their own experiences, cultures, or values affect their views” (Oster, 1989, p. 85). Oster (1989) also emphasizes that students from an education system different from the U.S. might be “threatened” by a system that asks them to put themselves in someone else’s shoes (p. 85). This change of thinking can be extremely difficult for some students who might never have been asked to view things from a different perspective.

However, literature can be the “ideal vehicle” to help them achieve this difficult task (Oster, 1989, p. 86).

In addition to learning to think for themselves, literature provides opportunities for international students to acculturate to the American university and academic system. For example, in interpreting, discussing and writing about texts, students will find that there might be more than one answer to a question. Oster (1989) points out that students may have to learn the concept that it is ok to disagree with the teacher and that it is not offensive to disagree with your classmates (p. 86). Often they will expect one correct answer or interpretation of the text to be communicated to them by their professor. It is also important to keep in mind that that this openness to new ideas may not be valued by all students, depending on their cultural background (Oster, 1989, p. 87). Students are not required to take on these ideals simply because they fit with the American academic system. However, it is important that they understand that it is a part of the university culture and will be practiced in many of their classes. Having this understanding will help them adjust to academic life in the states and increase their chance of success.

Another way literature can help students acculturate is by giving them a deeper understanding of American culture. For example, the young adult book *My Louisiana Sky* by Kimberly Willis Holt is set in the American south of the 1950's. This book is a captivating story highlighting the unique qualities and nuances of Southern culture as well as a little bit of American history. Reading and discussing this book can give students an insight into American life that they might not get otherwise. It is important to note that because students lack cultural knowledge books like this might also pose difficulties for students. Yet, I argue that the benefits

of reading will outweigh the challenges, especially if the teacher provides the appropriate background information for students.

Transfer of skills

Some might question what good are skills in interpreting and discussing literature if a student intends to major in a different field of study. In response, one benefit is that these skills can transfer to other kinds of reading (Oster 1989; Gajdusek 1988). In other words, students can take their reading fluency and analytical skills with them as they continue their education. Not only do the benefits of reading literature transfer to other types of texts, but they transfer into students' writing as well. Collie and Slater (1987) argue that students gain familiarity with complex language structures through ER, and with literature the use of language is more creative when compared to everyday conversation or practical texts. Therefore students are exposed to the many creative ways language can be used and what they themselves can do with it. They conclude, "at a productive level, a student of literature will, we hope, become more creative and adventurous as they begin to appreciate the richness and variety of the language they are trying to master" (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 5). Oster (1989) reiterates this idea saying that studying literature can improve students' writing and motivate them to be more creative (p. 97). In other words, the exposure to quality writing aids students in their own writing endeavors.

So far, we have discussed many benefits of using literature in the ESL classroom such as exposure to authentic material, engaging and interesting themes, and the experience of other cultures and the transfer of skills. After seeing so many benefits of teaching literature we might ask why the practice isn't more widespread. According to Wu (2008), the issue is that both students and teachers are intimidated by the canon texts (p. 13). Literature is viewed as too long, difficult and tedious, and only the classics are considered. All contemporary or modern works

are left out. Students need something that is challenging but also manageable and relevant to them. I argue that young adult literature can meet this need.

The Benefits of Young Adult Literature

This brings us to the question of “Why young adult literature?” In order to understand how young adult literature (YAL) can meet the needs of university ESL students, we must first understand what YAL is. There are different opinions about the exact definition of YAL. The vaguest definition says that it is anything young adults chose to read (Bushman & Haas, 2006, p. 2). However, usually YAL is considered to include the following qualities; main characters that are young adults, themes and experiences relevant to young adults and language characteristic of young adults (Bushman & Haas, 2006, p. 2). Like books for adults, YAL contains diverse genres within itself such as realism, fantasy, adventure, mystery, humor, historical fiction, biography, and nonfiction. Books like *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, *The Contender* by Robert Lipstiz and *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel are considered to have paved the way for the young adult novels of today. Published in the sixties and early seventies, these novels were the first to be recognized by teachers as having the potential for educational use in the classroom (Wu, 2008, p. 9). What constitutes a “young adult” can be foggy. Some argue it begins as early as 10-12, while others suggest it spans to 18 or as high as college-age students (Bucher & Manning, 2006, p. 5).

However, a potential concern is that college-age learners will be offended upon being asked to read a young adult novel. Reid (2002) states that, “using children’s and young adult literature to teach adults or older teens may seem disrespectful, but if their goal is to learn English, books for children and young adults offer the most natural range of vocabulary and structure practice” (p. 114). She goes on to say that in order to prevent students from being

offended, the teacher should avoid texts which adults will view as obviously beneath them. For instance, avoiding childlike illustrations and personified animals is recommended.

No matter what the age of the ESL reader, I believe, based on my guiding principles and theories, that YAL has strong potential to be used in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) university classroom. I have determined two main categories that make YAL a particularly beneficial resource. These topics are:

1. Engaging Content
2. Language

Engaging content

First of all, I argue that for intermediate ELs YAL provides meaningful, interesting content that is less intimidating and more relatable than classic texts that might be traditionally chosen for study. As previously stated, teachers often assume that if they teach “literature” it has to be the classics. However, canonical texts by Shakespeare, Hawthorne, Orwell and so on are not always suitable for ELs because of their difficulty and lack of relate-ability (Wu, 2008, p. 14). Much of the “classic literature” is not meaningful to today’s ELs because it contains archaic language that they will never use in the real world. Although the themes and ideas might be relatable, texts like this take significant time and explanation on the part of the teacher in order for language learners to benefit.

On that same note, Gajdusek (1988) specifies that the literature used in the EAP classroom does not have to be “American Literature” or “British Literature” but rather it can be “fairly short, and fairly contemporary fiction, poetry, and drama of the target culture” (p. 288). In other words, there are other options to the canon that have the potential to be more engaging, particularly texts that take place in the culture of the target language. Moi (2003) suggests this

approach is a crucial to make texts be relevant and meaningful to students (Moi, 2003, p. 23). Her way of achieving this is to use rock music as poetry.

I believe that well chosen YAL is another such option because the genre contains quality stories with themes that are relevant to international students' lives. Referring to American youth, Herz and Gallo (2005) state that, “[YAL] helps teenagers in their search for understanding the complex world of today. The questions *Who am I?* and *Where do I fit in?* plague most adolescents during most of their formative years”(p.xvi). Although Herz and Gallo refer to American teenagers, I argue that older international students face the same questions. Now that they find themselves in a new place surrounded by a new culture, their identity in their second language forms and changes (Brown, 2007, p. 158). They often deal with culture shock and the feeling of not fitting in. Therefore, I believe it is likely that international students will find the themes often found in young adult books very relevant to their lives. Young adults face other issues not that different from the potential students in an Intensive English Program. For example, according to Bucher and Manning (2006), young adults deal with- “eating disorders..., alcohol, drugs, and tobacco; AIDS and STDs, peer pressure; and physical and psychological safety concerns” (p. 2). When we consider these issues it is easy to imagine they would also be relevant to any college age individual.

Moving on, not only are the themes relevant to international students, there are also many different genres and styles to choose from. Everyone should be able to find a book that is right for them. In general, YAL can be broken down into two main genre types: realism and fantasy (Cambell, 2008, p. 66). Fantasy can be divided more specifically into fantasy, science fiction and horror (Bucher & Manning, 2006, p. 13). Other genres in YAL literature include poetry, drama, short stories, autobiography, biography and non-fiction. And lastly, we have comic

books, graphic novels and magazines (Bucher & Manning, 2006, p. 14). So as you can see, the options for students are abundant.

The language of young adult books

The second most valuable quality about YAL when compared to the classics is that it is at an appropriate level for intermediate to low-advanced students while still being high quality writing. This characteristic is extremely important in achieving my goal of having students read a text that is at their reading level or just a little beyond. Bushman and Haas (2006) describe the quality and difficulty level of the classics in the following passage:

... the classics are written in a style and with syntax and vocabulary that are often quite foreign to young adult readers. Along with the survival of time, the classics are livingly guarded by some of their prestige. It is this stylistic prominence that elevates the classic to the high level. Yet it is this evaluation that makes appreciation and understanding unattainable for most young adults (Bushman & Haas, p. 176).

I argue that this same rationale Bushman and Haas apply to young adult readers can also be applied to EL readers. The authors go on to say that classical literature is the most difficult literature to understand. Asking ELs to read these texts pushes them beyond their zone of proximal development (Bushman & Haas, 2006, p. 176). Bucher and Manning (2006) add that, “generally shorter than adult novels, sometimes less complex in structure, but often well-written and tightly constructed, young adult novels can lead students to a better understanding of the novel form and elements of fiction” (p. 11). Not only that, but in the case of ELs it can help them improve their English with a text that is at their level, more manageable and less intimidating.

Wu (2008) agrees saying that, opposed to the classics, the length and difficulty level of most YAL books makes them well suited for ELs. Herz and Gallo (2005) support this sentiment as well, describing the vocabulary of young adult texts as manageable for readers of “average ability” (p. 11). In this case they are referring to native speakers. However, I would argue that a native speaker of average ability is comparable to an intermediate/low -advanced ESL speaker. Although the language of young adult texts might be easier for readers to comprehend, it should be emphasized again that this is no reason to assume that these writings are any less literary than the classics. By contrast, all the traditional elements of typical classical literature are present in quality YAL (Herz & Gallo, 2005, p. 11).

Wu (2008) also mentions the use of modern language. ELs need vocabulary they can use in their everyday life. YAL provides just the language they are looking for. Old fashioned or archaic language is to some extent useless to ELs. For instance, the language of Shakespeare would not be very practical for students at the intermediate level. What they can benefit from are the high frequency vocabulary of everyday speech. This is not to say that students do not need challenging vocabulary. The point is that they do not need to be overwhelmed by it. And young adult texts can still be challenging. For example, *The Disreputable History of Frankie Laundau Banks* by E. Lockhart is an excellent young adult book that is written in common language yet also creatively weaves in academic vocabulary that would be challenging and beneficial to language learners.

Conclusion

The evidence above seeks to make clear the huge potential for YAL in the EAP university classroom. The right text and teaching methods has the power to motivate students, help them improve L2 reading fluency, expose them to culture and authentic language while at

the same time being enjoyable. As you will see in the following pages, this project will test some of these assumptions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Methodology

As is explained further in *Chapter 3*, classes in the Intensive English Institute (IEI) meet for 7 week sessions. During the session, data was gathered in several ways. Due to the small number of participants and the nature of the topic, it was determined that qualitative data collection methods would be most suitable for this project. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to focus on the perspective of the participants (Gray, 2009). My research focuses on the following three questions.

- 1.) What are students' attitudes toward reading and towards reading YAL, including the books in this class as well as YAL in general?
- 2.) Do students value, or see value in, the material in this course and the work they are asked to complete?
- 3.) Do the RRT teaching methods actually elicit responses from the students? In other words, does the approach appear to be working?

In sum, data was collected by reading attitude questionnaires administered at the beginning and end of the session, analysis of student response journals including directed questions, and lastly instructor's observation notes. Each of these methods will be discussed individually.

Participants

The participants in this study are all students in the IEI at Ball State University. In order to participate in this research study, students had to be enrolled in the Level 3 (intermediate) reading course taught by the researcher. Students did not choose to be in this specific course. Rather, they were assigned by the IEI administration. During the first week of class students

were given the Informed Consent document and had the project explained to them. At this point they could choose whether or not they wanted to participate. In order to protect students from feeling pressured to participate, the Informed Consent and the project itself was explained by a different instructor. Also their responses on the Informed Consent were kept from the researcher until grades were posted at the end of the session. This was done in order to ensure that students could choose not to participate and be confident that their grades would not be negatively affected.

Nine students participated; 4 males and 5 females. Of the 9 students, 7 were between the ages of 18 and 24 and the remaining 2 were between the ages of 25 and 30. Students came from various countries including China, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Iran and Afghanistan. Students were not given an incentive to participate. However, it was stated that the whole class would benefit from a "breakfast party" at the end of the session as a "thank you" from their teacher, regardless of participation or not.

Reading Attitude Questionnaires

Data was collected in three ways. First of all, two reading attitude questionnaires were administered; one at the beginning and one at end of the course (See *Appendix I and J*). I will refer to these as Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2. All students completed the questionnaire regardless of whether or not they were participating in the study. The results of those who did not participate were discarded. The main goal of these questionnaires is to determine students' attitudes toward reading.

The questionnaires used for this study were adapted from Camiciottoli (2001) and Yamashita (2007). Camiciottoli's questionnaire focuses specifically on pleasure reading and ER. In her study, Camiciottoli focuses on how reading frequency and attitudes relate to ER habits of

Italian EFL students studying in Florence. She found that most students had positive attitudes towards reading in English. Rather than negative attitudes, it was the issue of time and availability of materials that prevented them more often from reading for pleasure in English. An adaptation of her survey was chosen for this study because I am interested in the reading attitudes of IEI students and I want to determine if they have a similar pattern to Camiciottoli's participants. Also, because my course is designed to emulate ER, her questions are relevant and interesting for this study.

Camiciottoli's original questionnaire includes 22 questions. Ten of these questions were chosen to be included in Questionnaire 1. On the revised survey you can determine where the questions for each section came from by looking at the notation under the section heading. Only 10 were chosen due to the fact that I also wanted to include questions from an additional survey and students needed to be able to complete the questionnaire during one 50 minutes class. There was not enough time to answer all of Camiciottoli's questions and I did not want the questionnaire to be overwhelming to students. "Part 1" of her survey, "General Information and Baseline Data" was included because it effectively gets basic information from students. Questions from "Part 2, Extensive Reading Habits: Frequency and Preferences" and "Part 3, Reading for Pleasure in English: Motivations and Options" were also selected. Camiciottoli also includes questions regarding students reading for pleasure habits in their native language. Because these questions were outside the scope of this project, they were not included in my revised survey.

Questions were also taken from a survey designed by Yamashita (2007). His reading attitude survey was designed using a 5-point Likert-scale. Yamashita's reading attitude survey includes questions that focus on five different factors in reading attitude; Comfort, Intellectual

Value/ Practical Value, Anxiety, and Linguistic Value. The original questionnaire has 22 questions based on a 5-point Likert-scale. Due to the time constraints mentioned above, only 13 of those questions were chosen to be included in the revised questionnaire. The 13 questions represent the four different factors of reading attitude. Four questions elicited responses in relation to students' "comfort" level when reading. The remaining categories had three questions each, making a total of 13. See *Table 1* for a breakdown of the questions and the reading attitude factor they elicit. These questions were repeated on both Questionnaire 1 and 2.

Table 1

1. I feel relaxed if I read in English.
 - Comfort
2. Reading English is dull.
 - Comfort
3. I feel tired if I read in English.
 - Comfort
4. Reading English is enjoyable.
 - Comfort
5. I can become more sophisticated if I read in English.
 - Intellectual/Practical Value
6. I can acquire broad knowledge if I read in English
 - Intellectual/Practical Value
7. Reading English is useful to my future career.
 - Intellectual/Practical Value
8. I feel anxious if I don't know all the words.
 - Anxiety
9. I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand even if I read.
 - Anxiety
10. I don't mind even if I cannot understand book content entirely.
 - Anxiety
11. I can acquire vocabulary if I read in English.
 - Linguistic Value
12. I can develop reading ability if I read in English.
 - Linguistic Value
13. I can improve my sensitivity to the English language if I read in English.
 - Linguistic Value

Lastly, open-ended questions were added to Questionnaire 2. These questions were designed to gather students' general opinions of the material in the course after having finished the 7 week session. For example, students were asked questions such as, "What parts of this

class did you find the most helpful in improving your reading skills?" and "What parts of this class did you find the least interesting?" These were the only questions not adapted from an existing survey.

Student Journals

Student journals were also analyzed. As will be elaborated on further in subsequent chapters, students completed weekly journal assignments and these journals were collected throughout the session. Based on RRT, journal questions are open ended and leave much room for students to express whatever thoughts and opinions are on their mind. In addition to being open for students to choose their topic, students were also given questions specifically designed to draw out certain perspectives of the students. Journal analyses were designed to reveal student attitudes toward reading in general, attitudes toward the young adult novels, and to determine if the reader response lessons were working as hoped. See *Table 2* for a list of journal questions that were developed with the intention of analyzing student responses. These questions are geared towards uncovering students' attitudes toward the young adult books themselves as well as reading in general. For example, question nine reads, "The books we are reading in this class are considered to be 'Young Adult Literature'. Think about our class novel and the book you are reading for your Book Club. Why do you think these books are categorized this way? Do you think you would want to read another book from the Young Adult Literature genre?". This question is designed to get students reactions to reading YAL and asks whether or not they would like to read something similar in the future. Due to time constraints, only questions 1, 3, 9, 10, 11 and 12 shown in *Table 2* were used in the actual study. Combining both the questionnaire results and journals questions provides a clearer picture of what students really think about reading in English and reading YAL.

Table 2

Questions Relating to the Class Novel

1. What do you like so far about this book and why? What do you dislike about this book so far and why?
2. Think about the themes we have discussed in class. Which theme do you find the most interesting? Why?
3. Do feel like you can relate to any of the characters in this book? If so, how? If no, how do you feel different from the characters?
4. What do you think about the decisions the characters in the book make? What would you do if you were in their shoes?

Questions Related to the Book Club Novel

5. What do you like so far about this book and why? What do you dislike about this book so far and why?
6. What themes have you noticed in your book? Why do you think they are important?
7. Do you feel like you can relate to any of the characters in your book? If so, how? If no, how do you feel different from the characters?
8. What do you think about the decisions the characters in your book make? What would you do if you were in their shoes?

Questions Related to Young Adult Literature and Teaching Methodology

9. The books we are reading in this class are considered to be “Young Adult Literature”. Think about our class novel and the book you are reading for your Book Club. Why do you think these books are categorized this way? Do you think you would want to read another book from the Young Adult Literature genre?
10. What do you think about this statement? “I don’t like to write about what I read. I don’t think it is useful.” Do you agree or disagree? It is ok to be honest!
11. Here are two different kinds of activities. (1.) Discussing a chapter we read from the book. (2.) Closely analyzing the language in a chapter we read from the book. Which activity do you think would be better to do in class? Why?
12. What do you think is the best way to improve your reading comprehension and to become a faster reader?
13. Now that you have finished both of the books, has your opinion about reading Young Adult Literature changed? Do you think you would like to read another young adult book in the future? Why or why not?

Researcher’s Observations

Lastly, a reflection journal was kept by the researcher to note observations and perceptions of how the materials functioned in the class and the students’ reactions to them. Observation is a typical method of data collecting in qualitative methods (Gray, 2009, p. 185). These journal notes were primarily used to write critiques of the lesson plans for *The Wanderer* found in *Chapter 8* and the critique of the Book Clubs discussed in *Chapter 7*. Although this journal is not the primary source of data for this project, it helps to shed light on what took place in the classroom and might also serve useful in making connections between the student’s comments and my perception of the class.

Teaching Methodology

Guiding Principles

To answer the research questions outlined above, we need to have an in-depth understanding of my teaching methodology. In this section, I articulate my teaching methodology, outlining the specific principles and theories that guided my decisions as I set out to incorporate YAL into a Level 3 Reading course. In sum, this study combines RRT with the theory behind ER to create a teaching approach that focuses on 1.) reading a large amount of text and 2.) reading to interact with and think critically about the text. In addition, the principles of Meaningful Learning, Learner Autonomy and Communicative Learning are applied whenever possible. These principles and theories are outlined below including bullet points that highlight specifically how my materials seek to incorporate the principle or theory.

- Extensive Reading
 - Materials encourage students to read a large amount a text.
 - Materials are at an appropriate difficulty level. They are challenging for students but not overwhelming.
 - Materials incorporate readings in addition to the selected novels for the course.
- Reader-Response Theory
 - Materials and classroom activities encourage a personal response to the text.
 - Materials and classroom activities encourage critical thinking.
- Meaningful Learning
 - Materials and classroom activities are interesting and engaging.
 - Again, materials and classroom activities promote critical thinking.
- Learner Autonomy
 - Materials and classroom activities give students personal choice and therefore ownership of their learning.
 - Materials will encourage students to continue to read for pleasure on their own outside of this class.
- Communicative Learning
 - Materials and classroom activities promote communication amongst students.

In addition, the IEI has designated objectives for each course at each level. Below are the objectives for the Level 3 reading course, ENIEI 133, taken from the IEI Teacher Handbook, 2010:

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- Increase reading speed through timed practice in class
- Utilize various reading strategies including, but not limited to, previewing, skimming, scanning, and making inferences to improve reading comprehension and speed
- Increase vocabulary knowledge
- Recognize the structure, including similarities and differences, in various writing styles
- Read and understand short novels or similar-length pieces of non-fiction

With these objectives, principles and goals in mind, I set out to create a reading course featuring young adult literature. In this chapter, as well as the chapters that follow, I elaborate on what choices I make and how these choices help me to meet the above criteria.

Extensive Reading

ER has a big influence on this project and the instruction methods that are chosen. Based on the research behind ER, it is my goal to increase the amount of text students would normally read in a level three reading course. Level three was chosen because it represents students with intermediate language skills. It is this group who is at the best English proficiency level to be challenged but not overwhelmed by young adult books. My materials mimic ER by pushing students to read more text than usual. Typically a Level 3 class would read a book of about 100 pages. In my class they are asked to read a young adult novel that is close to 300 pages. Moreover, students are also asked to read a second young adult novel on their own. The reason they are able to accomplish this task is because, as ER requires, the text is at a level that is within their language ability yet still presents new vocabulary.

Another way I follow the principles of ER is by giving students a choice in one of the novels they read. As a class we read one novel all together. For the second book students are

given a choice of 5 books. After students submit their preferences, they are divided in “Book Clubs”. Each club is assigned a novel that they will read and discuss together. Therefore, I am implementing elements of ER by giving some choice to students and pushing them to read large amounts of text. It is true that these restrictions do not completely fulfill ER requirements. In order to do so students would be choosing their own texts entirely on their own and reading them at their own pace. Also, they would not do any additional activities to go along with their reading. As you will see in the following chapters, the students are indeed required to complete several tasks related to their reading. Despite these differences, my approach still allows students to access the benefits that ER has to offer, such as improving reading fluency, reading comprehension and acquiring vocabulary and writing skills

Reader Response Theory (RRT)

In addition to incorporating ER, I seek to apply RRT to my teaching approach. The qualities described in *Chapter 2* make the reader-response approach an effective and worthwhile way for students to study reading. I implement this theory in several ways. One way is that I have students keep response journals twice a week. Under RRT, response journals center on open-ended questions that ask students to think critically and relate to the characters as well as giving students space to write whatever strikes them personally about the text. Another reason RRT has been chosen for this project is because it enables students to develop critical thinking skills. Under RRT students are asked to analyze and evaluate the material they are reading (Amer, 2003, p. 68). One way my students do this is by answering open-ended discussion questions and also by creating their own discussion questions about the text. These critical thinking skills are crucial for an international student’s success if they wish to study at an American academic institution. Higher level thinking is so important because students who

come from certain countries have not necessarily been taught these skills and therefore especially need practice in order to be prepared for academic classes in The United States (Oster, 1989, p. 85). In *Chapters 5 through 8* we will specifically see how the materials created for this project strive to achieve the goals discussed above.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Ultimately the data analysis shows some promising evidence in favor of the goals and objectives of this project. Naturally, the data also brings to light some limitations and topics to consider for the future. In this chapter we will look at the data in response to each of the research questions:

- 1.) What are students' attitudes toward reading and towards reading YAL, including the books in this class as well as YAL in general?
- 2.) Do students value, or see value in, the material in this course and the work they are asked to complete?
- 3.) Do the RRT teaching methods actually elicit responses from the students? In other words, does the approach appear to be working?

Research Question 1

Questionnaire Data

To begin, research question one asks, "What are students' attitudes toward reading and towards reading YAL, including the books in this class as well as YAL in general?" On the whole, it can be said that the students entered the class with a very positive reading attitude. Indeed on Questionnaire 1 administered at the beginning of the session, 9 out of 9 students indicated that they wanted to read more for pleasure. While the most common reason for not reading for pleasure was, like that found in Camiciottoli, lack of time, 4 of 9 students also cited not knowing "which books to read" as a common reason for not reading.

In addition to the data from Part 1 of the Questionnaire 1, the 5-point Likert-scale portion of the both the "Pre" and "Post" questionnaires also showed a generally positive attitude towards reading. Recall that this part of the questionnaire measured 4 factors of reading attitude:

comfort, intellectual/practical value, anxiety and linguistic value. Across the group of 9 students, answers were averaged for each factor and their average scores in the 4 factors of reading attitude were calculated as percentages. In *Table 3*, we see two sets of averages, one for the "Pre" questionnaire given at the beginning of the session and one for the "Post" given at the end of the session. The last average is a combination of the two.

Summary of Averages			
	Pre	Post	Combined
Comfort	80%	65%	73%
Intellectual/Practical Value	87%	73%	80%
Anxiety	73%	53%	63%
Linguistic Value	87%	80%	83%

We can see that the average of student scores decreased in all four categories. This result is unexpected and will be discussed in depth as we continue. Given these perplexing numbers, we turn now to the qualitative data to examine how students reacted to their reading experiences throughout their 7-week course

Student Journal Data

In addition to the surveys, student journals for our class book, *The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech, revealed interesting insight into reading anxiety. First of all, several students showed some signs of frustration while reading. In the following examples we see signs of frustration due to difficulty in comprehension as well as vocabulary. This experience of frustration could be cause for the decrease in the students' average score for reading comfort and anxiety.

Mary

- "I feel frustrated, because I find some difficult vocabulary then I want to stop reading or use the dictionary that makes me don't understand the story very well" (R4 P1).

Matt

- “I am afraid of the Sea. The book confuse me when it explain it...Finally, there are many words still I don’t know the meaning of them, some of these words are not found in the dictionary. ” (R3 P2).

As we can see, the students deal with some discomfort while reading and it bothers them enough that they choose to write about it. Other students, though also frustrated, have a more positive attitude about their difficulties and seem hopeful that they will overcome them.

Jane

- “I feel that there are many unfamiliar terms. Because the book is sailing story. When I don’t know the term’s meaning I find it with dictionary. It’s very helpful to me when I confused to reading comprehension. After, it comes to me again I can remember its meaning almost” (R3 P2).

Joe

- “Some of the words were difficult and confusing, but when I was reading further it became more clear” (R4 P2).

We see from the examples above that sometimes students handle reading difficulties more positively than others

Although students faced some frustration, the satisfaction students received from finishing the book made their hard work worth it. Overall, the class was very happy with their accomplishment and let that be known in their journal writing.

Matt

- “In the end, I feel sad to read the end of the story because I like it and I knew many words in last chapters” (R9 P2).

Alexis

- “I’m happy because I just finished reading an English book which was 305 pages” (R9 P1).

Many other students made similar comments, expressing their satisfaction in having finished the novel.

Attitude towards Reading Young Adult Literature

Research question one also inquires about students' attitudes towards reading YAL. To determine students' perceived attitudes about the value of reading YAL, students were given a specific prompt to answer during the fifth week of the course:

-Answer the following question:

The books we are reading in this class are considered to be "Young Adult Literature". Think about our class novel and the book you are reading for your Book Club. Why do you think these books are categorized this way? Do you think you would want to read another book from the Young Adult Literature genre?

The majority of students answered this question positively. Although one student was not so interested in continuing with YAL (see Matt below), the other students were, overall, more enthusiastic (see Joe, Jane and Mary).

Matt

- "Regarding to the books that learn in this class. I think is good for this level. But still have confuse for both of them...In my opinion, I think that's enough books for Young Adult Literature" (R7 P2).

So although Matt thinks that YAL is "good for this level", presumably meaning the level of difficulty, he also indicates that he personally has had "enough" of these kinds of books:

Joe

- I think the readings are advanced and its good for our level. We are understanding and learning more from these novels" (R7 P2).

Jane

- "I think that it's suitable to us. It's "Young Adult Literature." We aren't proficient in English. In this regard, "Young Adult Literature" can help us to comprehension quickly. Plus, it mainly uses a simple expression. If we read high expression we can't learn in English step by step. And I also will recommend "Young Adult Literature" when someone want to study in *my first language*" (R7 P2).

Mary

- "I like this kind of story. I would read another book from the young adult literature" (R7 P2)

So as you can see, the idea of reading YAL was generally accepted and well-liked among the students. Jane's opinion that YAL allows them to learn "step by step" is especially interesting. In addition, these comments highlight the fact that students did not find the book to be incredibly easy. This fact may have contributed to their decreased perceptions of anxiety and comfort. The linguistic value had the least amount of decrease, suggesting that they saw the value in reading.

Research Question 1 Discussion

The questionnaires paint a vivid picture of this group of students' attitudes towards reading. Interestingly, the average of students' scores (shown in *Table 3*) was lower in all four areas at the end of the session than at the beginning. Originally these questions were repeated on both surveys in attempt to measure any change in students' reading attitude. One possible explanation for the lower scores is that 7 weeks is not enough time to adequately measure or see a drastic change in students' reading attitude. Alternatively, since students answered the identical set of questions at the beginning and end of the session, and increased their English proficiency over the 7-weeks, it is possible that the second time students understood the questions more completely at the end of the course, and therefore answered them more accurately. Another possibility is that at the beginning of the session students were more optimistic about their reading abilities than they were at the end of the session after having attempted to read two novels. Along these lines, students may have based their answers more on their experiences reading in their native language, but as they were challenged with books written in English, they realized the complexity involved in reading such books. This idea was clear in their journal entries, where students seemed to be proud of accomplishing their novel, but still expressed the challenges that doing so presented to them.

Interestingly, averaging students' pre and post-survey scores revealed students' overall reading attitudes. When we look at the combined averages of the two questionnaires we can see that generally students have a moderately high value of reading on both a practical level and a linguistic level, scoring 80% and 83% respectively. Despite the lower post-course scores, the averages show that, in general, these students feel that reading is important to their success in English and believe it is a valuable subject of study. Students were generally slightly less confident in their reading comfort level and their level of anxiety, scoring 73% and 63% and based on the journals, may be attributed to their realization that the work was challenging because they did not always have sufficient vocabulary to comprehend the materials. Even so, these scores are fairly good, indicating a group of reasonably confident readers.

As these response journal comments suggest, finishing the book was very satisfying for students. The ultimate hope is that this satisfaction will motivate students to continue to read after this class and help encourage students to continue reading on their own. In relation to research question 1, this data reveals that students experience some reading anxiety that could deter them from wanting to read. However, their satisfaction from having finished the novel counters this frustration, and in theory helps students maintain a more positive reading attitude.

Research Question 2

Student Journal Data

Research question two asks, "Do students value, or see value in, the material in this course and the work they are asked to complete?" To evaluate the value of the course material (the novel, the classroom activities, etc.), I relied on students' comments in their response journals to *The Wanderer*, which they completed 2 times a week, as well as open-ended questions on Questionnaire 2.

Value of *The Wanderer*

To begin, even though they expressed frustrations with reading, overwhelmingly students expressed that they valued *The Wanderer*. Their comments confirm that the book was an appropriate choice (please see *Chapter 6* for an in-depth description of *The Wanderer* and why it was chosen). Interestingly, several students wrote in their early journals that they did not appreciate the story but changed their tone by the middle of the book. In the end all but one student claimed to have enjoyed the text. You can see in the example below how two students changed their opinions by the end of the novel:

Beginning of Session:

Mary

- “I think this story is appropriate for free time, because it is very long, so it is not appropriate to the students, especially if they have a lot of homework like me. I did find a lot of time to read this story very well and I did it not very interesting” (R2 P1).

Matt

- “I didn’t find these chapters very interesting but I am hoping for something interesting to come in the following chapters” (R3 P2).

End of Session:

Mary

- “This book is very good and fun and I will advice all my friend to read it, and I will take it with me if I go back to my country in the summer because my young sister like to read English books. I think it is a good gift for her” (R9 P2).

Matt

- “Overall, I like this story. It was pretty fun reading it while it kept me interested and wanted to read more. I enjoyed every part of the story” (R9 P1).

At the beginning of the session, Mary clearly indicates that the book is not appropriate (i.e., it’s too long for students who have a lot of homework), but at the end of the session, she thinks it is “good and fun” and wants to share it with her younger sister when she returns to her country. In the same way, Matt goes from finding the chapters to be less than interesting to wanting “to read more.” These types of comments suggest, perhaps, that students need adequate

time to acclimate to new material/assignments that may initially seem like a challenge, but ultimately, are do-able and valuable. The positive statements above are typical examples of what students had to say about *The Wanderer*

Value of Classroom Activities and Homework

In addition, the response journals shed light on how much the students valued the work done in class as well as the work they were asked to do for homework. In RRT, both writing and classroom discussion about what one reads is essential. Again, the journal entries revealed the amount of value that students saw in having to write about and discuss what they were reading. Students were given prompts in order to elicit their opinions about writing about what they had read. Here are three replies typical of the overall tone of the students:

Jane

- "I think the 'Response Journal' is good to us. It's very useful. Because it helps us to reflection, reaction and expression with your impression. Plus, if we write about what we read, we can make our memory keep long...In addition it also help us to improve writing skill" (R9 P2).

Tony

- "I think we usually should write about what we read. First, to express about our feelings of what we read. Second, to put our opinions about what we read. Finally to confirm and to refresh information you get from the passage you read" (R9 P2).

Joe

- "To be honest, writing about what I read is really helpful because of several reasons. It makes me to focus more on details and to concentrate on what is going on. I can also give me feed back about the story. Most importantly, I have a summary of whole book divided into chapters which I can review and point out what happened" (R9 P2).

So as you can see, students find the response journal assignments helpful for various reasons, such as helping them express their opinions, improve their writing and remember details from the text.

Students were also given the following prompt in order to determine if they valued the in-class discussion of the book's themes and important ideas:

-Answer the following question:

Here are two different kinds of activities. (1.) Discussing the themes and ideas from a chapter we read from the book. (2.) Closely analyzing the grammar and language in a chapter we read from the book. Which activity do you think would be better to do in class? Why? There is no wrong answer to this question; it is simply your opinion.

As you can see, students were asked to choose between classroom discussion and grammar analysis. Here are two responses typical of the group:

Matt

- “In my opinion, both activities are interesting and need to know it all” (R8 P2).

Jane

- “I suggest that we discuss the themes and ideas from a chapter we read because this is “Reading Class”. ... So it’s better than closely analyzing grammar and language” (R8 P2).

As these responses imply, in general the students agreed that discussing themes was valuable and appropriate in a reading class.

Qualitative Analysis of Questionnaire 2

Additional evidence about students’ perceptions of the value of the course material comes from open-ended questions that students answered on Questionnaire 2 (included below in *Table 4* below). Students’ answers confirm even more their value of the course material.

Table 4	
Part 2, Thoughts about the Course:	
1.	What parts of this class did you find the most helpful in improving your reading skills?
2.	What parts of this class did you find the most interesting?
3.	What parts of this class did you find the least helpful in improving your reading skills?
4.	What parts of this class did you find the least interesting?
5.	If you could change one thing about this class what would you change and why?
6.	What are your opinions about the books you read for this class?

Indeed, the majority of students (8 out of 9) had very positive things to say about the material used in this class as well as the class itself. While one student stuck out in particular as

having strong opinions against the structure of the class, his comments provide good food for thought and remind us that every student is different and it is very difficult to design lessons that will be suitable to everyone. To begin, this student, who has been given the pseudonym “Tony”, stated that he found *The Wanderer*, the response journal and the book clubs to be the least interesting and least helpful in improving his reading skills. Considering these things made up at least 75% of our classroom time if not more, we can guess that this student was not very content with the course. He also commented that these types of stories “do not fit level 3.”

Another critique of Tony’s that was shared by another student was a request for more focus on reading skills. For example, Tony stated, “I would to focus on techniques that help students to improve their reading skills for example more reading power book.” This statement reflects a desire to shift focus from reading novels to working with the textbook *More Reading Power*, which was used as supplementary material.

On the other hand, the rest of the class said they were completely content with the course material. If they did request changes, they were not relevant to course content but rather to other issues such as the amount of time available for reading class. A similar number also replied “nothing” or left blank the questions asking students to name what was least helpful or least interesting for them in the class. The most enthusiastic comments were in response to question one, “What parts of this class did you find the most helpful in improving your reading skills?” Here are several of the positive comments. Notice that even Tony had something good to say.

Dalia

-That we read all the book and we finished it because it make me want to read more books.

Mary

-The Wanderer, it is interesting and it helps me to learn more vocabulary in English, I like it.

Grace

-We read books. They were very help me.

Tony
-Discussion part about what happened in the story and interactions between students about novel.

Overwhelmingly, students had similar reactions and comments for questions two, “What did you find most interesting?” What these comments above tell us is that the majority of students were happy with the class and valued the material.

Research Question 2 Discussion

We can draw out several possible implications for the data in relation to Research Question 2. The positive statements about *The Wanderer* suggest that the selection of the course novel was a successful choice. Choosing a novel that will suit all students is very challenging and it is difficult to know if this same book would be as successful with a different group of students. In order to test this further, it would be interesting to use the same book again or to use similar books and measure their success.

Turning to the discussion of students’ values of classroom activities, after having reflected more, it seems problematic that students are asked to evaluate between in-discussion and grammar analysis. The issue is that student answers might reflect their dislike of studying grammar rather than their appreciation of group discussion. As a result, we must keep this weakness in mind when evaluating the students’ answers. We don’t necessarily know if students think the RRT approach is the *best* way for a reading class to be conducted. We can only say that it appears they see the value in what they are being asked to do and that they appreciate it.

In the end, the data shows that students were satisfied with the fact that they had completed such a long novel. The best case scenario would be that students take this excitement and motivation and use it to continue reading novels on their own. Whether they choose young adult

novels or pick something entirely different, as long as they choose to continue reading they will be continuing to improve their reading comprehension and fluency.

Research Question 3

Student Journal Data

To address question 3, "Do the RRT teaching methods actually elicit responses from the students? In other words, does the approach appear to be working?", I relied primarily on the free response paragraph in student journals, which asked them to think deeply about what they were reading. Students' free response paragraphs showed that students did in fact grasp the idea of writing a response and did it very well. Indeed, throughout the session many of them often made very thoughtful comments that demonstrated deep thinking on their part as well as a meaningful response to the text.

Giving more weight to the claim that the response journal worked in the way intended, consider the two excerpts from the first paragraphs of student journal entries. These come from two different students, "Alexis" and "Joe" who were commenting on what material they found to be most interesting in the text.

Alexis

- "If I was Sophie I would have never I don't be afraid of going and searching places and learning new things but I would have told my family where I'm heading to" (R3 P1).

Joe

- "I got really happy to find out that they were fixing the boat. But on the other hand I got sad to find out that she is an orphan" (R1 P1).

*R1= Response 1, P2= Paragraph 2

In Alexis's journal she relates to Sophie's desire to go on adventures but disagrees with her decision to not tell her family where she went. In his journal, Joe expresses an emotional connection to the text. Therefore, in reference to research question three, we can see that students are able to respond well to the reading even without specific questions from their teacher.

Two further examples are in response to directed questions. One type of response is to put yourself in the other character's shoes and compare one's own life with the life of the character. In the following two examples students do just that.

Jane

-“I also always eager to study in the United States while studying Architecture Bachelor's degree in Korea. And such as Sohie's feeling, I felt that time goes very slow” (R1 P2).

Dalia

-“They were freaking out because of the wind and the waves. if I've been in that place I will be scared to death” (R6 P2)

In Jane's example we see her comparing her life with that of Sophie's. Jane explains that she understands how Sophie feels because they have been in a similar situation. Similarly, Dalia puts herself in the place of the characters and imagines how she would feel in their situation. These are both the kinds of meaningful comments and reactions we are looking for from students in RRT. The comments above are typical of those made by students throughout the session.

Research Question 3 Discussion

The data above illustrates that the response journal did indeed elicit responses from students. It is important to answer this question because it speaks to the validity of the teaching methods and materials. If students did not respond to the text thoughtfully, we would question the instructions they were given and whether or not they gained anything from the task.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the data analysis affirms all three research questions in many ways. We have evidence to support that in general (1) students have positive attitudes towards reading and reading YAL, (2) students see value in the material of this course and (3) the RRT teaching methods do elicit responses from the students and appear to be working. However, it would be overzealous to assume that because of the findings above we can assume complete success. There are many limitations to this study that must be recognized.

To begin, we must recognize that this project was done with a very small group of participants. It would take larger numbers and more time in order to affirm if the teaching methods positively affect students reading habits currently and in the future. Another potential concern is the type of data collected. One drawback from the type of data collection methods used is that students may simply tell the teacher what they know he or she wants to hear. Students were aware that their teacher would be reading their responses for the surveys and their response journal. Although they were assured that they could freely give their honest opinion without worry of being penalized, it is still difficult for a student to challenge their teacher. We hope that students are honest, but at the same time we cannot completely know what they are thinking.

However, despite these weaknesses, we can still feel confident that the results have positive implications for the purpose of this project. Even though some students were less enthusiastic about the course than others, they were in the minority. Also, we cannot hope to please everyone. What we can hope to do is to inspire students to enjoy reading and to continue to read outside the classroom. The data results suggest a strong possibility that students who took this class were motivated by their achievement and that this motivation will encourage them to continue to read, which will in turn improve their reading fluency and comprehension.

Chapter 5: Course Overview and Learning Outcomes

In the remaining chapters, I present my course outline and materials for the seven week session and discuss how they specifically meet my learning objectives, principles and goals for the course. I also discuss my perception of the effectiveness of these materials after having taught them and make suggestion as to improvements and changes. In this chapter, I give an overview of the class and the learning outcomes.

The content and make-up of the 7 week course can be divided into 3 areas; *The Wanderer*, Book Clubs and Reading Skills. The reading class was a small group, consisting of only 11 students. In the IEI, classes are 50-minute sessions that meet 4 times a week. However, due to holidays and days spent taking final exams, the number of instruction days for session one of the spring semester only amounted to 23 days. A typical week was broken down into the following consistent schedule; on Mondays and Thursdays focus was placed on *The Wanderer*, Tuesdays were Reading Skill Days and Fridays were designated as Book Club Days. As you can see, 75% of classroom time was spent on activities and discussions relating to the young adult novels. See *Appendix 1* and *Appendix 2* for a detailed session outline that was given to students during the first class meeting and for the course syllabus.

Next we will reiterate the learning outcomes for this course and emphasize how each was met (or not met). Several of the learning outcomes dictated the need to use supplementary material outside of those I created. These instances are pointed out and explained. To begin, as stated previously, the IEI has designated objectives for each course at each level. Below are the objectives for the Level 3 reading course, ENIEI 133, taken from the IEI Teacher Handbook, 2010:

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Increase reading speed through timed practice in class
2. Utilize various reading strategies including, but not limited to, previewing, skimming, scanning, and making inferences to improve reading comprehension and speed
3. Increase vocabulary knowledge
4. Recognize the structure, including similarities and differences, in various writing styles
5. Read and understand short novels or similar-length pieces of non-fiction

In order to speak about these outcomes more clearly, they have been given numbers. Outcome 1 states that by the end of the course students are expected to have increased their reading speed through timed practice in class. In my course plan we did not explicitly time the students' reading speed in class. However, under ER students increase their reading speed naturally by being asked to read a large amount of text that was relatively at their reading level. ER research says that simply allowing students to do more reading will improve their reading abilities, such as speed, comprehension, fluency, etc. (Krashen 1985).

Outcome 2 states that students will use various reading strategies such as previewing, skimming, scanning, making inferences to improve reading comprehension and speed. For this objective I choose to use a supplementary text in order to have a way of talking about these skills explicitly. Because these skills are important, Tuesday was designated as the "Reading Skill Day". *More Reading Power* by Beatrice S. Mikulecky and Linda Jeffries was chosen as the supplementary text because the authors use a very logical approach to teaching reading skills. Each chapter covers a specific reading skill. The skill is presented and then followed by numerous kinds of practice activities. Therefore I was easily able to borrow relevant chapters on the reading skills mentioned above. After having discussed the skills, students were then able to apply them as they read their novels. I reinforced the skills by using them in my lessons. For example, students were often asked to scan a page to find an answer to a comprehension question. Making inferences occurred naturally through the reading and discussing of *The*

Wanderer because plot twists and character development was often implied by the narrators rather than explicitly stated.

Outcome 3 asserts that students will increase vocabulary knowledge. I can say that students inherently increased their vocabulary knowledge simply by reading a 300 page novel. As Krashen (1985) says, the amount of reading done by a learner directly relates to their success in acquiring vocabulary (p. 90). On the other hand, vocabulary is something I would have liked to spend more time on in my lessons. We discussed problem words in class, but there was no structured way for students to keep track of new words they learned unless they did so under their own motivation. Part of my hesitation to focus more on vocabulary was driven by the fact that, at this level, students are expected to master a list of over 150 roots, affixes and prefixes. Although all teachers are asked to focus on this list, the majority of instruction is expected to come from the reading teacher. The list is incredibly dense and difficult for students to master in less than 7 weeks. Because students were already spending significant time mastering this list, I was reluctant to add further vocabulary work to their already heavy load. Also, because I was trying to mimic ER, I didn't want to add on too many activities along with readings.

Another concern regarding this vocabulary list was that with my extra focus on ER, I was unsure where I could fit instruction in on roots, affixes and prefixes. Fortunately I was able to collaborate with the students' listening instructor who agreed to cover half the list in her class. This allowed me the extra time I needed to teach my materials as well as meet the IEI learning outcomes. Focus on the vocabulary list was covered mainly on Tuesdays, along with the reading skills.

Outcome 4 says that students should be able to recognize the structure, including similarities and differences, in various writing styles. This outcome was not explicitly taught in

the reading class. In some ways this outcome fell through the cracks. Although we did not talk about the differences in writing styles, students were certainly exposed to various texts. Clearly, they were exposed to fiction writing. Secondly, the various activities in the supplementary textbook exposed them to newspaper articles, magazines, and advertisements. Lastly, outcome 5 says that students will read and understand short novels or similar-length pieces of non-fiction. In our case, clearly the students read and understood novels.

Chapter 6: Book Selections

Book Selection

In total, 20 books were read and considered for this project. The selection process began by seeking out authors and books that had won respected awards for outstanding YAL. For example, several of the books considered had won the Michael L. Printz award or were National Book Award Finalists. In addition, book suggestions were taken from recent publications about YAL. Lastly a professor with expertise in YAL was sought out to give advice as to book suggestions. When considering novels I had several criteria in mind. For the class novel I was looking for a captivating story that would likely appeal to both men and women. Also I wanted a book that did not contain any potentially questionable or offensive material. YAL is a big genre, aimed at youth as young as 10 and as old as 18. When looking for novels I tried to stick to books geared towards the older end of this age range so that they would be more relatable for a typical IEI student, who is likely be between the ages of 18 to mid-twenties. I considered books from various subgenres, from fantasy to science fiction. In the end, books that focused on real life stories were chosen because they seemed to have greater potential of being enjoyed by a larger number of people. Below is a list of all the books surveyed for potential use in the class:

- *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers
- *The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech
- *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luan Yang
- *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli
- *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
- *Catherine Called Birdie* by Karen Cushman
- *The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte
- *When Zachary Beaver Came to Town* by Kimberly Willis Holt
- *A Bone from a Dry Sea* by Peter Dickinson
- *The Ramsay Scallop* by Frances Temple
- *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
- *the first part last* by Angela Johnson
- *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel
- *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card

- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *i am the messenger* by Markus Zusak
- *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak
- *Only You Can Save Mankind* by Terry Pratchett
- *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton
- *My Louisiana Sky* by Kimberly Willis Holt

Class Novel

For the class novel, *The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech was chosen. This selection was particularly important because the majority of class time and assignments would be centered around this book. Because of its importance, I considered this decision very seriously. *The Wanderer* follows the life changing adventure of a young girl named Sophie as she and her 3 uncles and 2 cousins sail across the Atlantic Ocean bound for England. Set in modern times, the story centers around the main themes of family relationships and facing one's fears. Sophie, being the only girl on the voyage, is in a very unique position. In addition to the exciting adventure of sailing across the ocean, the book is intriguing because Sophie has a mysterious past that is revealed little by little as one reads the book. The captivating story is one of the main reasons why I picked this book.

Another quality about this book that makes it particularly interesting is the fact that there are two narrators. For the majority of time the book is told from Sophie's perspective in the form of her diary. However, Sophie's cousin Brian also tells his perspective of what happens in alternating chapters. Brian, keeping what he calls a "Dog-Log", tells his side of the story and it is through Brian that the readers discover that there is more to Sophie than she is willing to reveal. The dualistic narrator gives the book several layers, adding an excellent opportunity for students to think critically as they analyze and compare the two accounts. I also liked this feature because it makes the book more appealing to a male and female audience because there is a protagonist from both genders.

Another feature of *The Wander* that I found particularly appealing for use in the classroom is that throughout the story one of the characters, Sophie's Uncle Doc, often references other works of literature. I saw this as a great opportunity to incorporate additional texts into the class, one of my teaching principles under ER. For instance, when they encounter their first bit of fog on the journey, Uncle Doc recites what Cody calls, "a poem about fog creeping along on little cat feet" (p. 53). This creates the perfect opportunity to read "The Fog" by Carl Sandburg in class. Other authors referenced include Lord Alfred Tennyson and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. This gives students a chance to be exposed to and make connections to literature outside the novel.

Book Club Selections

In addition to choosing a novel to read as a class, I needed to create a list of books for students to choose from for the book they would read with their Book Club. Originally I was given the idea for having Book Clubs from a course I took myself on YAL taught by Dr. Pamela Hartman. The first thing that I found appealing about the Book Club idea is that it gives students a choice in what they read. In the ideal situation, students will be more motivated by a book they themselves have chosen because it will be more interesting and relevant to them. My vision was for the Book Club book to be something students mostly worked on by themselves without classroom instruction. This was done in order to create learner autonomy while fostering reading that more closely imitates ER. Before describing more of the details of how the book clubs were carried out, I will present the book options given to students.

When searching for novels for the book clubs, I wanted to find a variety of options to appeal to students' different tastes. As with the class novel, I wanted to avoid any topics that could possibly be offensive to conservative students. In the case of potentially offensive content,

such as language or violence, students were warned ahead of time so they could avoid that book if they desired. Lastly, I looked for books with interesting stories, deep themes and captivating characters. It was also desirable to find books that featured interesting elements of American culture.

Of the 20 books considered, 5 were chosen for the book clubs. Both *The Contender* by Robert Lipsyte and *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton were chosen with a male audience in mind, though they could be equally enjoyed by females. These two books are considered by many to be "classics" of the young adult genre and for a long time have been frequently taught in the U.S. at the high school level. One particular benefit each has for an international student is the glimpse they give into different aspects of American culture and history. *The Contender*, set in the inner city in the 60's, features a young black man who is pressured by his friends to do drugs and commit crimes. For him boxing is an escape from the pitfalls of the street. In this book students are faced with the tough issue of racism. They also encounter and have to decipher African American English. *The Outsiders* takes place in the 1950's, also set in the city. In this book it is social class, not race, that takes the spotlight. Again students face tough issues and gain insight into American culture from the 1950s.

Also chosen was *My Louisiana Sky* by Kimberly Willis Holt. Quite different from the books mentioned above, I had a female audience in mind when I selected this book. One of the features I enjoyed the most about this story is that it highlights southern culture in the 1950s. The main character, a girl named Tiger Ann, deals with tough issues like death and growing up feeling different from everyone else. At one point Tiger travels with her aunt to the big city of New Orleans. Tiger is a country girl, so the city is filled with exciting and scary mysteries. My

thought was that international students, coming to a new place they are unfamiliar with, could relate to Tiger's experience being confronted with a foreign place.

Lastly, I selected *the first part last* by Angela Johnson and *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli. These two are different from the rest because they are set in the current time. *Stargirl* is a unique story. I choose it because it keeps the reader guessing and because it deals with not fitting in to a new place, again something international students might be able to relate to. *the first part last* was particularly a good choice because of its manageable length. The feature that really sticks out in this book is the way Johnson switches the narrative back and forth between the present and the past. Slowly as you read you must piece the story together. This makes the story more challenging and more interesting at the same time.

Appendix C contains the handout given to students to introduce them to their book choices. Titled, "Quick Looks", the purpose of this handout is to give students a sneak peek at the book to help them decide how they wanted to rank the books on their preference form. The preference form asks students to rank their top 3 choices.

Chapter 7: Book Clubs

Book Clubs

As briefly mentioned in *Chapter 6*, the goal of the Book Clubs is to give students choice over what they read while also encouraging them to read more text. In this way I tried to emulate ER by letting students pick a book at their reading level that they could work on at their own pace without doing much additional homework or activities. It is true that the students' choice was limited to picking from a list of texts provided by me. However, I tried to provide a variety of topics so that everyone could find at least one book that they might enjoy reading.

In order to implement this, I designated Friday as our weekly Book Club Day. The very first Friday, after students were assigned groups based on their top book choices, the students decided on a reading schedule they felt they could adequately maintain during the session. For all the Friday's following students were asked to come prepared to discuss their book by creating 3 discussion questions. The benefit of this approach is that students maintain some freedom but are still guided by the teacher. The fact that students designed their own reading schedule and discussion questions gives them ownership of their learning and promotes learner autonomy. Below is the half-sheet handout given to students to help them plan their reading schedule:

"Book Club" Fridays!!!

Discussion Questions

Every Friday you need to create **3 discussion questions** about your book to share with your Book Club. You will spend time in class talking about everyone's questions they have made. Remember that a good discussion questions is not a yes/no question. It is a question that makes people think and gives you a lot to talk about.

Reading Goals

Below you will set goals for how far you will read in your Book Club book by each Friday. There are 5 Book Club Fridays (not including today). As a group decide your reading schedule. Start by thinking about how many pages are in your book.

Book Title: _____

Number of Pages : _____

For Friday, 1/28 we will read: _____ (example: pp.1-40)

For Friday, 2/4 we will read: _____

For Friday, 2/11 we will read: _____

For Friday, 2/19 we will read: _____

For Friday, 2/25 we will read: _____ (How far can you get by the end of the session?!)

In addition to reading their book and preparing discussions for Book Club Fridays, students were assigned to give a presentation on their book for their peers at the end of the session. The goal of this presentation is to give students a chance to share with the rest of the class what they have been reading. It also gives students a chance to state whether or not they recommend this book to their classmates. *Appendix D* contains the student handout that describes the requirements of the presentation.

The presentation has two main components that students needed to cover, including a content and creative portion. The first content points ask students to briefly state the plot of the book for their classmates. Next students are asked to pull out the important themes of the book. This question is meant to force students to analyze their story and pick out what they think the most interesting and meaningful themes are. Lastly, students are asked to state whether or not they recommend the book to their peers and why. All of these questions are geared towards the skills we are working towards in this class, such as critical thinking and reading comprehension.

In the creative component of the presentation students are asked to redesign the cover for the book. This idea originally came from Collie and Slater (1987). In their book, *Literature in the Language Classroom*, they state, "Asking students to provide a design for the book's paperback cover is a way of eliciting and crystallizing their overall response to the work they have just been reading" (p. 79). In other words, this project is a way for students to express their final response to their book. My idea was to have students present their cover to the class and to explain what inspired them to create the cover the way they did.

Students were given in class time to work on their presentations. During this time I instructed students to make decisions together as well as delegate responsibilities. Power point is not an objective of this course, therefore the overall content of the presentation was what would actually be evaluated. It just so happened that in the students study skills course they did a unit on power point. The study skills instructor approached me, knowing students were to do a power point for my class, wishing to collaborate. The two of us shared ideas and expectations for the assignment and agreed to work together. As a result, students were able to perfect their power points in their study skills class. I believe this collaboration effort greatly increased the quality of students' power point presentations. It also helped reinforce my content objectives because students were informed about them in both classes.

Teacher Reflections on Book Clubs

Overall I was very content with the success of the Book Clubs. Because of the small number of students in class, we only had a total of 3 Book Clubs. All students were given their first or second choice in terms of their preferred book. The Book Clubs were as follows; *the first part last* with 4 students, *Stargirl* with 3 students, and *The Contender* with 3 students. My perception was the Friday discussions were fruitful and interesting for students. Students did

have difficulty creating their own discussion questions at first. In response, we took some time to talk about the difference between a discussion question and a comprehension question.

Students liked writing comprehension questions, presumably because they are easier to create. I modified their assignment to allow them to make one of their three questions a comprehension question. However, the remaining two needed to be discussion questions. I was very impressed with the questions some of the students created. They were deep and showed much reflection on their part, which under the reader response approach is one of our main objectives.

Even though students were productive during this discussion time, it became clear that students did not need the entire 50 minute class to discuss their questions about the book. As a result I began preparing reading skill exercises to do the first 20 minutes of Friday class time, leaving the remainder for Book Clubs. I felt that the Book Clubs discussion groups were a nice, calming way to end the week and I think doing them on Friday was a good choice. Also my perception was that most students liked their books. Some of the students in *the first part last* group stated they enjoyed this book more than *The Wanderer*. I was also very happy with their presentations. I felt they showed thoughtfulness and a solid comprehension of the important themes of the books.

One modification to the Book Clubs was made early on in the session. Originally I envisioned students finishing their book club book by the end of the 7 weeks. However, at the beginning of the session I immediately realized this was not going to be enough time for students to be able to finish reading both *The Wanderer* and their book club book. Some of the books, such as *The Contender* and *The Outsiders* were as long as 200 pages. By the second "Book Club Friday" I informed students that they were not required to finish the book. Rather, I instructed that there were to try and read as much as possible while still maintaining the work for their other

classes. At this time students reevaluated and modified their reading goals. Although unplanned, this turned into a great learning opportunity because students had to compromise and work together to decide on reasonable reading goals for their group. I also think it encouraged learner autonomy because they were deciding on their own goals, rather than being informed by the teacher.

Another positive result of this modification is that it works toward achieving my goal of motivating students to read beyond this course. The hope is that students, after having gotten at least half-way through their book club novel, will desire to finish the book on their own after our class has finished. Finishing the book on their own could help foster intrinsic motivation that just might get them to pick up another book and continue reading for pleasure beyond our class.

In conclusion, I felt that the Book Clubs successfully helped me meet my objectives of encouraging students to read more text in a way that is meaningful and promotes learner autonomy. I was able to give students choice and let them create their own goals, while still providing leadership. In the presentation students had an opportunity to be creative and to perhaps encourage their classmates to read their novel. The reading was challenging for students, but not overwhelming because they were able to dictate how much reading they could accomplish each week. And lastly, their weekly discussions encouraged a personal response to the text and gave students a chance to communicate these reactions with one another. Because of these successes, I hope to implement this approach into the reading classes I teach in the future.

Chapter 8: Materials - *The Wanderer*

In this chapter the lesson plans and assignments that accompany *The Wanderer* are presented and discussed. Deviations from the original lesson plan are pointed out and weaknesses in the lessons are presented when appropriate. For each lesson I will connect activities to RRT, ER and my guiding principles presented in *Chapter 2*. Each lesson will first be presented with an explanatory section followed by the lesson plan itself.

***The Wanderer* Response Journal**

As stated previously, 2 days per week were spent on *The Wanderer*. For each *Wanderer* day students were expected to come to class prepared, meaning they had done the assigned reading and written in their response journal. Students were given a reading schedule at the beginning of the session. On average, the readings are about 30 pages each. The amount varied for each reading because divisions were based on the content of the story rather than strict quantity of pages. The readings were purposely made slightly bigger at the beginning of the course in order to lessen the load on students at the end of the session. Typically students are busier at the end of the session due to projects and preparing for finals. Therefore, I decided it would be in the students' best interest to get more reading done in the first half of the session.

Below is the reading schedule for the novel:

Day 1: Ch 1-6, (pp.1-29)

Day 2: Ch 7-14, (pp. 30-62)

Day 3: Ch 15-19, (pp. 66-95)

Day 4: Ch 20-28, (pp.96-132)

Day 5: Ch 29-33, (pp. 133-164)

Day 6: Ch 34-41, (pp. 165-193)

Day 7: Ch 42-Ch.56, (pp.194-228)

Day 8: Ch. 57-Ch 62, (pp.229-250)

Day 9: Ch. 63-Ch 70, (pp.251-273)

Day 10: Ch 71-Ch 78, (pp.274-305)

According to RRT, the main goal is to get students to respond to the text. One of the most practical ways to achieve this is to ask students to keep a response journal. Not only does this give them a space to collect their thoughts about the reading, but it also helps them prepare for class discussion. I decided to make the response journal the primary homework for students. Other activities were saved for working on together in class. This was done in order to not overwhelm students with homework. According to ER research, activities can take away from the pleasure of reading itself. Therefore I wanted to try to create a situation in which students had to think critically about what they read but not be bogged down with too many tasks.

The response journal was set up in the following format. See *Appendix E* for the handout given to the students explaining the expectations of the journal. Students were expected to write 2 paragraphs of at least 7 sentences each. The first paragraph was left open to whatever the student felt inclined to write about in response to the reading. The second paragraph was to be in response to specific questions provided by me. The majority of time these questions designed to help students respond to the text. For example, the question for Day 1 is, “Compare Sophie’s desire for a journey with your own adventure coming to the United States to study. How is your journey similar? Did anyone oppose you going like Sophie’s mother and school mates?” This question asks students to relate Sophie’s life to their own experience. The questions were related to the reading and often specifically what we might talk about in class. At other times the questions were designed to get students reactions to reading young adult literature and the format of the course.

As is explained on the handout, students were encouraged to take notes while they read but this was not required or graded. Students were given an example response so that could fully understand what was expected. When this handout was covered in class we spent time talking

about the example response and discussing the difference between a summary and a response. They were also given a list of questions they could consider writing about for paragraph 1 if they did not have any of their own ideas.

Now that I have introduced the session plan for *The Wanderer*, in the following pages we will go through each lesson plan individually to discuss its strengths and weaknesses. Note that the end of each lesson plan contains the Response Journal assignment that students are to do for the next *Wanderer* day.

***The Wanderer* Introduction**

According to Collier and Slater (1987), giving a dynamic introduction to a novel is crucial to capturing students' interest and motivation. They suggest starting with a dramatic passage to give students a sneak peak at what is to come. They also recommend introducing students to the main themes, but at the same time being careful not to say too much and take away from the adventure of discovering the text on their own. Based on their advice, I planned my introduction to *The Wanderer*. In order to get students thinking about one of the important themes in the book, we started with a free write in which students were asked to write about what they are passionate about. Next I gave them some very basic background information about the story followed by reading two intriguing, but short, passages. Then the lesson ends with asking students to make predictions about what they think will happen in this book. Nation (2009) and Collier and Slater (1987) recommend having students make predictions as a way to get them interested in the story as well as keep them interested.

Introduction Critique

One pattern that quickly arises with all of these lesson plans is that activities took longer than expected. I was very happy with the introduction to the book and I felt that students seemed excited about reading the first few chapters. However, by the end of the class we did not have the 20 minutes designated to spend on the Response Journal handout. We went over it in a very rushed manner. If I were to do this again, I would plan on going over this handout the next day rather than the same day as the other activities.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer* Introduction

Goal: Create interest and excitement in novel and prepare students for their first reading by giving them basic background information about the text.

- **Pre-write (attention getter) 5 minutes**
 - Instructions: Ask students to write about their answer to the following question for the next 3 minutes. "Write whatever comes to your mind. Do not worry about spelling or grammar."
 - "What are you passionate about? In other words, what do you care most about? What things do you really want to succeed in and motivate you in life?" (write on the board or pass out on a piece of paper)
 - Share your answer with your neighbor.
- **"Sneak Peek" of the book 20 minutes**
 - "One of the main characters and narrators of this book is named Sophie. Sophie is passionate about sailing and about the ocean." Ask if students are familiar with what sailing means. "Let's read a little bit about Sophie's passion for being on the ocean."
 - **Read Ch.1 (p.1-2) out loud.** Discuss questions as a class. Students can respond with neighbor if they are quiet:
 - What is the speaker describing?
 - Do you have any passions that make you feel this way?
 - Do you have any hobbies that are dangerous?
 - **Read Ch 5, (p.23-24)** first two paragraphs.
- **Make Predictions, 5 minutes**
 - "What do you think is going to happen in this book? Take 3 minutes to write down your predictions. Then we will share with the class."
- **Reading Response Journal Handout, 20 minutes**
 - Go over handout and explain homework.

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Ch 1-6, (pp.1-29) and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

Paragraph 2

-Answer the following question:

Compare Sophie's desire for a journey with your own adventure coming the United States to study. How is your journey similar? Did anyone oppose you going like Sophie's mother and school mates?

The Wanderer Day 1

In addition to getting students to think critically and relate to the text, the goal of this lesson is to make sure students understand the basic premise of the story and especially the relationship between the characters. Usually in these lessons I begin with a 5 to 10 minute clarification time. This is a chance for students to ask any kind of question about the reading for that day. That way if a student has a big misunderstanding or if there is something that is really confusing for them about what happened in the story we can try to straighten it out before we get too far into the discussion of the novel.

For the "Day 1" lesson, after the clarification time students do what is called a "5 Sentence Summary". Collier and Slater (1987) suggest asking students to do this in writing as a way to check their comprehension. I modified this to a speaking activity in order to promote more communication in the classroom. With their neighbor, students take turns each adding a sentence to the summary. Next the summaries are shared with the class. During this time I write students' statements on the board and students are able to see what their summaries had in common with the other groups. We do this until all the main events from the reading are written on the board.

The next activity gets students thinking critically about the text as well as helps them become more familiar with the characters. I originally got the idea for this activity from Benton (1985), who suggests using family tree diagrams to show how characters are connected. This fit perfectly with *The Wanderer* because they are indeed family members and it also helps highlight some of the mystery surrounding Sophie's past. I created a family tree worksheet in which students fill in the missing names of several family members. This helps students straighten out who is who. Next students are asked to describe each character's personality traits in the space

provided. Then, one step further, they are asked to find a quote from the text to support their answer. This involves higher level thinking skills because the answers are not necessarily obvious in the text. They must make assumptions about the characters personality based on their actions. On the handout, titled "Sophie's Family Tree", Sophie's box is purposely not connected to the others to visually show that we are unsure of her place in the family. This handout can be found on p.69.

Day 1 Critique

To begin, "Sophie's Family Tree" handout was a successful activity. I was very content with students' answers and the discussion it created. It allowed me to draw out and correct students' misconceptions of characters and to emphasize traits that would be important later on. Completing the worksheet took longer than I expected. Students needed time to reflect on what they thought about each character as well as time to find appropriate quotes. However, we were still able to have fruitful discussion. Unfortunately the "5 Sentence Summary" activity was rushed because I wanted to get to the character worksheet. But as you will see in Day 4, the "5 Sentence Summary" activity can be fruitful if enough time is allotted.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 1: Ch 1-6, (pp.1-29)

Goals: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text. 2.) Check for understanding of basic premise of the story and relationship of characters.

- **Clarification Time/5 Sentence Summary, 10 minutes**
 - Ask if anyone has any questions about the reading that they would like to ask.
 - With your neighbor give a “5 Sentence Summary”. Take turns saying a sentence that describes what happens in the reading/ what we learned in the reading. Share summaries with the class.
- **Sophie’s Family Tree, 40 minutes**
 - Divide students in groups before class. Pass out “Sophie’s Family Tree” for students to complete in groups. (20 minutes)
 - As a class discuss answers. Have each group explain their answers for one of the characters and ask other groups if they agree. (20 minutes)

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Day 2: Ch 7-14, (pp. 30-62)and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

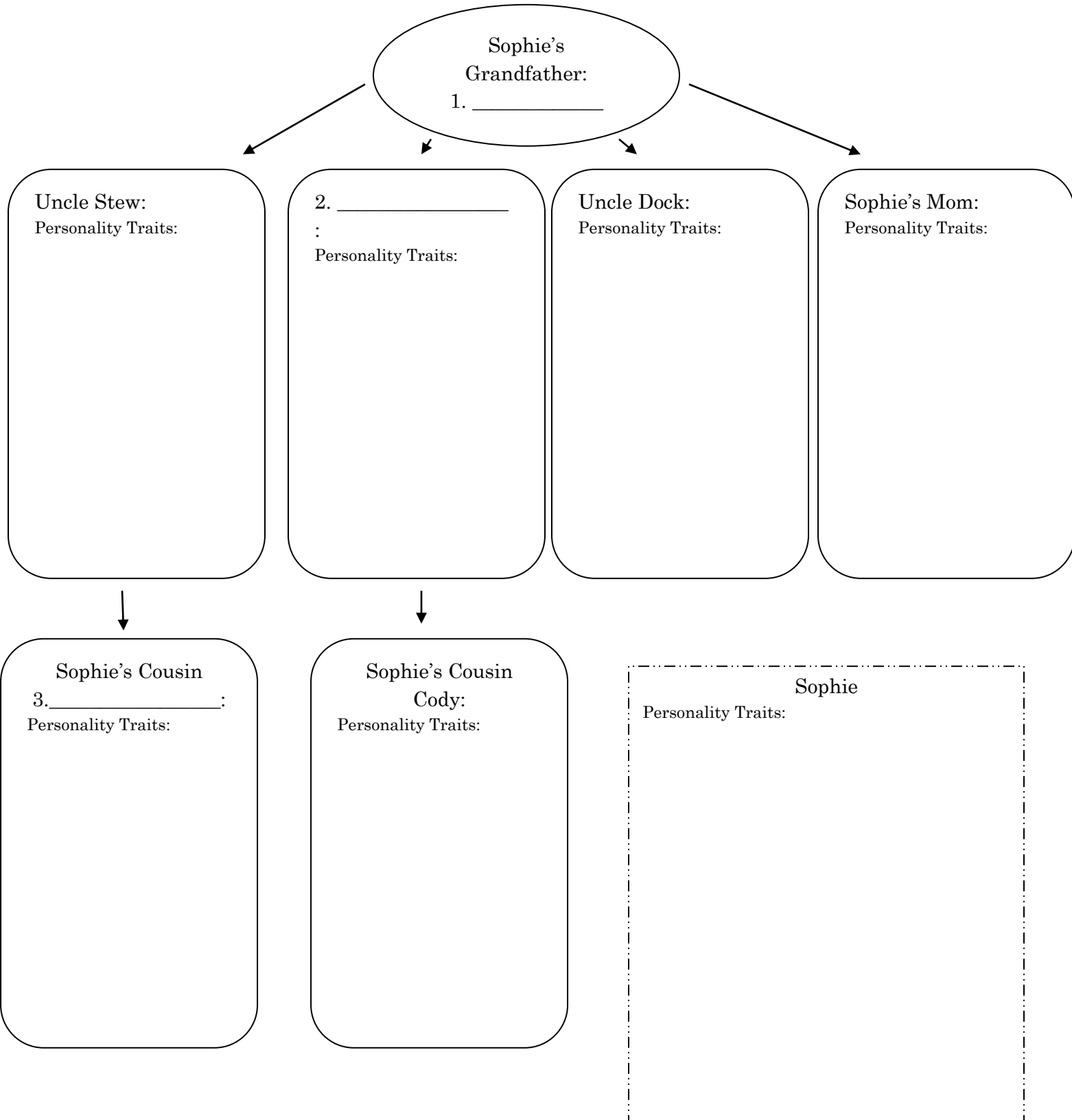
Paragraph 2

-Answer the following question:

We have learned that there is some mystery surrounding Sophie’s past. Sophie talks about her parents as if they were her real mom and dad, but according to Cody Sophie is adopted (p.28-29). What do you think about this? Do you have any guesses as to what happened to Sophie’s real parents? What do the other characters think about Sophie’s past and how does this affect the way they treat her?

Sophie's Family Tree

Directions: Below is Sophie's family tree on her mother's side. First fill in the three blanks with the appropriate names. Then use the space provided to describe each character's personality traits. For each character you must find **one quote** from the reading to support your answer.



The Wanderer Day 2

One of the main goals of this lesson is to make sure that students understand the mystery unfolding behind Sophie's character. This element of the story is crucial to understanding the main themes, character development and plot in the rest of the book, so it is very important that students understand what is going on. Once it is clear that all the students are on the same page, the next step is to get students to make predictions and to imagine how Sophie and the other characters in the story feel and why they might feel this way. In preparation for this discussion, students were assigned to write about the following prompt in their journal:

We have learned that there is some mystery surrounding Sophie's past. Sophie talks about her parents as if they were her real mom and dad, but according to Cody Sophie is adopted (p.28-29). What do you think about this? Do you have any guesses as to what happened to Sophie's real parents? What do the other characters think about Sophie's past and how does this affect the way they treat her?

In class students are first asked to share with a neighbor about what they wrote about in their journal. Next, after sharing responses with the entire class, we go through and look at the text to see how we came about these answers. I encourage students to think deeper than just "what happened" by continually asking them what is important about each excerpt and what does it reveal either about Sophie or about the other character's feelings. This in-class close reading is a chance to more closely evaluate specific sentences and what they mean.

The next activity, "Map Out the Journey!" was suggested by Benton (1985). Benton states that using maps for "journey or quest novels" helps students to visualize where the characters are and where they are going. Aboard their sailboard, the crew of *The Wanderer* makes several stops in the first half of the novel. Therefore, I decided Benton's advice would be especially helpful. I also hoped that seeing the grandness of the journey the group was undertaking would allow students to understand more fully the danger and help them to relate

better to what the characters are going through. In class students were given a colorful map displaying the journey (see *Appendix F*). Then we went back to the text to re-read the sections in which their travel plans are described and to find the locations on the map.

Lastly, under ER I wanted students to read as much as possible, and one way to do this is to incorporate other texts into the classroom activities. The reading for this lesson provides the perfect opportunity to do so. One of the characters, Sophie's Uncle Doc, makes reference to Carl Sandburg's poem "The Fog". This poem is short and simple, so I decided against having students do any kind of analysis on the poem. Instead, I wanted students to pay attention to the language itself and see if they could have an appreciation for the beauty of the words. It was also not meant to take a lot of class time. Rather, I wanted it to be a short and simple way to end class for the day. The poem is briefly introduced by explaining who the author is and then reading the excerpt from the text in which the poem is referenced. Then copies of the poem are distributed and the poem is read slowly to the students, more than once if desired. It is not necessary to discuss the poem, unless students have questions about the language. Students are simply encouraged to listen and enjoy.

Day 2 Critique

Overall, I was very content with this lesson plan. The discussion of Sophie's past was very dynamic with lots of student participation. I think writing about this in their journal assisted in the participation. They also seemed intrigued by this element of the story's plot. I was disappointed that students were not as impressed with the map as I had anticipated. That activity seemed to fall flat. Perhaps an improvement would be to have students draw out the journey themselves, as the name of the activity implies, rather than having it already created for them on the map. This could get students more involved and be more communicative if students were

asked to complete the task in pairs. Lastly, I enjoyed sharing “The Fog” with the students and they seemed to like the short poem.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 2: Ch 7-14, (pp. 30-62)

Goals: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text. 2.) Check for understanding of Sophie's "mysterious past" and clarify the path of the journey.

- **Clarification Time, 1-5 minutes**
 - Ask if anyone has any questions about the reading that they would like to ask.
- **Class Discussion, "Sophie's Mysterious Past", 20 minutes**
 - "In your journal you were asked to write about Sophie's mysterious past." **Take 3 minutes** to discuss what you wrote about in your journal with your neighbor."
 - First ask students what is going on...what is mysterious about Sophie's past? Then go through and read aloud the sections that point to the discrepancy between how Sophie talks about her parents and what Cody reveals in his "dog log". pp.28-29, 35, 50 and 53. Each time ask students what is important about each reading or does it reveal either about Sophie or about the other character's feelings.
- **Map Out the Journey!, 20 minutes**
 - Pass out The Journey map. As a class read the sections of the book that articulate the journey they will take and follow the path on the map. Use pp.24, 41, 50 and 53
- **The Fog, by Carl Sandburg, 5 minutes**
 - Pass out copies of the poem
 - Read the bottom paragraph on p.53 about the poem Uncle Doc recited.
 - Explain to students that this poem is called "The Fog" and is by Carl Sandburg who is famous for his "modern American poetry". He wrote this poem in 1919 and it is part of his "Chicago Poems" collection.
 - Read the poem slowly. Leave lots of silence for students to complement the poem. Let the words linger. Repeat as needed. Answer any questions about vocabulary if necessary (example: haunches).

FOG

**The fog comes
on little cat feet.**

**It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.**

Carl Sandburg

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Day 3: Ch 15-19, (pp. 66-95) and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

Paragraph 2

-Answer the following questions:

- 1.) What do you like so far about this book and why? What do you dislike about this book so far and why?
- 2.) What do you think is the best way to improve your reading comprehension and to become a faster reader?

The Wanderer Day 3

Day 3 is a rather simple lesson. One relatively easy way of carrying out RRT is to ask students discussion questions that encourage them to think critically and relate to the characters. In order to encourage response to the text as well as check comprehension, for Day 3's reading I created a mixture of discussion and basic comprehension questions. On the Tuesday of this week our reading skill focus is on scanning. I reinforce this skill in question 2 by asking students to scan several pages to find the answer. Because one of my guiding principles is to encourage students to communicate, I assigned them to discuss these questions in small groups. The goal is to leave some time at the end of the class to as a class talk about the questions students found most interesting.

Day 3 Critique

One thing I noticed with this lesson, and similar lessons during the session, is that students like to view discussion questions the same they view comprehension questions. They see them as something to answer quickly, meaning find the "right" answer, and then move on. I find it hard to communicate well that these are questions that they can dwell on and share different ideas about. Other than modeling in class, I'm not sure how to teach students to discuss. Although, lack of enthusiasm could also indicate that a question is not very interesting. These are some issues I have in mind as I continue to think about how this lesson and others could be improved.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 3: Ch 15-19, (pp. 66-95)

Goal: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text.

- **Clarification Time, 1-5 minutes**
 - Ask if anyone has any questions about the reading that they would like to ask about the reading.
- **Small Group Discussion, 40-45 minutes**
 - Create groups before class. In groups ask students to discuss the questions on the handout below. Go around and visit each group.
 - When there is about **10 minutes** left ask students to share about the questions that they find the most interesting.

Discussion Questions

In small groups discuss the questions below. Use examples from the text to support your answers when appropriate.

1. In the beginning of this reading we meet Doc's friend Frank. Frank restored an old fishing boat and made it look new again. Sophie says, "I love it when people do things like that- take something decrepit and create something grand out of it!" Have you ever done anything like this? Taken something that was old and ugly and made it beautiful again?
2. We learn more about Sophie's past in this reading section. We also find out that Cody thinks she is afraid of something? What do we learn and what does Cody think she is afraid of? (Hint: Scan pages 70-71 and pages 80-81).
3. On p.74 Sophie talks about why she writes things down. Why does she keep a journal? Do you have one now or have you ever kept a journal or diary? Why did you do it?
4. Where is the family now? Find their current location on your map.
5. In this section we learn more about Cody's life. What kinds of problems do his parents have? Find lines from the book to support your answer.
6. At the end of this section why is Uncle Mo upset? Sophie says, "I wondered if it was better to know about the bad things in advance and worry about them, or whether it was better not to know, so that you could enjoy yourself" (95). What do you think?

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Day 4: Ch 20-28, (pp.96-132) and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

Paragraph 2

-Answer the following question:

Choose one of the characters. Pick 3 lines from the text that you think represents the most important traits of this character. These lines can come from any part in the book we have read so far. Write one paragraph explaining why you choose these 3 lines. Your explanation should be easy to follow and thoughtful.

The Wanderer Day 4

The lesson for Day 4 is an extension of the lesson for Day 1, which included the “Sophie’s Family Tree” handout and the “5 Sentence Summary” activity. The justification for these activities remains the same. The “Sophie’s Family Tree” handout is changed to a “Character Traits” handout. Students are asked to think about their initial judgments of the characters and whether or not their opinions of them have changed. Again they are asked to find quotes from the reading that support their answer.

Modification and Critique

As stated in Lesson 1, I learned that there is not enough time in one class period to do both a character worksheet and the “5 Sentence Summary”. As a result, I made the decision to do the “Character Traits” worksheet as homework because I wanted students to take the needed time to reflect on their responses from the last time they completed this worksheet and evaluate how their perceptions of that character have changed. This homework assignment replaced their response journal entry for the next *Wanderer* class period. I made this decision because I did not want to burden students with work and because I thought a break from the journal might be a nice change for students. Making this homework rather than an in-class activity also allowed me to spend the proper amount of time doing the “5 Sentence Summary” activity.

The “5 Sentence Summary” was much more of a success in this lesson than with Day 1 due to the fact that we had enough time to discuss all the important issues and questions brought up by the students. I had several themes in mind that I was hoping to bring out of the class discussion. I found that nearly all of these issues were brought up by the students without my prompting.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 4: Ch 20-28, (pp.96-132)

Goal: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text. 2.) Check comprehension of story events and character development.

- **Clarification Time, 1-5 minutes**
 - Ask if anyone has any questions about the reading that they would like to ask about the reading.
- **5 Sentence Summary, 10 minutes**
 - With your neighbor give a “5 Sentence Summary”. Take turns saying a sentence that describes what happens in the reading/ what we learned in the reading. Share summaries with the class.
- **Class Discussion of Summaries, 10 minutes**
 - As a class write on the board the important things that happened in this section and the important things we find out about the characters.
 - Emphasize the following questions/themes
 - What secret do you think the adults are hiding? (p.106)
 - Does Brian seem to care about his cousins?
 - In several places the family talks about bad things happening (example 104-105). Do you think something bad will happen?
 - There is a lot of emphasize on doing what you love in life. (p.116)
- **Character Analysis, 30 minutes**
 - This is in in-class assignment and counts as **10 points** towards student’s grades.
 - Ask students to think about the traits they assigned characters when we did “Sophie’s Family Tree”. Have your opinions about any of the characters changed? Have students write a new description of each character using the handout below. They can work by themselves or in small groups.

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Day 5: Ch 29-33, (pp. 133-164)and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

Paragraph 2

-Answer the following question:

Do feel like you can relate to any of the characters in this book? If so, how? If not, how do you feel different from the characters?

*Note- Students completed the character worksheet instead of doing the above journal entry.

Character Traits

Think about the way you described the characters when we first started reading the book. Has your perception of the characters changed? Write new descriptions for each character based on what we read for today's class. Choose examples from the text to support your answer. This is an in-class homework assignment. It is worth **10 points**. If you do not finish in class, you may finish at home and bring it to our next class period.

Uncle Stew:
Personality Traits:

Uncle Mo:
Personality Traits:

Uncle Dock:
Personality Traits:

Sophie's Cousin
Brian:
Personality Traits:

Sophie's Cousin
Cody:
Personality Traits:

Sophie
Personality Traits:

The Wanderer Day 5

After students have gotten used to answering questions about the text, Collier and Slater (1987) suggest having students create their own questions. These can be comprehension or discussion questions. What I really like about this idea is that it makes the class discussion more meaningful to students because it centers around topics that are interesting to them. Creating questions can be a difficult task, therefore students are asked to use their critical thinking skills. Creating discussion questions can be especially challenging because students must create open ended questions. The lesson for Day 5 is centered on this idea. The whole class period is dedicated to students creating and then discussing their questions. In groups students are asked to write 2 discussion questions and 2 comprehension questions. When the groups are ready, their set of questions are passed to a different group to talk about. This is repeated until all questions have been discussed by each group. A set of 5 questions created by me were available to add to the students' questions if needed. Then at the end of class each group shares their responses to the questions they created and other groups can add their own opinions if desired.

Day 5 Modification and Critique

Unfortunately this lesson was not able to be carried out as described. At the beginning of the period it became clear to me that only one third of the students had completed the reading for that day. Although frustrating, this did present a good learning opportunity. I was able to let students know that this course would be taken seriously and that I had high expectations for them. I made the quick decision to have the small group of students who had done the reading discuss the questions I had created myself. Then the remaining students were instructed to read silently. I informed them very simply and straightforwardly that I was disappointed in them, that I would expect them to be prepared in the future and that they was to be no talking amongst

them. This approach seemed to impacting for this particular group of students because their behavior was not repeated. Those who were not prepared did not earn participation points for that day.

Fortunately, I did have a chance to give this lesson another try for Day 9. The results are presented later in this chapter.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 5: Ch 29-33, (pp. 133-164)

Goal: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text.

- **Clarification Time, 1-5 minutes**
 - Ask if anyone has any questions about the reading that they would like to ask about the reading.
- **Small Group Discussion with Student-made Questions, 45 minutes**
 - Divide students into groups before class. Give students the following instructions: “In groups you will create your own questions for your classmates to answer. You will create 4 questions total: 2 should be comprehension questions, 2 should be discussion questions. Who can tell me the difference? ...” Make sure students understand the difference between the types of questions. Students will have one additional question designed by the teacher (see below). Cut these questions out and pass out to groups.
 - Allow students 10 minutes to create their questions. Then have the groups rotate, or pass around the questions. Go around and visiting each group. Save the last 5-10 minutes of class for each group to share their response to the questions they created.

Teacher-Created Questions (to cut in strips and pass out to groups)

1. What is the significance of Bompie and his stories? How do you think they are important to the novel? What do they have in common and what do the other members of the crew think about them, such as Cody and Brian? (see pp.158 among others)
 2. What do we learn about Rosalie and Dock in this reading section? (see pp. 162-163)
 3. Why do you think Dock almost starts to cry at the very end of this reading section? (p.163)
 4. Re-read p.158-159. Do you agree with Brian or Cody? Should we confront things that scare us or should we stay away from them?
 5. Do you notice a difference in the way Cody describes what happens on the boat and the way Sophie describes what happens on the boat? (Cody includes more details about the comments Brian says about Sophie’s parents. Sophie leaves these out completely. other possible answers...)
-

Group 1

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Day 6: Ch 34-41, (pp. 165-193) and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

Paragraph 2

-Answer the following questions. You do not need to write a paragraph. Each question requires a 1-2 sentence answer:

- 1.) During this reading Cody gives lots of reasons why he has a difficult time sleeping. Tell me three of those reasons. (p.165)

- 2.) Talking about Cody, Uncle Mo say, "See? That boy's no idjit. He knows a few things." Why does he say this? (p.187)

- 3.) According to Sophie, everyone is "bone tired". Based on the context, what does this expression mean? (p.188)

Group 2

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Day 6: Ch 34-41, (pp. 165-193)and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

Paragraph 2

-Answer the following questions. You do not need to write a paragraph. Each question requires a 1-2 sentence answer:

- 1.) During this reading Sophie TELs Cody a story about a "little kid". What happens to this little kid? (p.165)

- 2.) Cody says that, "It's as if everyone talks in code where Sophie is concerned. Even Sophie talks in code." Why does he say this? What does he mean? (p.188)

- 3.) In the end of this reading Sophie and Brian get into a fight. What do they fight about and what almost happens?

The Wanderer Day 6

The lesson for Day 6 is another one of Collie and Slater's (1987) great ideas. For a creative way of facilitating class discussion, they suggest assigning half of students one set of questions as homework and the other half the students a different set of questions. Then in class you instruct students to get together in pairs and to ask each other their set of questions. In order to prepare students for this activity, I assigned 2 groups of questions for paragraph 2 of their response journals (see assignment at the end of previous lesson). I modified Collier and Slater's idea by first having students get into groups with those who answered the same questions as them. This allows students to double check their comprehension before having to work with a partner who had different questions than they did. Time is saved at the end of class to discuss all the questions as a big group.

The questions are comprehension rather than response/discussion oriented. I made this decision because I wanted each student to be an "expert" on his or her questions, meaning there is in fact a correct answer. However, all the comprehension questions relate to bigger themes and ideas going on in the novel. My hope is that emphasizing important events that occurred will give students a chance to put the bigger themes together on their own as we continue through the story. This approach helps me achieve my goal of promoting critical thinking and learner autonomy.

Day 6 Critique and Modifications

What I liked the most about the lesson for Day 6 is that, because students were in partners, it gave shyer students the opportunity to talk more. Overall participation was very high during this lesson. I was very happy with students' enthusiasm for the questions. Ultimately I think the change in format was interesting for students.

Lastly, I moved a quiz that was originally scheduled for Day 7 to the beginning of this lesson due to the fact that so many students had not done the reading the lesson previously. I did this to further emphasize to students that this class was to be taken seriously.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 6: Ch 34-41, (pp. 165-193)

Goal: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text.

- **Pop Quiz** (Originally scheduled for Day 7)
- **Clarification Time, 1-5 minutes**
 - Ask if anyone has any questions about the reading that they would like to ask
- **Response Questions, 45 minutes**
 - First, have the students get in Group 1 and Group 2 based on which questions they answered for homework. Students have a chance to clarify questions and compare answers.
 - Next have students get into pairs. Each student must have a partner who answered different questions than they did. Students ask each other their questions.
 - After students have answered all the questions go over the answers as a class. Discuss any important issues or questions that come up.

Group 1

(Paragraph 2)

-Answer the following questions. You do not need to write a paragraph. Each question requires a 1-2 sentence answer:

- 1.) During this reading Cody gives lots of reasons why he has a difficult time sleeping. Tell me three of those reasons. (p.165)
- 2.) Talking about Cody, Uncle Mo say, "See? That boy's no idjit. He knows a few things." Why does he say this? (p.187)
- 3.) According to Sophie, everyone is "bone tired". Based on the context, what does this expression mean? (p.190)

Group 2

(Paragraph 2)

-Answer the following questions. You do not need to write a paragraph. Each question requires a 1-2 sentence answer:

- 1.) During this reading Sophie TELs Cody a story about a "little kid". What happens to this little kid? (p.165)
- 2.) Cody says that, "It's as if everyone talks in code where Sophie is concerned. Even Sophie talks in code." Why does he say this? What does he mean? (p.188)

3.) In the end of this reading Sophie and Brian get into a fight. What do they fight about and what almost happens?

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Day 7: Ch 42-Ch.56, (pp.194-228) and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

Paragraph 2

-Answer the following question:

One of the themes in this book is family relationships. Another theme is facing death. What do you see in this reading that relates to these themes?

The Wanderer Day 7

The rationale behind this lesson comes from several of my guiding principles, including my goal to get to students to have a personal reaction to the text, have personal choice, and communicate with each other. As stated, every lesson students are required to write two paragraphs in their response journal; one paragraph in response to specific questions and a second in which they can write whatever is on their mind. I wanted to give students a chance to share about what they had been writing in the first and second paragraphs of their journals. In this way, they would be the ones in control of the discussion rather than the teacher. In order to promote communication, I decided to begin with discussions in small groups and then move to a discussion as a class in which each group could share what they talked about. Students are instructed to first skim their response to refresh their memory, and then to share what they wrote about with their group members.

The small group and class discussion takes up the majority of time in this lesson. At the end, 5 to 10 minutes is saved for an additional activity. As stated in the discussion of Day 2, one of my goals is to incorporate additional texts into the course. Like “The Fog” by Carl Sandburg, Sophie’s Uncle Doc also quotes from “The Lotus-Eaters” by Lord Alfred Tennyson. Tennyson’s language, being a poet from the 19th century, is very different from what students are used to. The goal in sharing this text is not for them to understand every word but rather to listen to the rhythm of the language and try to get a sense of the main idea or mood of the poem. Students are given a copy of the excerpt that will be read and they can either follow along or close their eyes and listen. The poem is read dramatically. The overall goal is to give the students a taste of the different ways in which English has been used and to encourage creativity in the way they use English.

Day 7 Critique and Modifications

In the lesson plan below you will see that originally a quiz was scheduled for this class period. However, as stated in the discussion of Day 6, the quiz from Day 7 was done the lesson previously. The sole point of the quiz is to keep students accountable and make sure that they are doing the reading, so it was more appropriate to do the quiz the week before.

Ultimately I was disappointed in the discussion that resulted from this lesson. Students seemed reluctant to talk about their journal entries or to bring up their own questions about the reading. Perhaps a revision I might make is to inform them beforehand that they would be sharing about their journal and that they should come to class prepared to discuss. Perhaps this would encourage students to take the class discussion more seriously. Another idea is to assign group roles. It seemed that no one in the groups took charge and led the discussion. Perhaps if roles were assigned such as discussion leader, note taker, reporter and so on, the students would have a clearer purpose.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 7: Ch 42-Ch.56, (pp.194-228)

Goal: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text. 2.) Evaluate reading comprehension (quiz) 3.) Expose students to other literary texts

- **Clarification Time, 1-5 minutes**
 - Ask if anyone has any questions about the reading that they would like to ask about the reading.
- **Quiz, 15 minutes (rescheduled for Day 6)**
 - Ask students to get out a blank sheet of paper. They must write down three important things that happened during this reading. This quiz is worth **10 points**.
- **Small Group Discussion of Responses, 30 minutes**
 - Create groups before class. First have students re-read their own responses to refresh their memory. Then ask students to get into groups and share about the things they wrote about in their responses.
 - If time, ask each group to share one thing they talked about.
- **“The Lotus Eaters” by Tennyson, 5 minutes**
 - Read the excerpt from “The Lotus Eaters” out loud to the students. Point out that Dock quotes this poem on p. 202. Explain that Tennyson is a famous British poet. Ask them to relax, and listen to the poetry. Instruct them to listen for the rhythm of the words. They should not focus on the meaning of every single line, but rather listen for a sense of the main idea. They can close their eyes or follow along. (See *Appendix G*)

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Day 8: Ch. 57-Ch 62, (pp.229-250)and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

Paragraph 2

-Answer the following question:

The books we are reading in this class are considered to be “Young Adult Literature”. Think about our class novel and the book you are reading for your Book Club. Why do you think these books are categorized this way? Do you think you would want to read another book from the Young Adult Literature genre?

The Wanderer Day 8

The lesson for Day 8 is nearly a mirror image of the lesson for Day 7 except that students are provided with discussion questions rather than asked to create their own discussion based on their journal entries. Day 8 is an important class because at this moment in the story Sophie and her family finally make it safely to Ireland after a long and dangerous journey. In order to help the students visualize their arrival and help them imagine what this was like for the family, I created a power point presentation with images of the Irish coast paired with relevant quotes from the text. Helping students visualize this experience works towards making the lesson more meaningful and interesting. It also helps them relate to the characters.

Following, students discuss questions about the reading in small groups. As per RRT, students are asked to relate to the text. In the question below students are asked to imagine how they, or their parents, would feel in this situation.

- 4.) Go back and read what Uncle Stew says on p.234 about being a parent. If you are a parent, can you relate to what he says? If not, do you think your parents feel this way?

In addition, questions ask students to think beyond what is given them in the reading. For example, they are asked to imagine why a certain character might feel the way they do.

- 1.) In this reading Sophie says that she is scared to see Bompie. Why might Sophie be scared to meet Bompie? What do you think will happen when she meets him?

This question also asks students to make predictions about what might happen next. As you can see, students are asked to engage in higher level thinking beyond simple comprehension questions.

And finally, students are exposed to one last literary text referred to in the novel by Uncle Doc. This time Doc quotes “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. This poem has 2 voices, so it presents an opportunity for the students to be involved in the reading. The language from this poem will also be strange to students because it was written at the end of the 18th century. Although the students might not comprehend every word, they can get a sense this group of sailors being tossed around on the ocean just like the crew from *The Wanderer*. Again, it exposes them to different forms of English and gives them a further glimpse of English literature.

Critique of Day 8

Overall, this lesson went as planned. The student’s participation level in discussion was improved from Day 7. More comments can be found in the discussion of Day 9 below.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 8: Ch. 57-Ch 62, (pp.229-250)

Goal: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text.

- **“Ahoy, Ahoy, Ahoy!” Power point, 5 minutes**
 - This power point shows images of Ireland along with relevant quotes from the text as the family arrives. Show to students and discuss what the family was seeing and feeling as they arrived to Ireland.
- **Clarification Time, 1-5 minutes**
 - Ask if anyone has any questions about the reading that they would like to ask
- **Small Group and Class Discussion, 35 minutes**
 - Divide students into groups before class. Allow students about 30 minutes to discuss the questions listed below. Leave 15-20 minutes to discuss as a class. Go around and visit each group.
- **“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge , 5 minutes**
 - If time, read an excerpt from the poem mentioned by Dock on p.246. There are two voices. Ask for a student volunteer to read with you or have two students read the poem back and forth. (See *Appendix H*)

Small Group Discussion Questions

Please discuss these questions with your group members. Be prepared to share your responses with the rest of the class.

- 1.) In this reading Sophie says that she is scared to see Bompie. Why might Sophie be scared to meet Bompie? What do you think will happen when she meets him?
- 2.) In Chapter 58 (pp230-232) Cody talks about Sophie. Skim these pages to refresh your memory. What do you think is important about this chapter? What words do you think Sophie wants Cody to say for her?
- 3.) How have the relationships change throughout the book? What evidence do we see of this in the section we read for today?
- 4.) Go back and read what Uncle Stew says on p.234 about being a parent. If you are a parent, can you relate to what he says? If not, do you think your parents feel this way?

The Wanderer Reading Response Question

For next time read Day 9: Ch. 63-Ch 70, (pp.251-273)and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about the reading.

Paragraph 2

-Answer the following question:

Here are two different kinds of activities. (1.) Discussing the themes and ideas from a chapter we read from the book. (2.) Closely analyzing the grammar and language in a chapter we read from the book.

Which activity do you think would be better to do in class? Why? There is no wrong answer to this question, it is simply your opinion.

The Wanderer, Day 9

The lesson for Day 9 was originally to be taught for Day 5 and a full description and rationale can be found above. To sum up, in groups students create 2 to 3 discussion questions. Then their questions are passed around and the other groups must answer them. I created some questions in advance to add to the students' questions if needed. Once students are done answering questions we discuss them as a whole class. On Day 5 it was not possible to do this lesson because the majority of students had not completed the reading. However, it worked perfectly for Day 9.

Day 9 Critique

The past 3 lessons have all been different approaches to discussion. By far, this lesson was the most successful. The discussion was very dynamic. First of all, I was really impressed with the depth of the students' questions. We had no need for the questions I had prepared in advance. They were engaged in the activity and it resulted in great class discussion. They picked up on interesting nuances in the chapters that I hadn't noticed. We were able to touch on nearly all the important themes I had in mind without my additional prompting.

Perhaps the reason this lesson was most successful is that it gave students the right amount of freedom and direction. The lesson for Day 7 gave perhaps too much freedom. Students didn't know what to do with their time. Next, for Day 8 the students were not extremely motivated by the teacher-created questions. However, for Day 9 they were interested in what their classmates would create and motivated by the fact that their questions would be read by other groups. This created some accountability. For future lessons it would be interesting to develop variations on this lesson considering it seemed to work so well.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 9: Ch. 63-Ch 70, (pp.251-273)

Goal: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text.

- **Clarification Time, 1-5 minutes**
 - Ask if anyone has any questions about the reading that they would like to ask about the reading.
- Create your own question!
 - Ask students to get in groups.
 - Instructions: In your group you will prepare 2 discussion and/or comprehension (one of each!!!) questions for the other group to answer about today's reading. You will have 10 minutes to get your questions ready.

Interesting parts to highlight if they come up in discussion...

- p.254- Sophie dreams about her parents.
- p.256- Sophie mixing up stories. And gets the color of the wave wrong. She seems confused between story world, dream world and reality.
- Rosalie!!! p.260
- Brian worried about Sophie, p.264.
- Talk about Sophie's real parents, p.268 (p.269- NOT Bombie!) Cody's realization.

My questions to add to their questions...

- 1.) When they are finally on land they go to a pub and order lots of food. What do they order (see p.251-252)? Imagine you have been on a long journey like theirs. What kind of food would you want to eat???
- 2.) How do they travel from Ireland to England?
- 3.) What is different about the way Brian talks to Sophie on p.264?
- 4.) What does Cody realize on p.267-270? What do we learn about Sophie?

The Wanderer Reading Response Question- LAST JOURNAL!!!

For next time read Day 10: Ch 71-Ch 78, (pp.274-305)and write in your Reading Response journal.

Paragraph 1

-Write about your reactions, thoughts and opinions about **the end of the book**. What do you think about the ending???

Paragraph 2

What do you think about this statement? "I don't like to write about what I read. I don't think it is useful." Do you agree or disagree? It is ok to be honest!

The Wanderer, Day 10- Last Day!

I felt that it was important to end the novel on a high note. With so much building up towards finishing the book, I felt that it was important to make it feel like a celebration. I wanted students to recognize their achievement in reading such a long text. I also felt that it was important to wrap up the most important themes and discuss any unanswered questions. After starting class with a big congratulations and applause in honor of their achievement, we began a class discussion about how the book ended. I asked questions such as, “Were you happy with the ending? Did it end as you thought it would?” and so on. Students had varying opinions about these questions. Next we move on to talking about the important themes of the book. Students had a chance to give their final opinions on the topics and to clarify any lingering questions. Throughout discussion, statements made about the characters or themes were continually backed up by specific examples. I ensure this happens by asking students why they believe something and asking them to share what examples in the story back up their opinion.

The lesson ends with an activity from Collier and Slater (1987) called “Last Page Plus One”. Students are asked to imagine what might happen to the characters after where the book ends. In class they brainstorm and then write 1 or 2 short paragraphs. Students must take their understanding of the ending and create their own story.

Day 10 Critique

I was very pleased with students’ reactions on the last day. To begin, everyone was very excited to have finished the book. They expressed that they felt like they had accomplished an admirable goal. Several students commented that when they first started the book they didn’t think they would be able to do it. Overall they said they liked the book. Some commented that in the beginning they weren’t interested but as they continued and the plot thickened they were

drawn in. It seemed clear that not all students grasped some of the deeper ideas in the book, such as the significance of Sophie's "transformation". However, I feel it is most important that they were satisfied with the achievement they had made in reading. Hopefully for some the satisfaction they've experienced will encourage them to read on their own in the future. This conversation allowed me to encourage them to continue to read on their own. I reminded them that when they look for books in the future they can easily find hundreds of YAL books at Ball State's library.

Lesson Plan: *The Wanderer*, Day 10: Ch 71-Ch 78, (pp.274-305)

Goal: 1.) Encourage students to think critically and relate to the text. 2.) Wrap up the book in a meaningful way.

Last Day!!

- **Class Discussion (30 minutes)**
 - *As students offer their opinions, they are encouraged to explain them and, when relevant, point to specific examples from the text.
- Ending
 - Were you happy with the ending? Why or why not? Was the ending happy? Why or why not?
 - If you could change anything about the ending what would you change?
- Sophie's Past
 - We FINALLY learn what happened to Sophie's parents. What happened?
 - So Bombie's story's were real! How did Sophie know them? Had she ever met Bombie before?
 - So during this session we've had a lot of different theories about Sophie and if she knew she was adopted, if she remembered but didn't want to, or if she had forced herself to forget. After finishing the book, do you have any thoughts about this question?
- Family Relationships
 - What other signs did we see of mending relationships in this reading?
- **In-Class Writing (15/20 minutes)**
 - "Last Page plus one" Write a paragraph about what happens to the characters after where the book left off. (Collie and Slater)

Chapter 9: Conclusion

As this project comes to close, it is important to highlight its successes. Perhaps the biggest success of this project is the evidence of the high value students' placed on the course materials. The qualitative data was very encouraging. Student comments, such as Mary's comment about *The Wanderer*, affirm the book choice. She says, "This book is very good and fun and I will advice all my friend to read it, and I will take it with me if I go back to my country in the summer because my young sister like to read English books. I think it is a good gift for her". At the end of the session Dalia wrote that the best part of this class was, "That we read all the book and we finished it because it make me want to read more books". Both of these comments seem to suggest a desire for further reading. This project was inspired by an observation of students' general lack of motivation towards reading for pleasure in English. Therefore, the enthusiasm of the students after having finished *The Wanderer* and gotten a good start on their book club book is very hopeful.

Admittedly, analyzing students' reading attitudes, improvements in reading fluency, and pleasure-reading habits is difficult over a 7-week time period. It is difficult to say clearly whether significant learning took place. In addition, without following students for a prolonged period of time, it is difficult to say what long-term effects this approach will have on students. Lastly, as with all projects like this, it is difficult to quantify if student success is due to the materials themselves or to other outside factors. Using a control group would perhaps be a way to work towards resolving this issue in further research.

Despite the limitations due to the methodology, the approach itself was clearly valuable and should be strongly considered as teachers plan similar courses. The students' positive reaction to the course novel suggest that teachers should consider using *The Wanderer* and other

young adult books in the classroom as well as recommending them to students who wish to read on their own.

As a teacher and researcher, completing this project has been an eye opening experience. Perhaps the most beneficial process has been creating my own lessons and materials and seeing first hand their success or failure. These experiences have enriched my abilities as a teacher. Teachers who would like to try these materials themselves can benefit from the “Critiques” of each lesson, using my experiences to improve the lessons as they adapt them to their own needs. In conclusion, this paper is only a small attempt at untangling the complicated factors that determine whether or not a student is motivated to read. I hope to continue pondering this topic in my further teaching and research endeavors.

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Appendix A: Student Schedule

Instructor: Mrs. Ellsworth

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1			1/13	1/14
			-Introductions -Syllabus and Schedule HW: Read book list and fill out "Preference Form"	Class Expectations
2	1/17	1/18	1/20	1/21
	No Class, Martin Luther King Day	-Introduction to <i>The Wanderer</i> by Sharon Creech HW: Read first reading from <i>The Wanderer</i> for Monday and write in your Reading Response Journal. (see last page for reading schedule)	- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 1, Discussion and Activities (Discussions on <i>The Wanderer</i> will take various formats. Activities will constantly be changing each week according to the chapters read.) -Reading Attitude Survey! HW: For Monday: Read the next <i>Wanderer</i> reading and write in your Reading Response Journal. For Tomorrow: Remember to finish the reading from your Book Club Book and to prepare 2 discussion questions.	-First Book Club Day! Today you will meet with their book clubs and discuss the books they are reading
3	1/24	1/25	1/27	1/28

	<p>- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 2, Discussion and Activities</p> <p>HW: For Thursday: Read the next <i>Wanderer</i> reading and write in your Reading Response Journal.</p>	-Reading Skills and Vocab Day	<p>- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 3, Discussion and Activities</p> <p>HW: For Monday: Read the next <i>Wanderer</i> reading and write in your Reading Response Journal.</p> <p>For Tomorrow: Remember to finish the reading from your Book Club Book and to prepare 2 discussion questions.</p>	-Book Club Day 2
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		1/31	2/1		2/3		2/4
4	<p>- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 4, Discussion and Activities</p> <p>HW: For Thursday: Read the next <i>Wanderer</i> reading and write in your Reading Response Journal.</p>	<p>-Exam 1: This exam will be about <i>The Wanderer</i> and the Reading Skills we have discussed so far.</p>	<p>- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 5 Discussion and Activities</p> <p>HW: For Monday: Read the next <i>Wanderer</i> reading and write in your Reading Response Journal.</p> <p>For Tomorrow: Remember to finish the reading from your Book Club Book and to prepare 2 discussion questions.</p>	-Book Club Day 3			
5		2/7	2/8		2/10		2/11

	<p>- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 6, Discussion and Activities</p> <p>HW: For Thursday: Read the next <i>Wanderer</i> reading and write in your Reading Response Journal.</p>	<p>-Reading Skills and Vocab Day</p>	<p>- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 7, Discussion and Activities</p> <p>HW: For Monday: Read the next <i>Wanderer</i> reading and write in your Reading Response Journal.</p> <p>For Tomorrow: Remember to finish the reading from your Book Club Book and to prepare 2 discussion questions.</p>	<p>-Book Club Day 4</p>
	2/14	2/15	2/17	2/18
6	<p>- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 8, Discussion and Activities</p> <p>HW: For Thursday: Read the next <i>Wanderer</i> reading and write in your Reading Response Journal.</p>	<p>-Reading Skills and Vocab Day</p>	<p>- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 9, Discussion and Activities</p> <p>HW: For Tomorrow: Remember to finish the reading from your Book Club Book and to prepare 2 discussion questions.</p> <p>For Monday: Finish <i>The Wanderer</i> and write in your Reading Response Journal</p>	<p>-Book Club Day 5</p>
7	2/21	2/22	2/24	2/25

7.5							
		2/28		3/1		3/3	3/4
	- <i>The Wanderer</i> Day 10, Discussion and Activities		Exam 2 over <i>The Wanderer</i> and the reading skills we have discussed in this class.		-Reading Attitude Survey!		-Last Book Club Day (6) (Work Day for Project)
	Book Club Presentations (Last Day of Class)		Finals		Finals		Finals

The Wanderer by Sharon Creech, Reading Schedule

- Day 1: Ch 1-6, (pp.1-29)
- Day 2: Ch 7-14, (pp. 30-62)
- Day 3: Ch 15-19, (pp. 66-95)
- Day 4: Ch 20-28, (pp.96-132)
- Day 5: Ch 29-33, (pp. 133-164)
- Day 6: Ch 34-41, (pp. 165-193)
- Day 7: Ch 42-Ch.56, (pp.194-228)
- Day 8: Ch. 57-Ch 62, (pp.229-250)
- Day 9: Ch. 63-Ch 70, (pp.251-273)
- Day 10: Ch 71-Ch 78, (pp.274-305)

Appendix B: Syllabus

SYLLABUS: ENIEI 133 Level 3 Reading, Section 2

Mrs. Christine ELsworth:
MTRF, 10-10:50, TC109
cpELsworth@bsu.edu

Office Hours:
M, 11:00-2:00 and TH, 11:00-12:00
(and by appointment)

Requirements:

1. Maintain an **organized and separate folder** for this class to keep all of your papers, notes, and other information in one location for all of your classes.
2. Bring all recent handouts to class with you.
3. Hand in any assigned exercises and/or compositions on time.
4. **Do not buy textbooks until the teacher tELs you.**
5. Pay \$5 for photocopies of course materials to Ms. Kara Clark Duquette in the IEI office (RB 320) by Month/Day.
6. Check your BSU email account everyday.

So What Are We Doing???

In this class we work on continuing to improve your reading skills. And what is the best way to improve your reading skills? To read!!! This class is different from other reading classes you might have taken for one very important reason- we won't have a textbook. Instead we will read real books. One book we will read as a class and a second book you will read in small groups or "Book Clubs". We will work on enjoying reading and getting better at reading faster and more effectively. In this class we will spend a lot of time reflecting about the novels we are reading and discussing them. You will have lots of opportunities to share your thoughts and opinions both in class and in writing.

Required Texts:

Do NOT purchase your books from the book store or any other source! I will be ordering our books and you will buy them directly from me. After the books are ordered I will inform you of the cost.

This semester we will read:

- 1.) *The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech
- 2.) A second novel that you will select.

Required Materials:

- One notebook for this class ONLY. This notebook will be specifically for your Reading Response Journal.

Evaluation:

Grades are Credit/No Credit. Credit will only be given for grades of C (73%) or higher. Grades will be assigned on the following basis:

1. Progress as measured by performance on assignments, quizzes, and tests.

3. Homework and other assignments handed in on time.
4. Other requirements of the course, as defined by the teacher, have been met.
5. Attendance/tardies
6. Final Exam (worth 25% of the final grade)

Percentages

Homework	
The Wanderer Response Journal and Book Club Discussion Questions.....	35%
Book Club Project.....	15%
Exams and Quizzes	
One Mid-term and Several Quizzes.....	20%
Participation.....	5%
Final Exam.....	25%
Total:	100%

Absence Policy: You may not have more than 2 absences. Each student is allowed 2 absences without affecting the student’s grade. Each additional absence will cause your final grade to be reduced by 5%.

Definition of Absence:

- A student not being present for an entire class period is ABSENT.
- A student coming in over 15 minutes late is ABSENT.
- A student leaving the class 5 or more minutes early is ABSENT.

2. Be on time. **Two tardies are equivalent to an absence.**

Definition of “tardy”:

A student coming into class more than 5 minutes late but less than 15 is considered tardy. If an absence is due to illness, the teacher has to be notified before the next class (if possible). Students can email the instructor or call the Main English Office and leave a message (285-8580). It is **the responsibility of the student** to bring a note from a doctor or the health center stating that the student could not attend class on the specific day. If a student misses class because of a field trip, they must bring the teacher a note from the teacher of that class **before the absence**, explaining the reason for the planned absence.

In all cases of an absence, it is **the responsibility of the student** to contact the teacher in order to ask about any missed assignments and to pick up any missed handouts.

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty includes using unauthorized aids during tests and other assignment and submitting someone else’s work as your own. It also includes plagiarism, which is using another’s word or ideas without proper citation. Plagiarism is not permitted in this class or **any** class at Ball State University. You cannot use material written by someone else, or written by you for another class without documenting this. Academic dishonesty may result in No Credit, and may result in being expelled from the university. This topic will be addressed more thoroughly in class throughout the semester.

Accommodation:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office location and hours are listed at the top of the syllabus.

Mrs. ELsworth Late Work Policy

- Late work will be deducted 5% for every day that it is late.
- In-class work (including homework, quizzes, tests and projects) can be made up if the absence is excused.
- In-class work (including homework, quizzes, tests and projects) that is not completed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.

Appendix C

Book Club Books- Quick-Looks

This session you get to be part of a “Book Club”. Each Book Club will read a different book. You will choose the book that you read from this list. Please read about these books carefully and then fill out the “Book Club Preference Form”. This form is due at our **next class period**. If you do not turn in the preference form I will choose a book for you.

the first part last, by Angela Johnson

This beautiful novel will sweep you away as you read the touching story of a young father and his baby girl. At only 17 Bobby finds himself the daddy of a little baby girl named Feather. The hardest part about being a single dad isn't being tired all the time, or giving up hanging out with his friends. The hardest part for Bobby is that he is doing it by himself. The person missing is someone very dear to him. It is his girlfriend Nia.

In this sweet book you will see examples of love and laughter, and also sadness and loss. It is highly recommended by someone who enjoys stories with emotion and real life issues.

*Be aware that there is some bad language in this book. Also because this novel is shorter than the other novels you will be required to read a few short stories in addition .

The Outsiders, by S.E. Hinton

Read this book if you are ready for an adventure! The story of Ponyboy and his two brothers come to life as you turn the pages. Ponyboy (yes, that is his real name!) is only 14 years old and lives alone with his brothers after his parents died in a car crash. They have a tight group of friends who always stick together no matter what. They call themselves “Greasers” and their worst enemy are the “Socs” or socials. The Socs are the popular, rich kids whereas the greasers are known for getting into trouble. When Ponyboy and his good friend Johnny are attacked one night everything changes for the group. Get ready for danger, fights, and even a little romance!

*Be aware that this book takes place in the 1950's. There is old-fashioned slang that is not used today. But it is a very interesting look into American culture and history.

The Contender, by Robert Lipsyte

“Everybody wants to be a champion. That’s not enough. You have to start by wanting to be a contender, the man coming up, the man who knows there’s a good chance he’ll never get to the top, the man who’s willing to sweat and bleed to get up as high as his legs and his brains and his heart will take him” (p.27). Do these words inspire you to want to be a contender? If so, then you will love this book. Alfred wants to be a winner, but Donatelli TELs him that the road isn’t easy. Donatelli is a respected boxing coach and is willing to give Alfred a chance. For Alfred the challenges in his life are more than just the boxing ring. He must also deal with friends who are mixed up in crime, drugs and the fact that he dropped out of high school. This book is action-packed and puts you in Alfred’s shoes. You don’t want to miss the difficult decisions he must make. This compelling story also deals with the deeper issues of racism and addiction.

*Be aware that this book has violent scenes in and out of the boxing ring. Also the content includes drugs and drinking. This book takes place in the 1960’s. Some of the slang is unique to the time and to African American English. It provides a interesting look into American culture and history.

Stargirl, by Jerry Spinelli

When Leo starts his junior year of high school he has no idea what is coming. Everything is going as usual until the new girl shows up. From the very beginning she is different from everybody else. To begin she has a very unusual name- Stargirl. Stargirl is the most interesting and strange person you will ever meet. Some people at school love her, some people can’t stand her. Leo isn’t sure what to think. Whether she is decorating her desk with daisies, singing in the hallway, or carrying her pet rat “Cinnamon” everyone agrees on one thing. She is weird! All Leo knows is he can’t stop thinking about her. Stargirl is clouded in mystery. This book takes you on an interesting adventure into two young people’s lives. They wrestle with questions we all think about such as, “Who am I?” and “What is most important in life?” It’s a story you won’t soon forget.

My Louisiana Sky, by Kimberly Willis Holt

Experience some real southern flavor as you get to know Tiger Ann Parker and her family. Growing up in 1957 in the small town of Saitter, Louisiana, Tiger Ann has plenty on her mind. She is mostly worried about her first kiss and wanting the other girls in town to like her. Tiger thinks life would be a lot easier if her parents were like everybody else’s mom and dad. Her parents might be a little

different, but Tiger sure is grateful that she can count on her Granny to be there when she needs her. But things are about to get a lot more complicated. Join Tiger as life altering events take place in the small town of Saitter. In this book you can also look forward to learning about Southern language and culture.

Book Club Preference Form

Name: _____

Which book would you like to read for our “Book Clubs”? On this sheet you get to rank your preference. Please put a “1” for your first choice- the book you most want to read. Then put a “2” next to your second choice and a “3” next to your third choice.

_____ *the first part last*_____ *The Outsiders*_____ *The Contender*_____ *Stargirl*_____ *My Louisiana Sky*

Appendix D

Book Club Book Presentation!

At the end of the session your book club will present your book to the class. This will be a great opportunity to share about your book with your classmates and possibly recommend that they also read your book.

Requirements:

- Your presentation must use **power point**.
- Your presentation should be **10-15 minutes** long.
- Everyone in the group should **speak equally**.
- It should be evident that everyone is **well prepared**.
- Your comments should be **thoughtful** and show that you put **effort** into this presentation.
- You should cover all the **content** points below and the **creative portion**.

Content Points:

In your presentation you need to answer the following questions.

- ✓ “What is this book about?” This should take less than one minute to say! Do NOT spoil the ending!!!
- ✓ “What are the important themes in the book?”
- ✓ “Would you recommend this book to the class? Why or why not?”

Creative Portion:

- ✓ **Create a New Cover**

Design a new cover for the book. What do you think would best represent the story and themes of your book? Create a new cover for the book that represents what you think is most important in the story. This cover must contain original artwork. You must either use a computer program in which you are a part of the design process, or make the cover by hand. You must demonstrate that you put time and thought into the preparation.



Appendix E

***The Wanderer* Reading Response Journal**

This session you will keep a **Reading Response Journal**. This is a place for you to take notes while you read and to write responses (or reflections).

For every reading from *The Wanderer* that we do in this class you are asked to write a response. This response is worth **10 points**. Your response must meet the following requirements to get full credit:

- Be 2 paragraphs long. A paragraph is at least 7 sentences. The first paragraph should be your own thoughts and opinions about the reading. The second paragraph should be in response to a question that I give you in class.
- Be interesting and thoughtful.
- Use correct grammar, spelling and be written legibly.
- Contain the required structures of a paragraph (topic sentence, body, concluding sentence)

Example of Notes:

Notes can be taken while you read. You can write down questions or your thoughts and opinions. It can look like this:

- I was confused on p.26. What did the author mean by, “the town has a nervous system”.
- I really like the main character, Kino. He is determined to make a new life for his son.
- Why is the doctor so evil? I really don’t like him.
- I don’t understand what happens when the doctor comes to visit Kino. What is the white powder he gives the baby?
- I am interested in the songs that Kino often hears. I wonder why he hears them. Are they important?

Example of a Reflection (or Response)

In a response you write in complete sentences and explain your thoughts. One paragraph is for your own thoughts and opinions. You can write whatever is on your mind. The second paragraph will be in response to question that I give you. Below is an example of the first paragraph.

I really like Chapter 3. I’m excited for Kino and Juana and for their future. They have now brought their wonderful Pearl home and have shared the news with the neighbors. I am also worried about them. It seems that everyone is jealous of their new wealth. In this chapter we often hear “evil

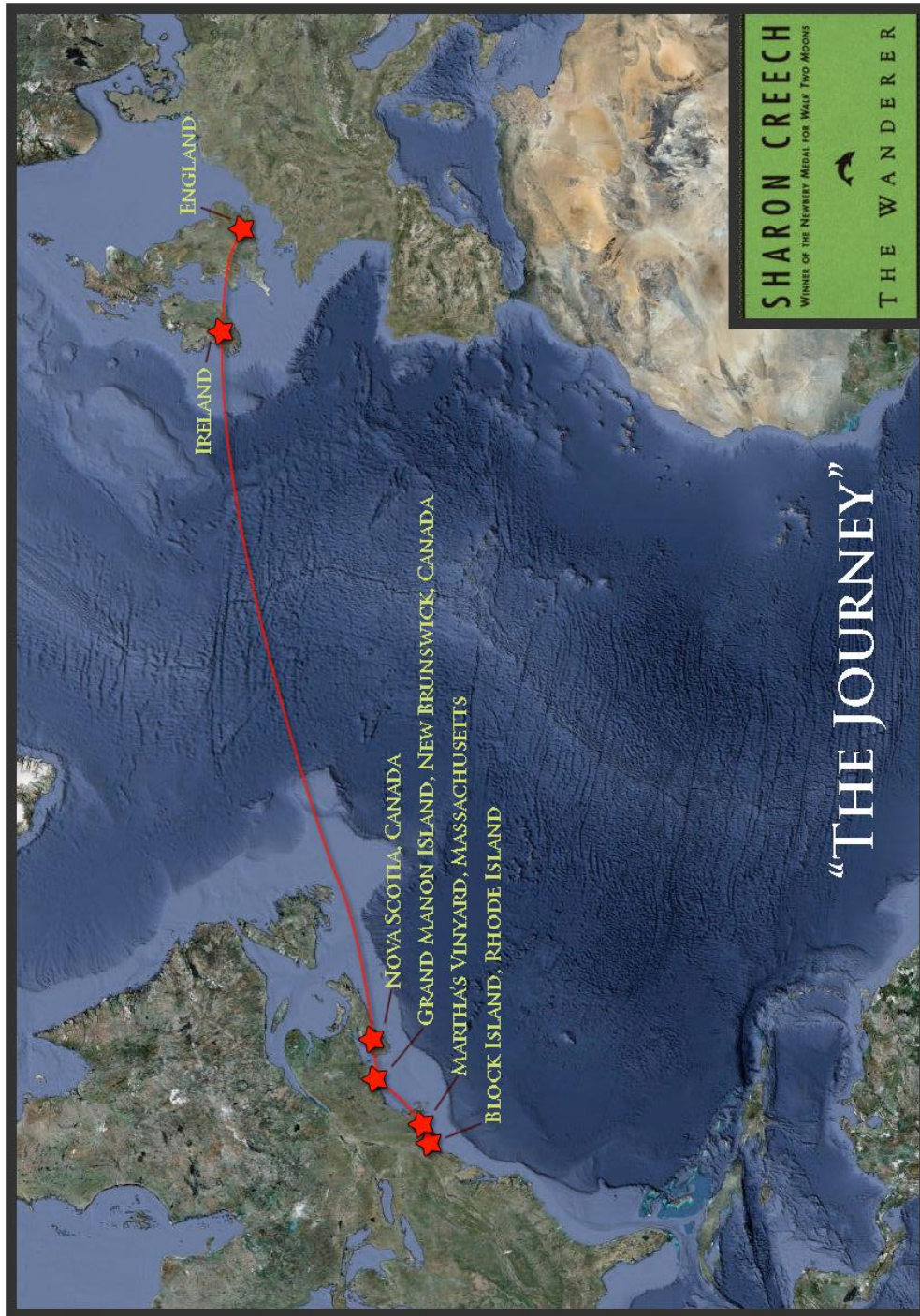
music". Maybe it is a sign that bad things are coming. The doctor might be one of the bad things. He pretends to help Kino and the baby, but I think he is selfish and only wants their Pearl. I wonder if the Priest is evil too. In the end Juana wants Kino to destroy the pearl. I don't know what I would do if I were them.

Need some ideas? Here are some questions you can ask yourself when writing responses....

- What do I think about those chapters?
- Which character is my favorite and why?
- Which character do I like the least and why?
- What do I think is going to happen next?
- Do I agree with the character's actions?
- Why do I think the characters make the decisions that they do?
- How would I feel in their situation?
- What are the themes in book? How does this chapter relate to the themes?
- What do I think is the deeper meaning behind the book? What is the author's message?

For the first paragraph you can write about ANYTHING from the book that you find interesting!!!

Appendix F: Journey Map



Appendix G

From *The Wanderer* Day 7 The Lotus-Eaters

by Lord Alfred Tennyson
(1809-1892)

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more";
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

...

Appendix H

From *The Wanderer* Day 8

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

by Samuel Taylor Coleridge
(1772-1834)

Part the Sixth

FIRST VOICE.

But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing--
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the OCEAN doing?

SECOND VOICE.

Still as a slave before his lord,
The OCEAN hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast--

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.

FIRST VOICE.

But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?

SECOND VOICE.

The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green.
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen--

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring--
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze--
On me alone it blew.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree!

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray--
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

Appendix I: Reading Attitude Questionnaire 1

Reading Attitude Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about reading attitudes and habits. It will help you think about your attitude towards reading in English. After you complete the survey, we will have a discussion about reading attitudes and any questions that you may have.

Part 1, General Information (adapted from Camiciottoli, 2001)

Directions. Please place a check (✓) in the space before the option that applies to you.

1. Sex: M F
2. Age: 18-25 25-30 Over 30

Part 2, Reading for Pleasure

3. *Directions.* Please place a check (✓) in the space before the option that applies to you
 In the past, were you ever encouraged to read for pleasure in English by a teacher?
 yes, often
 sometimes
 rarely
 no, never
4. In reading for pleasure in English, how would you rate your comprehension level? In other words, how would you rate your level of understanding?
 low (wide use of dictionary)
 good
 average
 very good (little use of dictionary)
5. If you do *not* know the meaning of all the words when reading in English, are you able to understand the gist of what you read?
 yes, almost always
 sometimes
 rarely
 no, I always need to use a dictionary.
6. In your leisure time, how often do you read for pleasure in English?
 at least once a week.

- once every 1-2 months
 sometimes (for example, during vacation periods)
 never, I prefer to do other things during my leisure time (*skip to question n.4*)
7. In the last 12 months, how many books have you read for pleasure in English?
- 1-2
 3-5
 6-8
 more than 8
8. What do you usually read in English during your leisure time?
- Rank according to what you read most frequently. Write 1 for the type of reading material you read the most frequently, 2 for the second type and 3 for the third.*
- lyrics of pop, rock songs
 newspapers
 magazines
 books
9. Would you like to read more books in English for pleasure than you do now?
- definitely yes
 probably yes
 not sure
 no, I'm not interested in reading more in English.
10. Why don't you read more books in English for pleasure?
- From the list below, rank at least three reasons in order of importance. Write 1 for the most important, 2 for the second and 3 for the third.*
- it's too difficult because of my limited comprehension
 lack of time due to university studies
 I don't know which books to read
 lack of time (work, family commitments, etc.)
 I don't have access to books in English
 I don't want to read English during leisure time
 other reasons (*write here*)_____

Part 2, Attitude Toward Reading in English (adapted from Yamashita, 2007)

Directions. Part 1 refer to how you feel about *reading* in English. For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree or (5) strongly disagree. Please give your first reaction to each statement and mark an answer for every statement.

1. I feel relaxed if I read in English.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
2. Reading English is dull.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
3. I feel tired if I read in English.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
4. Reading English is enjoyable.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
5. I can become more sophisticated if I read in English.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
6. I can acquire broad knowledge if I read in English
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
7. Reading English is useful to my future career.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
8. I feel anxious if I don't know all the words.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
9. I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand even if I read.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
10. I don't mind even if I cannot understand book content entirely.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
11. I can acquire vocabulary if I read in English.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
12. I can develop reading ability if I read in English.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree
13. I can improve my sensitivity to the English language if I read in English.
 - *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

Comments:

Are there any additional comments you would like to add either about any of the topics in this survey?

Please use the space below and on the next page.

Appendix J: Reading Attitude Questionnaire 2

Reading Attitude Questionnaire

Name: _____

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about reading attitudes and habits. It will help you think about your attitude towards reading in English. After you complete the survey, we will have a discussion about reading attitudes and any questions that you may have.

Part 1, Attitude Toward Reading in English (adapted from Yamashita, 2007)

Directions. Part 1 refer to how you feel about *reading* in English. For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree or (5) strongly disagree. Please give your first reaction to each statement and mark an answer for every statement.

14. I feel relaxed if I read in English.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

15. Reading English is dull.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

16. I feel tired if I read in English.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

17. Reading English is enjoyable.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

18. I can become more sophisticated if I read in English.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

19. I can acquire broad knowledge if I read in English

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

20. Reading English is useful to my future career.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

21. I feel anxious if I don't know all the words.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

22. I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand even if I read.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

23. I don't mind even if I cannot understand book content entirely.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

24. I can acquire vocabulary if I read in English.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

25. I can develop reading ability if I read in English.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

26. I can improve my sensitivity to the English language if I read in English.

- *Strongly disagree *Disagree *Neither agree nor disagree *Agree *Strongly agree

The next set of questions are optional. You may choose to not answer these questions.

Part 2, Thoughts about the Course:

1. What parts of this class did you find the most helpful in improving your reading skills?

2. What parts of this class did you find the most interesting?

3. What parts of this class did you find the least helpful in improving your reading skills?

4. What parts of this class did you find the least interesting?

5. If you could change one thing about this class what would you change and why?

6. What are your opinions about the books you read for this class?

Additional Comments: