READING IDENTITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL COLLEGE READERS

by

JOY BOWERS-CAMPBELL

(Under the Direction of James Marshall)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore reading identity in students who were placed by low college placement exams in a mandatory developmental reading class (termed Learning Support Classes by the institution). Sociocultural theories of learning framed the qualitative study that was conducted at a University System of Georgia open-access Institution. The study addressed three issues related to reading identity: (a) How students placed in the developmental education class described themselves as readers; (b) How students' in-school and out-of-school literacy practices affected their perceptions of themselves as readers; and (c) How the ways literacy is taught and valued by society influenced students' perceptions. Data were gathered over a 15-week semester through official course documents, participant surveys, a series of interviews, and participants' class work. I analyzed the data using document analysis, grounded theory, and a case-study approach. Analysis of the data showed that participants' notions of themselves as readers differed when they described their out-of school literacy practices and their in-school literacy practices. Participants often used a skills-focused notion of reading to describe "good" in-school readers, but many participants described themselves as engaged readers outside the classroom. More often than not, students in the developmental reading class accepted the institution's label of "struggling" reader within the definition of school reading.

This study suggests that reading identity is more complex than good reader or struggling reader labels often assigned to students. The findings also suggest that standardized reading tests have limited ability to portray accurately students' diverse literacy practices.

READING IDENTITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL COLLEGE READERS

by

JOY BOWERS-CAMPBELL

B.A., The University of North Carolina, 1991

M.A., Columbia University Teacher's College, 1992

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2010

READING IDENTITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL COLLEGE READERS

by

JOY BOWERS-CAMPBELL

Major Professor:	James Marshall
Committee:	Donna Alvermann
	Janette R. Hill

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2010

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my amazing family. For Jonathan Campbell who constantly stayed in my corner supporting me and encouraging me. For Cassidy Greer who became a teenager during my pursuit and reminded me that anything worth having is worth working hard for, and for John Hampton who kept me laughing and taught me that you do not have to be a reader to love reading. And, for my own parents who always encouraged my passions. I love you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped to make this degree a possibility:

To Jim Marshall who agreed to be my advisor and who encouraged me to pursue this dream. Thank you for your tireless support, your knowledge, and your patience with my work. I do not know if I could have completed this step without your guidance.

To the members of my committee: Donna Alvermann and Janette Hill who met with me, recommended readings, and guided me through the process of becoming a better writer-- many thanks. It was a pleasure working with you.

To my colleagues at Gainesville State College, Oconee who CONSTANTLY encouraged and supported my work—I appreciate all your kindness. A special thank you for Karen Redding who many times put everything aside to help me proof a section, a chapter, a manuscript-- You Rock!

Finally, to my participants who shared their stories as readers with me. This project would have been impossible without you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I met Nikki at the end of her first semester in college. She stopped by my office to introduce herself because she had enrolled in two of my Spring Semester courses: Reading 0099 and English 1101. Nikki wanted me to know that she passed all of her classes that semester—12 hours of Learning Support classes--but that she had not passed the COMPASS exit test for reading. She was concerned about being in a college English class and having to retake the reading class. I assured Nikki that she would not be the only student taking the not-for-credit reading class while also enrolled in the traditional freshman English class. We discussed her frustrations with the test and her love of reading. She wanted to get started over the break with some of the reading for our English class. I asked Nikki if she would be willing to be a participant in my dissertation study. She agreed and said she hoped I could figure out how to help her pass the COMPASS.

The following semester, Nikki introduced herself on eLearning to her English 1101 classmates. She wrote:

My name is Nicole Harris. I'm 18 years old. I was born in Anderson, South Carolina but raised in Hartwell, Georgia. I graduated from Hart County High School in 2009. This is my second semester at Red Diamond State College. I'm majoring in Accounting. My favorite subject is Math. I'm 5'8 and my favorite sport to play is basketball. I love to dress and go shopping. In my free time I love to read romance and mystery novels and surf the web.

Her introduction for Reading 0099 was similar with two exceptions. In Reading 0099 Nikki added the following information: "I'm very shy at times. . .I MUST pass the COMPASS this semester."

Since Nikki was in class with me from 8:00 am until noon twice a week, we had many opportunities to discuss basketball, writing, her school reading, and her own reading. Although Nikki wrote that she was majoring in accounting in her class introduction, she had to attend required advising sessions with me until she successfully completed the institutions' Learning Support Requirement. During our time together, it was common for us to discuss books we both enjoyed; we had both recently read *Time Traveler's Wife,* for instance. We discussed ways to improve her writing, and we talked often about passing the COMPASS. Nikki was bewildered by her struggle on a reading test. She had done well in high school, and she never had any problems with any of the state's standardized tests during her schooling.

Nikki's predicament worried me. Although Nikki spoke fondly of reading and became animated when discussing books she enjoyed, she did not test well during the class. In fact, Nikki failed to score above 75% on any of the multiple-choice tests given in class. She excelled on the more open-ended written parts of the test where she often created mind maps to demonstrate her thought process and active reading strategies. But the COMPASS is entirely computer-based and multiple choice.

The ramifications of Nikki's testing difficulties were of great consequence. Nikki's first semester in college rendered her "at risk" and on probation. If Nikki did not earn an 80% on the COMPASS, she would be suspended for three years from the entire University System of Georgia. How did this situation occur? How did Nikki get this far in her education unable to pass a basic reading test? How did the definition of what is crucial for college reading become a

multiple choice test that determines students' futures? Nikki's situation illustrates the problems faced by students when narrow views of what reading is or who readers are dominate pedagogy. Nikki sees herself as a reader; yet, the institution describes her as an unprepared reader. How can these dual identities exist within the same student, and how do they affect her goals for attaining a college degree?

In this opening chapter, I introduce several students and my own children whose identities as readers have had profound effects on their education. First, I introduce myself as a reader and the subjectivities that have influenced my research. Second, I discuss the rationale behind the project drawing on my experiences teaching students in a developmental college reading class. I also outline the purpose of the study and my research question, which aims to investigate how students' bridge out-of-school reading identities with the expectations of college. Finally, I overview the theoretical framework guiding my inquiry.

Converging Interests: How I came to this Study

Like Nikki, I too have always considered myself a reader. Although I cannot accurately recall The Intimate Bookshop's exact location on Chapel Hill's Franklin Street, I can still smell it—a mixture of pipe tobacco and old books; I can still hear the creaking of the old wooden floorboards as I climbed the stairs to the children's section to buy the next *Trixie Belden* or *Little House on the Prairie,* and I can still feel the bindings give between my hands when I opened my purchase. Laura Ingles was responsible for my scar—a tiny sliver that runs across the bridge of my nose. As Laura, I decided to jump from the hayloft of a friend's barn into the stall below. Laura Ingles never chickened-out of a dare and neither did I. The small nail sticking out from the opening found its mark across the bridge of my nose. On the way to the ER, I promised my mother I would no longer live Laura's life.

The Intimate Bookshop did not last long into my adolescence, but my love of books remained. My only real trouble in junior high school was when my best friend and I decided to set up our own library (with the library's books) in our lockers in protest of the two-book maximum imposed by the tyrannical librarian. Unfortunately, we circumvented the whole checking-out process: One of us would distract the librarian while the other one whisked out of the library with armloads of books stacked higher than our heads; clearly, it was a time before detectors but not busybodies. Another student turned us in; we had to return the books, spend a day in school suspension, and wait an extra year before applying to the National Junior Honor Society.

My love of literature spurred my decision to major in English and become a teacher. In August of 1992, one week before classes started in New York City, I finally landed my first full-time teaching job. As a recent graduate of Teacher's College, where I had spent nearly two years training in process-oriented reading and writing instruction, I felt confident that my classes--modeled as process-approach workshops--had prepared me for the challenges ahead. I dismissed as jaded the voices of dissent who asked our guru, Dr. Calkins, about the possibilities of not being prepared for actual classroom experience: I was extremely young and armed with Nancie Atwell (1987). Nancie was a reader, and Nancie's Boothbay Harbor students were readers. I was a reader. I thought I would mimic her teaching with my students in Brooklyn, and my students, like hers, would be readers.

I received my room assignment, room 214, the day before students showed up. The roster did not appear until minutes before the opening bell. My classroom was the former art/architecture classroom. The desks were drafting tables bolted to the ground in strict rows; virtually every piece of furniture was immobile. Small groups, the bedrock of reading and

writing process, were not going to be possible in this configuration. Day one was a disaster. My plan to read Cisneros' "Eleven," followed by personal writing and story swapping was derailed when my principal walked in and asked to see the "Do Now." Teacher's College did not teach "Do Now's." I panicked and fell back on the only other thing I knew: my high school days. I seated students alphabetically; I printed "DO NOW: Read 'Eleven', answer questions 2 & 4". I survived and nearly tossed Atwell in the garbage. It was Christmas before my classroom practices began to resemble anything I learned and believed in from pre-service training.

Early in my career, we moved around--academic nomads following my husband's degree requirements. Every other fall, I landed in a new school in a different state. Regardless of the location, however, the start of the school year found me in the same place: the bookroom. Those familiar with the inner workings of planning for a school year know the bookroom. Interestingly, in my experiences, no matter how shiny and new or old and dilapidated the school building, their bookrooms shared remarkable similarities: tiny, windowless walk-in closets lined from floor to ceiling with metal shelves crammed mostly with hardbound books arranged by subject and shuffled by condition. The novels were generally the same novels I read in high school, my mother read when she was in high school and my grandmother read before her. Yet, it was always here that I turned for the elixir: the magical potion that would turn *all* my students into readers.

Five years after I became a teacher, I became a mother. Influenced by the read to your children movement and my experiences with students, I inundated my daughter with books. We read together every night, and by the time she started kindergarten she was already reading. By 2nd grade she was devouring the *Harry Potter* series. One day as I watched from afar Cassidy sat in a swing in the middle of the playground oblivious to the chaotic screams of her classmates;

she was lost in the world of spells, Quidditch and Hogwarts. I felt an overwhelming sense of pride: I had created a reader.

Two years after Cassidy, Hampton was born. Reading to him each night was different from Cassidy. I learned more than I ever wanted to about spiders, bats, and snakes. I repeated inane jokes about the adventures of Captain Underpants, and I cried a bit when Big Nut Brown Hare assured Little Nut Brown Hare of her love. Yet, when Hampton reached 2nd grade, he still could not read independently. Testing done in the spring of that year confirmed my suspicions: Hampton was dyslexic. Although I was prepared for his diagnosis, I was devastated: I assumed he would never be "a reader."

As Hampton's mother, I have been involved in several individualized education program (IEP) meetings where educators have attempted to make modifications aimed at improving Hampton's reading abilities while also addressing his bright, inquisitive mind. The tension between those two seemingly straightforward goals has caused a lot of frustration for our family as well as for the school. I am learning from this experience that when a child struggles to read on grade-level (despite high comprehension levels), the child's entire education is viewed through his disability. His "struggling" label follows him from reading to social studies and science, where he excels.

In my work with college freshmen, I have observed some of the same frustrations as I have with my son. Reading 0099 is a class designed for students who did not score high enough on a University of Georgia system wide placement test. It was here in Reading 0099 that I met Nikki, Lauren, Rawley and Matthew (whom I will introduce later). In addition, it was at this crucial convergence of my life when Hampton's reading difficulties and the lives of my students demanded attention and investigation. This project addresses their stories.

Background of the Problem and Research Questions

The reading interest inventory completed by Rawley, a recent high school graduate enrolled in my mandatory developmental reading class at Red Diamond State College, could have been completed by almost any of the hundreds of students beginning their college careers. Because Rawley's verbal SAT and placement exam scores fell below institutional requirements, the college required Rawley to enroll in a developmental reading class aimed at preparing him for the rigors of college reading. Rawley circled that he "sort of" liked to read, and he wrote that he "was not a very motivated reader" and his biggest weakness came from "pronouncing big words." Yet, when Rawley stopped by my office at the end of the semester to talk about last minute strategies to pass the required exit test, I noticed his obvious fatigue. Rawley explained that he had stayed up most of the previous night reading his new aircraft manual. Rawley, it turned out, was also working on his commercial pilot's license: he was an aircraft junkie and read everything aircraft-related that he could get his hands on. He pointed out that when he was reading about planes, he could read forever.

Unfortunately, while I had given Rawley and all the students enrolled in my class a battery of diagnostic instruments at the beginning of the semester, I knew nothing of his affinity for airplanes until a few days before the semester's end. Rawley's fascination with airplanes that began as a child with his father and continued in his young adulthood went undiscovered and unheard. Rawley's example, like that of Nikki and my son, beg the question of how important our students' pasts are in the reading classroom, specifically in a college classroom filled with adult learners. Should instructors actively seek out their students' stories? How might those stories be helpful for empowering students who many times have been labeled as "struggling readers?"

Rawley's behaviors are those of a reader: he reads for both pleasure and knowledge (Cone, 1994). Yet, by the institution's and Rawley's own definition, he is a struggling reader whose reading skills require remediation before he can begin the rigors of college. His story highlights the importance of self-perception and identity in literacy education. Nikki's love of mysteries and romance, and Rawley's reading practices as an aircraft expert are out-of-sync with their institutional remedial reader labels; however, they accept the institution's label and they approach me for help passing a standardized reading test far less complicated than the reading material they self-select.

College students who enroll in developmental reading classes often describe themselves with labels placed on them earlier in their education. Many students write that they are slow readers or struggling readers, and they describe a myriad of events that shaped their perceptions. The teaching of reading receives less and less attention as students move from elementary school to middle school and beyond (Moje, 2002). Funding for literacy efforts are often focused on early childhood experiences rendering late high school and college reading difficulties less visible. At the same time, government and advocacy groups are reporting middle and high school students' increasing difficulties with reading; the Alliance for Excellent Education (2006) argued that America's adolescent literacy struggles are alarming. The Alliance urged policymakers to invest greater resources into studying and supporting the reading practices of older students whose reading achievement has stagnated in the last decade. For example, the U.S. Department of Education's (2007) National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) described several troubling trends for the nation's 12th-grade reading achievement levels. According to NAEP data, the percentages of students performing at or above basic reading proficiency and proficient reading levels have decreased over the last 13 years. Additionally, only 35% of America's high

school seniors performed above basic reading proficiency levels in 2005. The decline in reading scores was evident across all reading contexts, i.e., reading for information, reading to perform a task, and reading for literary experience.

In an effort to better prepare college-bound students whose reading scores are below expected cut-offs, most colleges and universities across the country require these students to take classes aimed at preparing them for college reading. As Hull, Rose, Fraser and Castellano (1991) have argued, labeling students and requiring remediation follow a well-oiled tradition in American education. Indeed, American education has a history of categorizing children by ability: education has typically treated lower achieving children as though they lacked essential elements of both intelligence and character. Labels have changed from "dunce," "wayward," and "incorrigible" in the early part of the 20th century to "sleepy-minded," "immature," "slow," and "dull" (Hull et al., 1991, p. 311). Although the new century ushered in less clearly insulting labels, the older ideas of classification and remediation still permeate the classrooms of today. These ideas affect the way children are seen by others and the ways they see themselves (Hall, 2009). For traditional college students who are recent high school graduates and especially for non-traditional college students who tend to be older and thus possibly educated under more stigmatizing labels, the institution's requirement that they be remediated reinforces students' self-perceptions that there is something inherently missing in them that affects their ability to do well in college.

Developmental readers' reading practices are often overwhelmed by the stigmas of academic labels, which ultimately affect their sense of themselves as readers. For example, many of the students who must take a college reading class recount years of being educated through their weaknesses, using in their self-descriptions the same labels their schools used on them: they

are "slow" readers, they say, or "poor" readers or "weak" readers. They appear paralyzed in many instances by assessments they have internalized through years of schooling.

The following study focuses on college readers who were placed at matriculation in developmental reading classes (termed Learning Support Classes by my institution) and who subsequently were labeled as "at risk." I examined the concept of reading identity in the literacy classroom as way to investigate how readers' identities help shape their reading practices and attitudes in the literacy classroom. Three questions framed this study: (a) How do students placed in a college reading class describe themselves as readers; (b) How do in- and out-of-school experiences with reading affect students' perceptions of themselves as readers; and (c) How do the ways literacy is taught and valued influence students' reading identities?

<center>Sociocultural Perspectives on Literacy and Learning</center>

My theoretical frame builds on social-constructivists ideas of learning as primarily a social phenomenon. These ideas derived in part from Vygotsky (1896-1934) who argued against the stage-driven Piagetian view of knowledge construction in children. Unlike his predecessors, Vygotsky (1986) theorized that the genesis of thought and language derived, initially, through social relationships, and that independent mastery demanded social interactions.

Vygotsky (1978) extended his theories of learning by describing optimal learning situations. According to Vygotsky, learners exhibit a "zone of proximal development" which he defined as, "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Thus, social interactions enable learners to focus on concepts they have not yet mastered by providing expert

assistance. Vygotsky's metaphor of "buds and flowers" that with guidance will "fruit" demonstrates the necessary social interactions required for independent learning (p. 87).

Sociocultural theorists and literacy educators draw upon the ideas of Vygotsky in their attempts to understand the power of cultural diversity and literacy learning (Au, 1998). Like Vygotsky, later sociocultural scholars posit that learning is active and happens in practice; learning requires explicit demonstration and guidance from a knowledgeable other as well as implicit scaffolding (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this view, learning is situated in and mediated by the culture where it occurs (Gee, 2007). Additionally, sociocultural researchers investigating literacy and language development have offered powerful conceptual tools that can inform a study of students placed in a college reading class. First, although researchers have documented that most people practice literacy outside of school—indeed many times with more sophistication than what is expected in the classroom—those whose literacy practices do not align with practices in school are often considered failing or inadequate (Moll, 1992; Street, 2003). Second, Vygotsky's theories explain the importance of social interactions like those of the classroom as crucial components for independent learning. Finally, the power structures present in most American schools (Delpit, 1988; Heath, 1983) allow some groups to be successful while others fail (McDermott & Varenne, 1995). Therefore, investigating how college students describe their experiences with reading requires that I explore the ways students' reading practices—and the academic and social responses to those practices--have helped to shape their reading identities.

Reading and Identity

Sociocultural theory also suggests that the relationship between accepted, school-based literacy practices and sometimes unacknowledged out-of-school practices often create important

issues in the construction of students' reading identities, especially when students who lack proficiency with certain types of literacy are labeled "illiterate" or "struggling" early in their academic lives. The impact of these negative labels for teachers working with adolescents (Hall, 2009) and adults (Hull & Rose, 1989) has become a central concern.

James Gee (2007) described the dovetailing of context and language and their importance to education. He argued that language is "a matter of social negotiations rooted in culture" (p. 15). Gee described the consequences when students do not adhere to the conventions of acceptable language use. He explained that, "saying a child does not know how to speak her own native language correctly has implications about that child, her abilities and her deficits—and these carry over into how she is treated in school and society" (p. 24). Gee (2001a) further explored the relationship between students' (capital D) Discourses and the school setting. He argued that "Discourses" are socially acceptable ways of recognizing and validating the identity of a person. He suggested that one's Discourse being valued or marginalized depends on the time in history and the culture within which one was behaving. In this model, the community where the language occurs determines the language use as acceptable or deficient.

The ways students read written language in and out of school affects the way they view themselves as well as the way they are viewed in academia (Gee, 2007). The labels placed on students due to their reading practices affects self-esteem (Hall, 2007) and educators' assumptions about the students' abilities (Hull & Rose, 1989).

I began this initial chapter by introducing Nikki so that her situation would emphasize the importance of understanding students' experiences with reading during their education. Psychologists have written about the importance of social contexts for learning, and educational researchers have argued for understanding students' home and ethnic identities. Institutional

educational practice, however, still has a tendency to ignore students' out-of-school identities (Gee, 2007). Furthermore, Nikki's placement in a reading class in college created a palpable fear that made her doubt her abilities to be successful in college. Thus, Nikki's situation illustrates the problems faced by students when narrow views of reading or reader dominate pedagogy. Nikki saw herself as a reader; the institution saw her as an unprepared reader. How do these conflicting identities affect students' goals for earning a college degree?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the early 1970's Mina Shaughnessy successfully advocated for her academy, The City College of New York (CUNY), to become an open-access admissions institution. Shaughnessy (1973) argued, "the open admissions is forcing the real question—not how many people society is willing to salvage, but how much society is willing to pay to salvage itself" (p. 401). Ironically, thirty years later both New York City Mayor, Rudy Giuliani and New York State Governor, George Pataki, vowed to eliminate CUNY's open-access admission policy and virtually eliminate all developmental education courses by 2002 (Marcus, 1999).

Many other states including Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee and Virginia have attempted to phase out developmental education altogether (Merisotis & Phipps, 2000). Georgia, my home state, began reducing its number of underprepared freshmen students at the state's four-year institutions by "at least 5% each year" (Hebel, 2000, p. 1) in an effort to completely eliminate remedial education for first year students by 2005 (Hebel). The expectation was that four-year institutions would no longer accept students whose academic records fell below acceptable standards; thus, underprepared students had to attend community colleges or private institutions. Additionally, the University System of Georgia stipulated that any student who required developmental education would be granted limited attempts to pass developmental classes before being suspended from all the system's institutions for three years.

Given the contentious struggle of how states provide for students who require developmental education, the following literature review seeks to provide a historical

background of developmental education in the United States, a definition of current

developmental education, a description of students who enroll in developmental education, and a

summary of the types of research conducted with students in developmental reading classes.

History of Developmental Education

The National Center for Educational Statistics (2007) reported that 17.5 million students

enrolled in college in the fall of 2005 with an anticipated 13% increase in the coming decades.

Most studies agree that just over 40% of students entering community college and 30% of

students entering 4-year college required at least one developmental class (Adelman, 1998).

Attewell, Lavin, Domina, and Levey (2006) corroborated much of this information with their

analysis of the data produced by the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88).

The study produced for the U.S. Department of Education provided trend data about students

whom the Department of Education followed from their 8th grade year in 1988 through 1994.

The authors reported that of the 60% of the cohort who attended college, 40% of students

enrolled in at least one developmental course. Of those students who required developmental

education, mathematics was the subject most students needed (28%), 18% enrolled in

writing/language arts classes and 9% required reading classes. A more recent study conducted by

the Community College Research Center (CCRC) (Jenkins, Smith Jaggers, & Roksa, 2009)

concurred with older data. The authors reported that nearly half of the 24,140 first-year freshmen

matriculating in Virginia's community colleges enrolled in at least one developmental education

course; the course with the highest demand was math (43%). The authors acknowledged that

while their study focused solely on students in Virginia's community college system, their

findings "may well be common to many community colleges" (p. 1). Data collected at my

institution, Red Diamond State College, aligned with these studies; nearly 50% of the incoming

class in fall 2009 required at least one Learning Support course with math having the highest numbers of students.

According to Merisotis and Phipps (2000), developmental or remedial classes have existed as long as higher education has existed. Attewell et al. (2006) documented that college remediation has been a regular part of Ivy League Education and other universities since the colonial period. Seventeenth century Harvard students needed additional tutoring in Greek and Latin while the Land-grant colleges of the 18th century developed preparatory programs for students needing additional reading, writing and math skills. More recently, as a result of the GI Bill, open-admissions policies, and new educational laws, the mid-20th century saw an increase in the demand for classes aimed at bridging gaps in the skills of students matriculating in higher education. Merisotis and Phipps's concluded, "those halcyon days when all students who enrolled in college were adequately prepared and students smoothly made the transition from high school and college simply never existed" (Merisotis & Phipps, p. 69).

By the mid 1970's two major professional organizations emerged to serve the interests of faculty focused on students requiring academic assistance. Both the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) and College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) conducted research aimed at understanding the unique needs of developmental students (Jehangir, 2002).

Despite the efforts of NADE and CRLA, developmental education came under increased scrutiny in the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Casazza, 1999; Kozeracki, 2002). Jehangir (2002) identified several reasons for the controversy. First, the increasing numbers of students attending colleges brought additional numbers of developmental students. This growing demand intensified questions surrounding the quality of America's secondary education system. In fact,

many state governments argue that the public school systems, not institutions of higher education, should carry the financial burden of unprepared students (Kozeracki, 2002). Second, decreased governmental funding strained institutional budgets, so many programs in higher education were requiring more accountability. As in the CUNY situation, criticism from state legislators and policy makers required developmental education to justify its existence (Kozeracki, 2002). Finally, frustrations from within the academy regarding how to support struggling students on campus continued to pit educators against each other (Casazza, 1999).

Historically, students who require assistance have been a part of America's educational fabric, yet they have often been relegated to inferior-student status (Jehangir, 2002). Former NADE president, Martha Casazza (1999), pointed out that navigating the tension between providing services for diverse learners and maintaining high standards has worried American educators for 200 years. She reminded critics that America's democratic principles require that American education work to provide all who desire higher education access through its doors; Casazza argued that access to higher education "is a matter of human dignity" (p. 1). Likewise, Brier (1984) wrote that efforts "to bridge the gap are part of the traditional, if not formal mission of higher education" (p. 3).

Defining Developmental Education

Educators have struggled with terminology used to describe efforts with students placed in required preparation classes. "*Remedial*" and "*developmental*" approaches employ different theoretical frameworks of learning (Spann & McCrimmon, 1998). These different learning theories about how to approach students' educational needs create tension and division within the field of developmental education (Kozeracki, 2002). Casazza (1999) attempted to address the schism between educators who sought to remediate students and those who espoused a

developmental educational approach. She argued that the differences between the words "remedial" and "developmental" are significant because they represent contrasting theories or philosophies about the very foundations of how we educate our students.

Remedial, the most common term across all education levels, describes students by their particular weaknesses or deficiencies (Casazza, 1999). The term implies fixing something that is broken or reteaching some skill that is missing. Within this health care paradigm (Casazza), students are treated to fix their problem. Subsequent evaluations determine whether the problem has been corrected. When the problem remains, the same treatment will be reapplied until students are asked to leave or until they become so discouraged they drop out.

In an attempt to avoid the negative associations of remedial theories, other faculty described their educational efforts as *developmental* (Jehangir, 2002). Developmental education focused "on students' potential rather than deficits" (Spann & McCrimmon, 1998, p. 41). Kozeracki (2002) explained that *developmental* education, as opposed to remedial education, attempted to incorporate human development theories into pedagogy by providing a myriad of student services such as study skills, social opportunities, and career counseling along with traditional academic support. Casazza (1999) described four basic tenets crucial to a developmental approach:(a) learning is holistic, not a set of isolated skills to be mastered; (b) educators must focus on students' growth and development socially, emotionally, and academically; (c) the approach assumes that all learners have talents and it is the educators' job to identify and support those talents; and (d) learners exist across many different levels. Higbee (1996) articulated further fundamental differences between the two approaches:

> Among the meanings of "develop" are "to evolve the possibilities of . . . to promote the growth of " (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1981, p. 308). "Development" is

defined as "the act, process, or result of developing" (p. 308). "Remedy," meanwhile

refers to "a medicine, application, or treatment that relieves or cures a disease . . .

something that corrects or counteracts an evil" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary,

1981, p. 970). To remedy is "to provide or serve as a remedy for" (p. 970). Pardon me if I

bristle every time I hear someone refer to what I do as remedial. My students are not sick,

and they do not need to be cured. They are evolving, and the possibilities are limitless. (p.

63, 66)

Students Enrolled in Developmental Education

While Higbee's (1996) passionate words point to a difference between two distinct

approaches, many educators and students claim that the shift from remedial education to

developmental education has been purely semantic (Kozeracki, 2002). Researchers have reported

that the second-class status that plagued remedial students followed them into developmental

classes. Students, faculty, and policy makers continue to describe developmental students as

those who do not belong in college and who would be better advised to pursue vocational

degrees (Marcus, 1999).

Sentiments that underprepared students do not belong on college campuses coupled with

misconceptions of who typically enrolls in developmental education classes instigate additional

tension. The assumption that developmental education exists to serve non-traditional students

and inner-city graduates is false. Many students are recent high school graduates, and, although

they may be more demographically diverse than the university population at large, they represent

a wide band of students (Caverly, Nicholson, & Radcliffe, 2004). Students whose families were

in the lowest socioeconomic status (SES) were more likely to enroll in developmental education,

yet 24% of students from the highest SES also enrolled.

Hardin (1988) developed seven categories to illustrate the range and diversity among developmental learners: (a) The "poor chooser" described "the student who made a decision or decisions that adversely affected his or her academic future" (p. 16). She included students who did not elect a college-prep high school program and those who did not finish high school and earned GEDs in this category; (b) The non-traditional older adult student who was re-entering education, or one who was in a career transition due to lay-offs. According to Hardin, these students were mostly women, and they performed dual roles such as, student and parent and often wage earner; (c) Students needing disability services; (d) ignored students whose "academic or physical problems were never detected in high school" (Hardin, p. 20); (e) students whose native language was not English; (f) Students who were attending college because their parents forced them to attend; and, (g) "extreme case students who have such severe academic, emotional, and psychological problems that they cannot be successful in higher education" (p. 22).

Hardin (1988) argued that while the majority of students fell somewhere in the first five categories, the final two categories represent whom many people recognize as developmental learners. She wrote, "most students in developmental courses may be underprepared, but this does not equate to being incapable or uneducable" (p. 22). Thus, the reality of developmental education is one that "encompasses a much broader swath of students and many ability levels" (Attewell et al., 2006).

The Case Against Developmental Education

Critics of a developmental approach in college education argue that lower graduation rates for students who must take developmental education mean that the placement only delays the inevitable for the academically weak, and they usually drop out in debt with no degree

(Kozeracki, 2002). Neither Adelman's (1998), Attewell et al.'s (2006), nor CCRC's (2009) research examining characteristics of students in developmental education supports this argument. Overall, Attewell et al. (2006) concluded "that taking one or more remedial courses in a two-year college does not, in itself, lower a student's chances of graduation" (p. 905). Likewise, the CRCC (2009) study reported, "students who started in the highest level of developmental courses had a higher rate of gatekeeper (freshmen composition and math courses) course enrollment than did students who took no developmental coursework" (p. 5).

Additionally, some have argued that needing certain developmental classes doom some students more than others. The popular notion suggests that a reading deficit is deadly to hopeful college students (Attewell et al., 2006). Researchers have looked at students needing academic support in college to determine if any single course or combination of courses creates too big a hurdle (Adelman, 1998; Attewell et al., 2006; Kozeracki, 2002; Merisotis & Phipps, 2000). Research has generated contradictory findings regarding this question. Adelman's research, for example, suggested that, although requiring academic assistance in college does not doom a student to failure, requiring reading assistance in college might be too big of a hurdle. Attewell et al.'s study of the NELS cohort, however, produced different conclusions. The authors found that students requiring reading assistance at a 4-year college were at a disadvantage; that is, they had a 7%-11% lower probability of graduating. However, the findings were nearly reversed for students in community colleges requiring reading. In those cases, students had an 11% higher probability of earning a degree (Associate's or Bachelor's) within 8 years of enrolling than similar underprepared students who did not enroll in a college reading class.

Given the current climate in public and in higher education that often describes developmental education programs as unnecessary drains on limited resources, I reviewed the

research conducted with students enrolled in developmental reading courses. The first strand of research adopted a "remedial" approach to education. Students were approached as though they had deficits in their language abilities and were not ready to handle the rigors of college reading. The second strand of studies attempted to make the developmental reader more cognitively aware of the process of reading; however, the studies still focused on errant processes of students. A third strand of studies focused on motivational difficulties experienced by college readers. Finally, the fewest strand of studies focused on readers themselves. It is important to note that because I intend to study how students describe themselves as readers as well as the effects of the institution's naming process, I only refer to students as "remedial" or requiring "remediation" when reporting the findings of a study that used such language. For the generic terminology, I refer to students who require a reading class as needing developmental education or as Learning Support.

Research Trends in Developmental Education

Strand One: Skills Based Research

This body of literature on college students in reading courses focused on isolated skills that students did not learn in their high school preparation. The majority of these studies concentrated on comprehension skills such as locating main idea (Peverly, Ramaswamy, Brown, Sumowski, Alidoost, & Garner 2007), identifying vocabulary in context (Mealey, 1990), and understanding inference (Calvo, Estevez & Dowens, 2003) to improve scores on standardized reading tests. The literature reported short-term gains in students' post-test scores with these approaches; yet, few of the studies dealt with long-term success in college or the attitudes of readers themselves. Hence, the conclusions of most studies suggested treatments that might "fix" students' poor comprehension performance (Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004).

Several studies examined the assumption that "remedial" readers lacked the ability to isolate authors' main ideas and identify supporting details correctly. Most of these studies employed a pretest-post test design comparing readers' growth on a standardized reading test like the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (NDRT). For example, Jordan (1996) investigated 28 students enrolled in a developmental reading class. The author reported that explicit teaching in skill-acquisition better enabled students to pass her institutions' minimum score requirement on the NDRT. The author concluded that 24 of the 28 passed the NDRT and 22 students reported using skills taught in the course "often" on an author-designed reading behavior survey.

Qualitative measures have also documented skills-based approaches to improve reading. Josten (1997) taught a graphic mapping technique to college reading students to encourage recognition of main idea and text structure. The instructor modeled the technique and provided students practice finding an author's map while they read. She reported specific benefits for students, such as successfully distinguishing major and minor details. The author reported students' reactions after learning the method as positive and helpful with higher-level college classes. On an anonymous survey, the author reported 100% of students in attendance ($N = 34$) said the strategy was useful. Sixteen students commented about SAD's usefulness for reading comprehension, and its ability to aid memory on reading tasks. Ultimately, Josten concluded that SAD mapping helped students answer the question, "how can I tell what's important?" (p. 5).

Other skills-based studies have focused on different pedagogical strategies targeting improvement of students' exit tests. Taraban and Becton (1997) focused on developmental readers who had failed the placement test in Texas and enrolled in an 8-week remedial course. Authors split students into two groups and taught a "look-back" technique aimed at finding the answers in the passage and an annotation method that allowed for a more holistic and broader

approach to teaching reading. The authors concluded that a slower reading process is indicative of a more thoughtful approach. Both groups also correctly answered a higher percentage of problems attempted; yet, only the growth measured in the look-back group was significant. The authors advocated focused, explicit instruction as a means of improving reading test scores.

Cukras (2005) examined pedagogy focused on improving students' inference skills. Her study was a pretest posttest design focusing on the benefit of cooperative groups for at-risk college freshman. Cukras reported higher gains scores for the experimental group (10.6 vs. 5.3) and more favorable passing rate (i.e., 68% versus 53%) although the results were not statistically significant. She concluded that cooperative learning helped students with inferential material over the lecture question and answer format delivered with the similar control group.

Likewise, Peterson, Burke, and Segura (1999) focused on differences for developmental readers on post-tests if they participated in computer support labs instead of text support labs. To test their hypothesis that a computer support lab would be more beneficial than a text support lab, the authors divided 51 college readers into a computer practice lab group (25 students) and a text practice group (26 students) with the lab instructor held constant. The ANOVA statistical procedure revealed no significant differences in the performance of the two groups.

Indicative of all the skill-improvement studies, researchers had a difficult time finding any statistically significant differences between students taught with a myriad of skill-specific approaches and students who took a more traditional version of college reading. Moreover, the focus on students' short-term gains on institutional pre-test and post-test reading tests neglected an essential concern: Did students improve their success with the rigors of college-level reading?

Strand Two: Cognitive Reading Process Research

Stahl, Simpson and Hayes (1992) recommended that college reading instruction require a metacognitive awareness of the reading process as a whole. The authors delineated their strategies for creating strong college reading programs: (a) use a programmatic model emphasizing cognitive development of students, (b) encourage strategy transfer and modification across academic disciplines, (c) explain that a flexible use of process is required within a strategy, (d) understand students' beliefs about their performance, (e) help students understand and define academic tasks, (f) adopt research-based approaches to vocabulary acquisition, (g) teach students how to deal with multiple sources, and (h) use a variety of valid assessment and diagnostic measures.

Researchers influenced by Stahl et al. attempted to make college students more aware of themselves as readers. For example, El-Hindi (1997) looked at the benefits of metacognitive instruction in reading and writing for developmental students. In a six-week intensive residential summer program, the pre-college experience enrolled 34 participants and provided them with reading journals as a means of tracking their reading and writing processes. The class provided direct instruction in the three recursive phases of reading and writing: (a) activating prior knowledge, (b) drafting—self-monitoring and questioning and (c) responding to reading in teacher-assessed reflective journals. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the author analyzed reflective journals and a self-created questionnaire designed to track metacognitive strategies. Both methods yielded results that identified the importance of metacognitive awareness as an important component of sophisticated literacy development. El-Hindi concluded that the strategies helped students avoid the pitfalls of reading on autopilot by becoming aware of

and articulating their reading strategies. She argued that reflective journals provided a vehicle for students that had been ignored by isolated skill instruction.

Maitland (2000) also attempted to increase metacognition as a way of combating disengaged and inattentive readers flocking to the reading lab solely to follow a professor's instructions and pass state tests. She wanted to help reading students become more aware of their knowledge and better monitors of their comprehension. To assess students' growing metacognition, instructors required readers to maintain a Personal Reading Plan that could be evaluated. Instructors read and commented on students' thinking. Anecdotal evidence revealed that "positive outcomes result when teachers guide and encourage students to be in charge and in control of their own learning" (pg. 9).

Martino, Norris, and Hoffman (2001) investigated a reading approach called Communicative Reading Strategies (CRS) with a skills-based comprehension program. The authors defined CRS as an integrated intervention approach to reading that aided students in making connections between processing units. Eight second-semester college freshman, who were all simultaneously enrolled in a for-credit biology class, participated and were divided into two groups. One group participated in the CRS teaching method, and the other an isolated skills instruction method. The authors concluded that reading intervention programs improved college students' comprehension abilities and CRS instruction produced quicker gains in those abilities.

Finally, Caverly, Nicholson, and Radcliffe (2004) conducted two studies looking at short and long-term effects of strategic reading strategies in a stand-alone developmental reading course. Study 1 looked at 36 students who learned PLAN (a heuristic developed by the authors to organize students' reading procedures) and were tested on several different assessments. Participants showed significant growth on all departmental and standardized reading assessments

at the end of the semester class except the Likert questionnaire exploring self-efficacy concepts. A qualitative follow-up with the cohort suggested that the students were still modestly employing the PLAN technique in subsequent college courses. A second study compared developmental readers who had taken a class with explicit instruction on PLAN with those developmental readers who had not learned the heuristic method. The authors examined students' scores in a college-level history class (deemed a reading-intensive course) and determined that developmental students who had the strategic reading course outperformed developmental students who had not had the PLAN technique. While the authors noted the problems with linking the two courses, they concluded that the study suggested that evidence existed that showed some evidence of transfer for study strategies.

Although the focus of the research in this strand shifted away from isolated skill instruction, the cognitive-based studies shared the limitations of the skills-based research by not demonstrating that students transferred their awareness from the classroom or the reading lab to their success in their college education. The students' growth, measured predominantly through pre-test/ post-test instruments, was a one-dimensional snapshot of the students instead of a multilayered description of social, emotional and academic growth.

Strand Three: Motivation Studies

Other educational researchers turned to motivational constructs as ways to bolster students' reading successes. These studies approached the student as more than a collection of errant skills; however, many still used a simple exit test or questionnaire to measure complex growth.

Self-efficacy. According to Schunk (2003), "those who feel efficacious for learning or performing a task participate more readily, work harder, persist longer when they encounter

difficulties, and achieve at a higher level" (p. 161). Although theorists agree that no construct works in isolation, self-efficacy appears at the top of the motivational hierarchy; that is, unless students believe in their abilities to succeed, there will be little chance for engaged student learning or achievement (Schunk, 2003). Lynch's (2006) study examining the association between motivational factors and course grades found, for college freshmen, self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of a course grade. Specifically, the higher the self-efficacy subscale score on the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), the greater the academic success. He suggested that faculty spend time with students to help them become more aware of how their beliefs affect their performance.

Similarly, Morrison (1999) administered the College Student Inventory (CSI) to first-time college freshmen during orientation week to identify traits associated with conditionally admitted students (Learning Support students) which might differentiate them from the total freshman population. She found that on the Academic Confidence Scale, a scale measuring a student's belief that he can perform well in school, 75% of the conditionally admitted fell below the mean for the population. Like Lynch, she advised educators in developmental programs to provide academic opportunities for successful experiences that will "eventually enable students to become self-disciplined and responsible" (p. 12). Howey (1999) published a similar study that examined the differences in motivational constructs for 428 first-time freshmen. Although he failed to find meaningful relationships between the constructs and academic success, he found differences between developmental college freshmen and regular admits with developmental students reporting poorer self-efficacy.

Few studies report meaningful treatments for improving self-efficacy, and fewer still focus solely on improving college students' self-efficacy for reading. McCabe, Kraemer, Miller,

Parmar, and Ruscica (2006) investigated self-efficacy and text format for reading on 76

developmental reading students. The study examined students' self-efficacy for reading when

aspects of the text structure, such as font size, margins, and headings, were manipulated. Using a

two-day process, the authors found that students showed statistically different self-efficacy rates

for a passage that was presented in eight unique formats; moreover, comprehension rates

correlated with the text preferences when students were given different passages to read in their

most preferred and least preferred formats. The authors discussed the implications of their

findings on students enrolled in developmental education who may be more susceptible to self-

doubt given the characteristics of many college textbooks.

     Self-regulation. Students demonstrate the characteristics of self-regulated learners

anytime they consciously modify their behavior in order to achieve a learning goal (Reed,

Schallert, Beth & Woodruff, 2004). Wambach, Brothen, and Dikel (2000) suggested that the aim

of all developmental education programs should be to arm students with a repertoire of skills that

promote success in college and life. Although the presence of self-regulation has been studied in

upper elementary, middle and high school (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997; Pintrich & DeGroot,

1990), less empirical data exist supporting its predictive correlation in post-secondary

developmental education. However, in Morrison's (1999) aforementioned study comparing

conditional freshman admits and regular freshman admits on the CSI, she found that 72% of the

conditional subset fell below the mean on the Study Habits Scale, a scale designed to measure a

student's willingness to make necessary sacrifices to achieve classroom success. Ley and Young

(1998) also examined students' self-regulation scores as a possible predictor of developmental

status. Comparing self-described studying and learning strategies from student interviews,

researchers could predict placement for 78% of the student sample. Ultimately, the data revealed

that the best predictor for classifying students as regular or developmental was the overall number of learning strategies students described using to glean academic understanding. Similarly, Ray, Garavalia, and Murdock (2003) found that, unlike non-developmental college students whose academic achievement in college is highly predicted by college aptitude entrance exams (ACT, SAT), developmental students' successes are best predicted by self-regulated learning strategies and motivational beliefs. In another study focusing on the number and type of self-motivating strategies employed by developmental and non-developmental college students, VanBlerkom and VanBlerkom (2004) found that developmental students used less sophisticated strategies than their non-developmental counterparts. VanBlerkom and VanBlerkom also demonstrated that, although developmental students used fewer and less reliable/sophisticated strategies in the beginning of the course, their use of these skills improved by the semester's end. Young and Ley (2004) reported that in a study of 52 developmental reading students, those students whose course included the POME (Prepare, Organize, Monitor, and Evaluate) instructional method for self-regulated learning significantly outperformed those students whose course did not contain an explicit self-regulation component. All of the aforementioned motivational studies recognized that scaffolding students as scholars required educators to view students as more than skill-deficient learners; however, none of the studies attempted to link the unique attributes and past histories of students with the demands of the academy.

Strand Four: Investigating the Reader

While National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) has been outspoken in its calls for a more holistic view of students who enter higher education requiring academic assistance, actual research and practice has lagged behind substantially (Kozeracki, 2002). In fact, by creating binaries within the literacy pedagogy educators risk defining readers as either

acceptable or struggling; likewise, developmental reading educators often see students as lacking either ability or motivation (Hall, 2009).

Lesley (2004), for example, posited that to empower students who have been placed into college reading classes, educators must instruct students with models that re-examine their perceptions about themselves as readers. She argued that past and present reading experiences must be "recast and 're-visioned' without the stigmatism of remediation, before developmental readers can begin to express their unfettered literacy selves" (p. 63). In a phenomenological study, Lesley collected reflective journals, responses to class readings, and a literary narrative created at the semester's end from 22 students enrolled in her developmental reading class. At the core of her investigation, the author examined the power of students' previous literacy history and experiences. From her data, she concluded that student frustration created by patterns and labels established through many students' school history is repeated with a skill-drill approach; she suggested that developmental reading classes should disrupt the remedial cycles by developing critically cognitive students who reflect on their learning. Moreover, she challenged educators to examine their assessment practices that create labels and categories of readers, which invariably leave many students behind.

Berg (2002) collaborated with four of her college reading students over three consecutive semesters to explore their homes, schools, work, and social lives as they intersected with their desires to obtain a college degree. Berg did not attempt to generalize her findings across all developmental students; yet, she did reach some powerful conclusions. She explained that her students shared a remarkable sense of agency in rejecting messages transmitted by their former schools that they were not college material. She argued that her students "offer consistent evidence that they possess abilities that should be valued and celebrated in all schools, including

institutions of higher learning" (p. 11). Additionally, she posited that her study showed that developmental students are empowered by their education and simultaneously strengthen the university itself.

Berg (2002) argued that the academy, in general, and developmental educators specifically embraces students who are labeled as underprepared and who enter college tentative about their scholastic abilities by marshalling efforts to counter the negative views of these students long entrenched in American higher education. Often, however, old deficit-ridden metaphors follow these students into their 21st century classrooms. The numbers of skill-driven research studies that continue to dominate college reading literature exemplifies a continued remedial approach. Ediger (2001) explains the pervading notion:

> First, the remedial reading instructor needs to determine where the student is presently in reading achievement . . . The student may reveal a necessity for word recognition skills. And beyond word identification, the student may have demonstrated a need for assistance in comprehending ideas. Diagnosis and remediation in university student reading should make for better readers (p. 1).

Thus, developmental education's past and present often casts students as those who are missing crucial skills or the overall intelligence needed for higher education (Hull et al., 1991; Jehinger, 2002). In order to heed the calls of Berg (2002), Lesley (2004), and others, developmental educators need to examine other theories of literacy and learning that combat notions of remediating weak students (Higbee, 1996). Crisco (2002) identifies what is clearly absent in the field: A definition for literacy and learning that empowers students. Metaphors that situate literacy as a set of skills can forever cast students in a deficit model by,"focusing on students' literacy as a skill learned or as an empty vessel waiting to be filled limits the

possibilities for students to demonstrate what literacies they do bring to the university and limits the possibilities for teaching and learning" (Crisco, p. 49).

<center>Literacy and Identity</center>

In the following review of the literature in adolescent literacy and identity, I establish a backdrop for examining the reading identities of college-age developmental readers. Drawing on the work of Lewis and Del Valle (2008), I organize the way identity has been described in literacy research as a series of three waves. I then outline the possibilities for examining reading identity as a socially constructed mix of out-of-school reading competencies and in-school reading practices, referred to as a hybrid concept of reading identity.

For nearly four decades, educational researchers have examined the connections between literacy and identity (Mahiri & Godley, 1998). Street (1995) argued that to understand the function of literacy in peoples' lives, researchers must examine culturally important value systems as well as inherent structures of power. Furthermore, Street posited that the ways people live directly affect the role literacy plays in their identity. In a similar argument, Ferdman (1990) described a three-part connection between literacy, society, and the individual whereby individuals' personal values, identifications, and views of literacy are interconnected. Likewise, Sarup (1998) explained the three-part connection as "a construction, a consequence of interaction between people, institutions and practices" (p. 11). Mahiri and Godley (1998) further explained the importance of identity to literacy studies. The authors wrote, "The study of individuals and their life stories can lead us to the affiliation, values, and beliefs that form the basis of the relationship between literacy and identity" (p. 420).

Identity as conceptualized by literacy researchers, then, moves beyond an individual definition of self (Lewis & Del Valle, 2008). It is conceived, rather, as shaped by social, cultural,

historical, institutional, and political forces. McCarthy and Moje (2002) published a series of

their email correspondences that attempted to answer the question of why identity matters to

literacy research. In general, the authors explained that who students are influences how they

interact, respond, and learn in classrooms. More specifically, they discussed their concept of

identity as a notion that had moved away from a stable concept. Moje (2002) explained:

> While I do not subscribe to the old unfolding core claims made about identity by more
>
> traditional psychologists, I do think that we may be more than an incoherent mass of
>
> contradictions. Our individual histories, cultures, and languages provide us with a kind of
>
> gel that holds us together. (p. 230)

In their review of the research dealing with identity and literacy, Lewis and Del Valle

(2008) described the field's research activities and foci as a series of three waves. The authors

explained that periods could not be demarcated by definite start and end dates; rather they

suggested the waves continually affected and overlapped with one another.

Wave One: Reading Identity and Racial, Ethnic, and Socio-economic Identities

Adolescent identity work from the initial wave depicted student identity as stable and

unified. Researchers from this theoretical framework focused on cultural conflicts between

students' homes and schools. Heath's (1983) seminal ethnography from her work with low-

income Black and White families in North Carolina demonstrated that the ways individuals used

language within their communities and the ways schools expected them to use language often

conflicted. The tension created between the mismatched student identity and educational

expectation provided an important domain of study for many researchers. Ferdman (1990)

explained, "Since cultures differ in what they consider to be their texts and in the values they

attach to these, they will also differ in what they view as literate behavior. An illiterate person is

someone who cannot access (or produce) texts that are seen as significant within a given culture" (p. 186).

Additionally, Delpit (1988) in *Other People's Children* discussed the problems present in American schools where large numbers of White, middle-class teachers educate children unlike themselves. She argued that African American teachers are dwindling, and those who have remained in education have been either unheard or ignored. Delpit concluded that to reach children who have been historically marginalized, teachers must embrace the native culture children bring to class, expose the power codes needed to succeed in American society, educate students on code-switching, and finally empower students to question these codes and become agents of change for social justice. Delpit (1988), Kunjufu (2002), Rodriquez (1982), and others have written about the need for schools to embrace and value the often hidden identities of their students in order to understand, challenge, and change the power codes and hegemony of schools. Beach et al. (2008) explained, "when worlds are perceived as incongruent, students may perceive these borders as insurmountable barriers between worlds, particularly when they assume they lack the social capital valued in academic worlds" (p. 35). Researchers from this theoretical framework demonstrated that linking identity studies with literacy studies helped illustrate education's propensity for marginalizing those outside privileged spheres of knowing.

Wave Two: Extending Potential Influences of Reading Identity

A second wave of researchers theorized identity as negotiated and performative. They examined adolescents' out-of-school literacy practices as well as unsanctioned in-school practices to explore ways identity was dynamic, fluid, and context dependent. For example, Margaret Finders (1996, 1997) spent one year following four adolescent girls as they made the transition from sixth grade to junior high school. Finders reported tagging along with her

participants to athletic events, the mall, slumber parties and school to investigate how the girls perceived and constructed their emerging social roles in an unknown cultural scene. Her study contrasted the literate practices of the popular girls (the "social queens") with working class girls, ("tough cookies") and the ideal students as defined by schools. She reported that each group of girls used different literate practices to establish boundaries between themselves and other students as well as ways of negotiating new social expectations. The author examined notes the girls wrote to each other, bathroom graffiti and teen-focused magazines in an attempt understand the different identities the girls constructed. The teenage magazines carried the most interest in so far as only one group, the social queens, reported relying on the unsanctioned magazines as a "marker, a yardstick to measure how one was progressing into womanhood" (pg. 81). Finders argued against leaving the teens' magazines clandestine because unchallenged the magazines represented a type of mirror for the young girls.

For literacy researchers, the construct of a performative identity allowed them to examine how students constructed different versions of their identity through participation in various textual worlds (Beach et al., 2008). Literacy practices could be powerful across a variety of contexts that had little or nothing to do with what was happening in their classrooms. Guzzetti and Gamboa (2004) examined the covert zine-making literacy practices of older adolescent girls. The authors were interested in understanding what gave some girls the courage to write differently from their peers in unsanctioned outlets of their own. Like Finders (1996), Guzzetti and Gamboa suggested that the work done within the walls of the classroom was relatively limited compared with the literacy activities students often engaged in outside of school; they contended that young people's multiple literacy abilities were important for discovering who students are as defined by their interests and activities. Researchers from this theoretical

framework approached students' identities as dynamic and fluid; moreover, educators conceptualized students' identities, especially adolescents' identities, as participants who were constantly reconstructing themselves amidst changing social landscapes (Bean & Moni, 2003).

Wave Three: Blending Notions of Identity

The third theoretical framework views identity as improvisational, metadiscursive, and hybrid. Researchers examined literacy practices as global and local, participatory and exclusionary. Lewis and Del Valle (2008) explained this concept this way: "Youth do more than perform their identities; they are discursively engaged in a process that brings identity into being" (p. 316). Researchers in this wave argued that adolescents are more than performers; they are participants in a process that brings identity into being. This process is multi-layered, overlapping, and sometimes conflicting and paradoxical.

Researchers looked to video gaming as literate practices where participants must construct and reconstruct their identities. Hammer (2006) explored the agency and authority in role-playing games. The study followed the practices of nine self-described narrative and social leaders in cyber-space role-playing games. Hammer concluded that role-playing games created a collaborative authorship among its participants that scaffolded the players' attempts to be producers instead of mere consumers. Producers share a collective ownership that empowers, in fact, demands, that they contribute to the virtual world they have created. Gee (2006) also examined the potential of students' game-centered literacy. The world of video games, he postulated, allows players to assume a "projective stance" (p. 96) where they become the authority and enhance their learning. Because gamers *become* the characters in the virtual world, they adopt the goals of the character, and they work to attain these goals thus keeping their character alive and healthy. He provided the example of *Thief: Deadly Shadows* as a game where

a player must become the master thief, Garrett, and thus inherit all Garrett's strengths and weaknesses. To play the game without keeping Garrett's specific attributes at the forefront, limits the players ability to be successful.

This paradigm suggests that identity is not stable, but students do not shed identities like articles of clothing. They do shift within different contexts, but there are consistent beliefs and values that remain stable across contexts as well (Beach et al., 2008; Hagood, 2002; Moje, 2002). Identity is not completely shapeless because it is surrounded by larger social agents that create memberships and pariahs in a discourse community (Moje & Lewis, 2007). A hybrid identity, then, derives from both a self that is more-or-less coherent across contexts and the culture and power structures in which that self is constantly resituated. Youth are a unique and valuable resource, Moje (2002) argued, because they have unparalleled access to experiences and discourse communities. The author explained the impetus for hybrid notion of identity and literacy:

> What we have not done, and where we need to direct our attention in the future, is to examine how youths' literacy practices reflect the intersection of multiple groups (e.g., ethnic groups, youth cultural groups, social class groups, to name just few), and to examine how the knowledges, ways of knowing, and identities they build from those group experiences intersect with the advanced, deep content learning teachers, parents, and administrators expect young people to do. (p. 213)

Possibilities of Hybrid Approach

For college readers who have been placed in a mandatory reading strategies class, a hybrid concept of identity provides a lens through which to examine and challenge deeply ingrained perceptions of what it means to be "a reader," what behaviors count as reading, and,

finally, how out-of-school literate practices can serve as bridges to literate practices deemed necessary by the academy.

Specifically, examining my students' reading identities as improvisational, metadiscursive, and hybrid makes the following actions possible: (a) students and their teachers may challenge institutional labels; (b) students and their teachers may redefine and enlarge their conception of literacy practices and behaviors; and (c) educators may help students bridge their outside practices with academic expectations.

Challenging Institutional Labels

The reading research literature is replete with studies tracing the damaging effects of labels placed on students who, for any number of reasons, are not meeting institutional expectations (Alvermann, 2001; Hall, 2007; Williams, 2008). By the time readers have reached college, placement in a developmental reading class reinforces beliefs that they are not "college material" (Berg, 2002). McCarthey and Moje (2002) have illustrated the promise that a hybrid notion of identity brings to the developmental reading class. The authors suggest that considering identities to be social constructions that students can always change allows educators and students to rethink the labels used to identify students. The authors explained, "by considering identity as an important concept that needs to be embraced, challenged, and reconceptualized, we might be able to think about students and their literacy practices in ways that will help us reconsider those labels" (McCarthey & Moje, p. 230).

Although many colleges and universities across the nation have changed the names of preparatory classes from remedial to other less offensive names such as underprepared, learning support, and developmental, the switch has been viewed as semantic at best (Kozeracki, 2002). However, when educators acknowledge the complex reader (Hall, 2009) in the classroom with a

lifetime of literacy practices to pull from, many new possibilities emerge. For example, Weiner (2002) explained that acknowledging that students in a college reading class have a multitude of literacies to draw upon can help them "interrogate, interpret, and revise dominating discourses" (p. 152). Such discussions, he argued, allow students to become social agents who challenge the effects of state-mandated tests and institutional labels that perpetuate the cycle of marginalization.

Redefining Definitions and Behaviors

Language and literacy practices have enormous power in our culture (Gee, 2001b; Mahiri & Godley, 1998). Yet, very few researchers have examined the concept of what it means to be defined as a reader (Kaestle, 1988). Cone's (1994) research focused on creating readers in a high school English class. Her definition of reader was simple, "a reader is one who chooses to read for pleasure and knowledge" (Cone, p. 450). Cone discovered that self-defined readers existed across all levels of school achievement and SAT scores; similarly, nonreaders were sometimes honors students and students with learning disabilities.

In order for struggling readers to challenge debilitating labels, educators can move beyond valuing a print-only literacy world (Stone, 2007). Hall (2009), for example, argued that a cognitive print-centric view of reading dominates language arts and reading pedagogy, and good reading viewed as a set of specific skills prohibits educators from recognizing other reading identities that may be present in the classroom. Indeed, education's insistence on canonical works and increasingly standardized programs of literacy study influence what students think counts as real reading (Alvermann, 2001). Research from the US and the UK illustrated the incongruity between what students are reading and what types of materials they think *good* readers read. Clark, Osborne and Akerman (2008), authors for the National Literacy Trust in the

UK, described the perceptions of students about reading. The majority of the young people surveyed believed that being a good reader meant reading long books, knowing big words, and being able to read well aloud. Survey respondents thought that readers enjoyed book-length fiction, magazines and poetry. The same survey, however, reported that these young people most frequently reported reading e-mails, blogs and social networking sites. The report encouraged educators to promote a range of reading materials since students may be leading rich literacy-filled lives outside of school. Placing value in the literate practices students actually report may help students and teachers recognize those practices as scaffolds to literate practices about which they feel less confident (Williams, 2008).

Bridging Outside Passions with Academic Demands

Stone (2007) posited that schools must begin to change their strict definitions of literacy as well as what it means to be literate. Lankshear and Knobel (2007) supported the argument explaining, "different histories of 'literate immersion' yield different forms of reading and writing as practice" (p. 2). The authors point out that the opportunities that expressive media provide (social networking sites, fan fiction, blogs, etc.) call into the question the very concept of "text" and force educators to look beyond print images in the classroom. Prensky (2001) admonished educators that if they want to reach their students, they must embrace digital literacy. Social networking sites, virtual online locations where users create profiles to connect to other users, already engage incredible numbers of adolescents. According to the National School Board Association (2007) survey, 96% of students with online access reported using social networking technologies, and those online generally spent 9 hours per week chatting, text messaging, blogging and visiting online communities. Perhaps even more surprisingly, the study found that 60% of social network users talked about schoolwork while online.

Moje and Lewis (2007) argued that literacy provides learning opportunities that allow for differences and movement across discourses; this movement creates and shapes knowledge requiring new formations of the self. In fact, Gee (2006) argued that people today are more like walking resumes or a portfolio of skills, experiences and achievements. It is incumbent on educators then to work with these identities, and to help students recognize the power of the stories they tell about themselves and the stories they allow others to create.

Conclusions

In sum, to adopt a sociocultural perspective of literacy and identity is to accept that people's identities are fluid, changing and constantly influenced by family, institutions and the contexts in which people live (Gee, 2007; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Caine, 1998; McCarthey & Moje, 2002). This perspective assumes that literacy is more than a sum of acquired skills; rather, it is a set of varied practices existing in social and cultural milieus (Street, 1995). To continue approaching each developmental reading student as a container of unmastered skills is to continue a tradition of remediation with all of its classroom implications. In this chapter, I have discussed the historical background of developmental education and its deficit model of student learners. I also explored the literature focusing on identity formation in literacy education. The purpose of my project is to contribute to the literature on the importance of identity issues in literacy education, especially when dealing with adult readers who are pursuing college degrees. This study extends the research from adolescent literacy and reading identity into developmental education. Students enrolled in developmental reading classes have much to add to the investigation since as adults they have many experiences as readers. Additionally, their reading abilities have been evaluated many times and often these evaluations have had adverse effects on their perceptions of themselves as readers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

I approached the reading identity of college readers from a social constructionist perspective that assumes humans' actions in the world are shaped by the meanings they construct through their social interactions with others (Crotty, 1998). The theorists' whose ideas framed my inquiry also informed how I investigated reading identity as well as how I interpreted my data. Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory emphasizes the connections between learners' background knowledge and the scaffolding of a knowledgeable other for optimal educational settings. Vygotsky believed life-long learning depended on social interactions. Gee's (2007) ideas also framed my exploration. Gee examined the importance of students' identities in educational settings. Gee and others who take a sociocultural approach to literacy argue that literacy, historical practices, and social practices cannot be untangled and studied in isolation. According to Gee, if literacy is the ability to read something, then culture defines what it deems important to be able to read. Thus, students' reading habits are valued by educational settings only when they read certain types of texts in a certain type of way and interact with these texts in an expected manner. Gee explained, "the practices of such social groups are never just literacy practices. They also involve ways of talking, interacting, thinking, valuing, and believing" (p. 45). Adopting Vygotsky's and Gee's perspectives, I believe that students are not independently creating their identities as readers since their reading ability has been evaluated many times throughout their lives and, in many instances, has been labeled inadequate (Hull et. al, 1991). Developmental readers, who have been placed by low-test scores into a reading class, have been

defined by the discourse of reading assessment as weak or struggling readers, and that definition has been reinforced by years of schooling. For me to investigate the identity of a developmental reader in isolation from the social and academic contexts in which it has been constructed would ignore the shaping influences of those contexts. In this study, I attempted to understand the ways developmental readers described their attitudes and behaviors with reading based on their past and present experiences with reading, especially in educational settings where reading abilities are assessed. By examining formal documents, students' open-ended questionnaires, surveys, online discussion posts and one-on-one interviews, I explored the "mystique of the good reader" (Compton-Lilly, 2008, p. 39) and the implications for students when reading identities are labeled as inadequate.

<p style="text-align:center">Pilot Study: Design and Reflections</p>

As part of a course in qualitative research, I conducted a pilot study aimed at investigating attributes of students' motivation and the factors of the classroom they described as helpful for battling low engagement efforts. Four major questions framed that research: (a) What are developmental students' perceptions of why they were placed in a reading class in college? (b) What are developmental students' perceptions of what skills they need to complete the class and graduate from college? (c) How do developmental students describe pedagogical techniques used in a reading college class? (d) How do students' descriptions of pedagogical techniques differ depending on their unique motivational strengths and weaknesses as identified by their responses on the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)?

Once I obtained IRB approval from University of Georgia and Red Diamond State College, I collected several pieces of information from two Reading 0099 students enrolled in my spring 2008 course. I interviewed my participants for an hour, and each interview was audio

taped. Both interviews took place in a quiet room on the campus of Red Diamond State College. For the opening questions, I chose to follow Charmaz's (2003) and Seidman's (2006) recommendation for beginning the interview by allowing the participant to reflect on past experiences for reading. Although the participants' initial responses to the childhood probes were quite terse, follow-up probes helped to elicit specific experiences and even book titles that the participants read as children.

The next section of interviewing focused on participants' experiences in the classroom. Both participants described resources and skills they found valuable in helping them become more confident readers. The first participant spoke of the vocabulary book and vocabulary requirements as helping her gain confidence. Similarly, the second participant told of a comprehension technique that she found helpful for dealing with "hard to understand" texts.

Finally, I attempted to end both interviews by asking the participants to think about their futures and how the skills they learned in Reading 0099 would prepare them for other classes. Again borrowing from Charmaz (2003), I asked participants about advice they might give to future students as well as about their career goals. Both spoke of determination and becoming more prepared for their futures.

The participants' description of themselves as readers echoed what many reading educators have discovered about students who label themselves as non-readers; they often do not "count" what they enjoy reading as important (Compton-Lily, 2008). Also, the participants described a changing perception of themselves as readers as they completed the class. Specifically, their self-efficacy and engagement efforts were bolstered by successful experiences in the class.

Reflections from the Pilot Study

Both interviews suggested that my original focus, motivation and classroom skills, needed expanding. For example, both students were restricted in their responses about their reading habits by strict definitions of what they considered "reading." Since the interviews occurred within the context of a reading class, they defined reading as the skills-driven tasks we were completing together in class. This assumption made them discount their comic books and mysteries as unimportant.

As designed, my pilot study completely focused on the skills and strategies students were learning in the class to improve their motivational efforts and virtually ignored the experiences and histories participants brought with them. Ultimately, my research questions needed both expanding and condensing, for I was asking too many disparate questions in my pilot study.

It also became evident that I did not have enough information to create rich data required to address my research questions. I realized as both participants spoke of their work with their group novels that had I missed a chance to include notes from their discussions. Finally, I realized that my interview questions did not help me gather the rich data I was looking for. In fact, it was mostly when I went off-script (and got lucky) that I elicited responses that were longer than my questions.

Methodology

Although my current research focused on one class of 17 students, the study offered three distinct areas for data collection. The first area focused on reading as it is defined through the academic institution. Examining institutional policies, syllabi and exit tests offered me a window into what reading practices "count" in school settings. I also asked students for their reactions to institutionally distributed materials. A second area where I collected data aimed to illustrate the

lived experiences of college students placed in a mandatory reading class. I compiled demographic information, placement and exit tests scores, information from open-ended reading surveys and information from questionnaires to create a rich description of students' reading experiences. Interview data from a smaller number of participants supplemented this group portrait, highlighting specific issues of reading identity. Finally, I used the data from one student as a case study to illustrate the student's ongoing relationship with academic and non-academic reading through the student's first year of college.

Document Analysis

As part of my study, I conducted a document analysis of the mandated syllabus for the reading course. Prior (2003) argued that documents form a distinct field of research. According to Prior, documents are important artifacts because of their dynamic nature; they are "situated objects" and thus defined by their use in a field of action (p. 26). Prior explained, "Every document is packed tight with assumptions and concepts and ideas that reflect on the agents who produced the document, and its intended recipients, as much as upon the people and events reported upon. For what is counted and how it is counted are expressive of specific and distinctive ways of thinking, acting and organizing; documents serve as a two-way mirror on aspects of human culture" (p. 48).

It is important to examine the departmental reading syllabus since it is a document created by the institution to establish classroom expectations. I distribute the departmental syllabus the first class meeting, so it is influential in setting the tone for the class. The content of the syllabus is important, but the context in which the syllabus exists in is equally important. By studying this document, and students' reactions to the document, I hoped to understand how the

language of the syllabus, the requirements, and the formality of policies presented all affected students' perceptions about developmental reading class.

I also examined the COMPASS exit test that students must pass to complete the class. The COMPASS is only administered on a computer. In order to analyze the COMPASS, I audiotaped myself reading aloud each passage as well as its questions. I did not perform a think aloud on this task; rather, I dictated the actual test so that I could examine it further. Published by ACT Educational Resources, the COMPASS is a multiple choice reading comprehension test used by Red Diamond State College as both a placement test and an exit test. The institution requires students to score 80% or above to successfully pass the class. The ACT homepage described the reading test as an effective way to "help determine if students have the skills to succeed in standard entry-level college courses or if they need developmental reading courses or other instructional support" (www.act.org). The COMPASS provided interesting information, as it was a powerful document affecting lives of college students. Prior (2003) suggests examining the document's authors, the document's creation and how its rules are applied. To investigate students' reactions, I audiotaped students and myself working through sample COMPASS passages. Unlike my independent work with the COMPASS, in this session I used think aloud techniques to capture students' experiences. Students' reactions to the COMPASS through close readings of sample passages helped illustrate the document's effect. The syllabus and the COMPASS provided an interesting point of comparison in that analysis suggests how well the objectives listed in the syllabus aligned with the content assessed in the COMPASS.

Interviews

Seidman (2006) argued that interviewing provides researchers with participants' stories, and "stories are a way of knowing" (p. 7). Seidman posited that for educational researchers

hoping to understand students' experiences, understandings, and classroom beliefs, "interviewing may be the best avenue of inquiry" (p. 11). Like Seidman, I believe interviews have a powerful potential for exploring the reading identities of my students; thus, I implemented his three-part structure for in-depth interviewing. Seidman described the first interview as a focused life history. The goal of the initial interview was to have students reconstruct their early experiences with reading in school, in their homes, and within their communities (Appendix A). I asked students to discuss their experiences throughout elementary school, middle school and high school. The second interview, according to Seidman, should address details of the experience. During this interview, I asked students to concentrate on the details of being in Reading 0099; I asked students for their reactions to the syllabus and practice passages similar to the COMPASS test. During the final interview, I asked participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience. My goal in the last interview, which occurred after the course ended, was to explore students' connections between their histories, their classroom experiences and their future goals. Overall, my interview process is best described by Van Manen's (1990) terms as a "vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner about the meaning of an experience" (quoted in Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 190). Initial interviews were conducted the third week of class, the second interview occurred after the midterm week, and the final interview was conducted after the COMPASS exit test and final grades were posted.

Grounded theory methods provided a dynamic set of tools to examine the experiences of students as readers. Specifically, Charmaz (2006) delineated several germane components that I followed. For example, initial codes and categories derived from the participants' interviews instead of a preexisting framework of theories applied to the discussions. I transcribed all interviews in full, and I coded interviews using constant comparative methods. I followed initial

coding with focused coding and theoretical coding attempting to understand relationships that existed within and between students' responses. For example, I noticed after my initial codes that students' descriptions of reading practices performed for school differed from their descriptions of out of school practices. Finally, I created memos describing the families of responses that I noted in my early coding efforts. Described by Charmaz as "the pivotal intermediate step between data collection and writing drafts of papers" (p. 72), memos enabled me to organize my ideas and to understand over-arching themes. One of the first memos pulled together verbs used to describe a personal notion of reading (see Appendix E for memo example).

As a complement to students' interviews, I also examined students' online book group discussions that occurred throughout the semester. Charmaz (2006) explained the importance of supplementing interviews; she wrote, "it (interviews) complements other methods such as observations, surveys, and research participants' written accounts" (p. 28). Students formed groups the third week of class, and they self-selected texts to read and discuss online using eLearning. The discussions provided another lens to examine how students created their reading identities. I examined the transcripts of the three groups' discussions using the same constant comparative methods described above. I coded discussion posts using gerunds that described students' responses, for example, "summarizing text" or "connecting text to movie." From those initial posts, several interesting categories emerged that described students' relationship to their texts.

Case Study

Yin (2009) described the case study method of research as ideal when the researcher desires to understand, "complex social phenomena" (p. 4). My attempts to understand how students perceived themselves as readers and effects of institutionally generated labels around

their reading abilities qualified as a complex intersection worthy of investigation. According to Yin, case studies are preferred when the following criteria are present: (a) research questions are open-ended "how" and "why" type questions; (b) the researcher has little control over the events and situations being investigated; and (c) the focus of the phenomenon exists within a real-life context. Yin explained that investigators of case study realize that the behaviors they are interested in cannot be realistically manipulated; moreover, those behaviors create more areas of interest than can be represented as data points. Therefore, the case study method allowed me to examine students' identities around reading in a college reading class thereby retaining "the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (p. 4).

Since I am teaching the same class I am studying, it is not possible to rely on field notes or participant observations; however, my access to my participants created a wealth of evidence. Yin (2009) explained that converging data was a crucial design feature for "maintaining a chain of evidence" (p. 3). Yin wrote that researchers should select cases for study that best exemplified the research question. Thus, in exploring the intersections between reading identity and college success, I needed a participant whose identities were in conflict; in other words, I needed someone whose personal identity was discordant with his or her developmental education label and struggling reader label. I did not have to look far; Lauren (my case) actually found me on her first day of college. I met Lauren during her first semester as a college student when she enrolled in my Reading 0099 class fall 2009. Lauren approached me after our first class to let me know that she felt she did not "belong" in a reading class; she was a high school honors student. After interviewing Lauren, I decided that she would be an interesting participant for a case study: she expressed feeling ashamed for having to take a developmental reading class; her self-identity of honors student contrasted with the label of "underprepared" the college had assigned her; and she

was willing to allow me to interview her three times during the course of the semester as well as the following semester when she was no longer enrolled in any developmental courses. Yin (2009) stressed the importance of using a variety of evidence types in case study research; hence, my case study examined documents, archival records, interview transcripts and physical artifacts. Along with the course documents and the transcripts from our interviews, I analyzed Lauren's written work in the class including all of her eLearning discussion posts, her self-evaluations, and her test scores.

<div align="center">Research Design</div>

Yin (2009) described the research design as a blue print for any method of inquiry. Given this metaphor, he explained that research questions, propositions, units of analysis, logical links, and criteria for interpretation as important tools for providing a visual of the product to be built. Breaking the findings into three distinct chapters allows the reader to focus on the unique qualities each element brings to the research question. Therefore, chapter four focuses on the institutional instruments of my Reading 0099 course. I examined the formal requirements from the University System of Georgia administrative policies, the Red Diamond State College department syllabus and the COMPASS test to explore how these instruments affected students' perceptions of themselves as readers. Chapter five reports on the collective voices of my participants, and it presents the lived experiences of students who must enroll in a course where their reading abilities have been labeled as inadequate or "underprepared" for the rigors of college reading. Chapter six presents a case study aimed at exploring one student's experience negotiating her own identity as a reader and the effect of the college's labeling of her reading identity.

Site of Research

Red Diamond State College (RDSC) was founded in 1964 to serve the needs of Northeast Georgia students looking for access to higher education. A member of the University System of Georgia (USG), Red Diamond State College is primarily a community college that enrolls close to 9,000 students. In 2004, Red Diamond State opened a satellite campus about six miles from Athens, Georgia, the location of the University of Georgia.

Over 2,000 students attend the satellite campus of Red Diamond State. They are mostly traditional, fulltime students (80%) with an average age of 19.2 years. Because the campus is a nonresidential college, its students generally find housing in the greater Athens area. The culture of RDSC reflects its proximity to UGA. Unlike the students at the main campus, the satellite campus students tend to be less diverse demographically and socioeconomically. The majority of these students are white, middle-class and recent high school graduates from a Georgia high school. The satellite campus provided an interesting site to collect data for many reasons: (a) Students were recent graduates and recalled their early experiences with reading; (b) students were away from home for the first time and they were newly independent; (c) students were entering a new college culture where they were "below" what was expected; and, (d) the researcher was employed by the institution and knew its culture well.

The University System of Georgia (USG) Board of Regents policy manual (2010) defined developmental education programs intended to serve students unprepared for Core Curriculum courses as "Learning Support programs" (LS). Learning Support was further defined as a generic term for programs "designed to prepare students for collegiate work" (BOR Policy Manual 3.3.2). Students place into Learning Support programs when their SAT scores fall below 480 SAT-Verbal or 400 SAT-Mathematics or the comparable ACT scores, or they have not met

College Preparatory Curriculum requirements in English or mathematics. Students who enter below the aforementioned standards must take the appropriate part of the COMPASS to determine LS courses. Students have 12 semester hours or 3 semesters (whichever comes first) to satisfy LS requirements. If students do not complete requirements, students are suspended from all USG colleges for three years.

For Red Diamond State College Fall Semester 2009, nearly 50% of the first time admits required at least one LS course. There were 2,313 new students between two campuses, and 398 of those students required Learning Support Reading (17%). The LS passing rates for those students at the end of the first semester were lowest in Math 0099 (58.7%) followed by Reading 0099 (63.3%) and English 0099 (64.2%).

Participants and Selection

I collected data from 17 students enrolled in my developmental reading class spring semester 2010 at Red Diamond State College. Twelve women and five men comprised my initial class roster. One woman dropped the class during the second week, and three additional students dropped the class at the midpoint. All three were in their second attempt, and all three were failing the class. There were 4 African American students and 13 White students. One student was a non-native speaker of English, and he had recently emigrated from Serbia where his family remained. Eight of these students were making their final attempt to pass Reading 0099, meaning they had previously failed the class or the exit test and were taking the class for a second time. The Board of Regents required the second-attempt students to sign a contract recognizing that they understood that the consequence for failing the class a second time was a three-year suspension from all University System of Georgia Schools. I also had two students who were "volunteers" in the class, meaning they elected to take the course and did not have to take the

COMPASS exit test. The class's average on the COMPASS placement test was 66.2% with a range of 49%-77%. The age range of the class was atypical for my reading classes: four students were enrolled who were over 23 years old, and three of those students were over 50 years old. Five students were also parents and three were grandparents. All participant names are pseudonyms; I either assigned them pseudonyms or participants selected their own pseudonym during our first interview session.

I used a combination of convenience sampling and purposeful sampling to decide which students to ask to interview (Maxwell, 2005). I invited selected participants to interview if descriptive information revealed that students were typical of sub groups within the class and that they were willing to meet three times throughout the semester to be interviewed. I approached students for interviewing through an email invitation. I decided on an email invitation because I wanted the first contact be low-pressure and informal. Since I was the teacher of these students and that relationship affected the data, I thought students might feel freer to decline my invitation through email than they would in a face-to-face meeting. I asked eight students to be interviewed; all showed up for the first interview; five showed for the second, and three for the third.

Case Study. Lauren is an 18-year-old White first-year student who attended one of the local high schools where she was an honors student. In high school, Lauren played soccer and was a cheerleader. In her introduction on eLearning, Lauren wrote that she was close to her family, she liked shopping in Atlanta, and she looked forward to meeting new people. Lauren planned to transfer to University of Georgia as quickly as possible. She still lived at home, but explained that she would move into an apartment once she was accepted at UGA. Lauren enrolled at RDSC on a HOPE scholarship. The HOPE scholarship program awarded students

who resided in Georgia a full tuition scholarship if they maintained a B average. Lauren planned to be a business major, but she could not declare a major until she completed her Learning Support Requirement. Lauren scored a 72% on her COMPASS placement test and her My Reading Lab diagnostic software reported Lauren's Lexile reading level as 8th grade, which was the average reading level for the class.

Instruments

Like Charmaz (2006), Rossman and Rallis (2003) defined descriptive studies as tools for understanding participants and the social phenomena surrounding them. I employed several supplemental instruments to better understand my students:

Reading Interest Inventory. I designed this survey as a way to learn more about the reading practices of my students (Appendix B). Open-ended questions in the survey asked students to describe their early experiences with reading, their strengths as readers, their weaknesses as readers, what they most enjoy reading and what they least enjoy reading. Students completed the surveys during the second class meeting. The document became a part of their reading portfolios that they revisited at midterm and the final week of class.

Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaires (MSLQ). Paul Pintrich developed the MSLQ as a means of measuring students' dynamic motivation and learning strategies across a variety of courses. The 81-item instrument contains two sections: a motivation section consisting of six subscales, and a 19-item section concerning students' resource management skills (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005) (Appendix C). Although the MSLQ was never normed, the authors reported that the MSLQ was well suited to evaluate the effects of courses on student motivation, which constituted the scale's most frequent use in the literature. Coupled with the reading

interest survey, the information from the MSLQ offered a snapshot of students' beliefs about their abilities to succeed in the reading class early in the semester.

Midterm and Exit Surveys. I designed these surveys to elicit student feedback on their ideas about reading as well as specific teaching strategies used in the class (Appendix D). For example, I asked students to discuss their experiences working in groups, discussing ideas in an online format, and active reading comprehension strategies taught during the semester. I distributed the surveys at the midpoint of the class and on the final day of class. For the exit survey, I asked students not to identify themselves. Since I taught the class where I collected data, it was important for me to acknowledge and understand that students may have felt uncomfortable being completely open regarding their classroom experiences. While I understand that an anonymous survey is not a guarantee of honesty, it was an attempt to deal with my dual relationship as teacher and researcher.

Analysis and Interpretation

Rossman and Rallis (2003) discussed the possibilities when qualitative researchers supplement their data with "material culture produced in the course of everyday events" (p. 197). According to Rossman and Rallis, these documents, when analyzed, enrich what is known about the social setting being studied. Through content analysis, the researcher looks for patterns that might suggest important aspects of what is valued and emphasized in a social setting.

Prior (2006) agreed with many of the tenets established by Rossman and Rallis (2003); he argued that content and context are both important dimensions to be examined. He recommended that analysis focus on text, text structure, and the overall organization of the document. He explained, "A focus on the arrangement of the works and sentences and things, has much to recommend it" (p. 25).

I examined the syllabus initially by describing its function as a formal document. Love (2003) recommended making explicit the type of document being examined as well as it creator. Therefore, I noted at the top of the document several a priori dichotomous categories: The document was a primary source because the document's author, the Reading Program Coordinator, was creating first-hand the expectations of the class; it was a solicited document given that the college requires all professors to distribute a syllabus; it was a limited document because it must be supplemented by instructors' more personalized versions; and it was virtually anonymous for my students because they were unfamiliar with its author. After categorizing the type of document I was analyzing, I began a line-by-line coding process that followed Charmaz's (2006) constant comparative method. I coded each line with a gerund aimed at describing the action implied by each sentence or phrase. I compiled codes into secondary codes of family codes and then theoretical codes. Finally, I employed content analysis aimed at describing underlying themes, assumptions, beliefs and meaning-making structures prevalent in the document (Love, 2003).

The institution also requires that students complete both the COMPASS placement and exit tests on a computer; however, ACT does not publish any computerized practices for students or instructors. Several hardcopies of practice tests exist in book form, but it is difficult to assess how well they match up with actual tests. In order to analyze the COMPASS test, I wanted to interact with the test in the same format as my students. Red Diamond State College allowed me to login to the testing site as an instructor to take a practice test. I audiotaped myself taking the COMPASS by reading aloud the passages and the questions. I also spoke aloud my thought processes in order to capture how I approached each question. My rationale for reading aloud was so I could go back and analyze my experience with the COMPASS. Obviously, as a

computerized test, there were not printed records of the passages or questions; thus, I had to rely on my notes to analyze the types of passages and questions I experienced. The testing coordinator reminded me that the COMPASS provides different numbers of passages depending on how well students are progressing. I answered at least one question incorrectly in each of the six passages I received. Through many semesters of student feedback, I know that students can see as few as four passages and as many as nine passages before receiving their scores.

As I analyzed the transcripts from my testing experience, I noted the subjects, structures and lengths of passages, and the numbers and types of questions asked by each passage. I also noted my thoughts and experiences with each passage; for example, I noted words I was unfamiliar with or background knowledge that I did not have.

Finally, I asked five students to follow the same procedures with me in an interview. Since I was not permitted to use the actual computerized COMPASS, I provided students with a COMPASS-like passage from the practice workbook. I audiotaped our interviews, and I worked through those transcriptions in a similar process to the one described above.

The method of analysis I used to examine student interviews follows recommendations from Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), Gillham (2000), and Charmaz (2006). At the completion of each set of interviews, I developed verbatim transcripts. I then examined the transcripts as written documents in a series of steps. First, I read the transcripts in their entirety, and then I re-read to highlight substantive statements (Gillham, 2000). I was especially interested in participants' descriptions of themselves as readers and elements of reading that have affected their beliefs about themselves. I coded data according to recommendations provided by Charmaz (2006). Thus, for initial coding, I read quickly through the data attempting to label the actions suggested in a line-by line format. I used focused coding in the second phase of analysis in order to

"synthesize and explain larger segments of data" (p. 57). My subsequent readings extracted

"meaning units" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) or sets of categories (Gillham, 2000) that seemed

to dominate interviews. Throughout the analysis, I made memos as a way to keep track of my

thoughts as I read and coded my data. Charmaz (2006) explained, "memo-writing provides a

space to become actively engaged in your materials, to develop your ideas, and to fine-tune your

subsequent data-gathering" (p. 72). I consistently examined memos from interviews and

supplemental data, and I compared ideas in order to draw conclusions regarding the research

question (Appendix E).

Yin (2009) recommended many of the same types of exercises in analyzing case study data.

He explained that theory should guide the analysis. I examined all the different types of data I

collected looking for ideas about reading identity and possible effects of institutionally generated

labels of reading attributes. I used both qualitative and quantitative measures to help me create as

full a picture as possible of the single-case I examined. According to Yin, a case-study database

filled with raw data strengthens a researcher's interpretations. Thus, I compiled institutional

documents for University System of Georgia Learning Support Policies, archival records from

my college's Learning Support classes and Lauren's specific records and transcripts in an effort

to allow for "converging lines of inquiry" (p. 115). Pulling all evidence together allowed me to

play with my data.

Implementation Timeline

- Phase one: Collected demographic information, reading interest surveys, MSLQ

  questionnaires; examined departmental syllabus (2-3 weeks).

- Phase two: Identified and invited students to participate in the interviews; conducted a series of 3 interviews with each student (interviews were scheduled week 3, week 7, and week 15).

- Phase three: Transcribed and analyzed the transcripts from the interviews (weeks 3-15).

- Phase four: Analyzed the COMPASS test comparing the test to stated objectives from the departmental syllabus (weeks 16, 17).

- Phase five: Analyzed and interpreted data across all sources and instruments.

- Phase six: Wrote manuscript (weeks 7-32).

Validity and Reliability

Frequently, validity in qualitative research is often assessed through the same positivist criteria used to evaluate quantitative research; hence, the research is described as soft (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). Yet, according to Creswell (1998), "it is virtually impossible to reach consensus" for defining validity in qualitative research (p. 216). Creswell and Miller (2000) identified eight procedures they argued were more appropriate to the diverse methods of qualitative inquiry: (a) prolonged engagement and persistent observation, (b) triangulation, (c) peer review, (d) negative case analysis, (e) clarifying researcher bias, (f) member checks, (g) thick description, and (h) external audits (p. 126-127). Researchers need not use all eight criteria, but they should explicitly deal with at least two (Creswell, 1998). Yin (2009) echoed many of the above strategies in his recommendations for dealing with validity. Like Creswell and Miller (2000), Yin recommended that researchers use multiple sources of evidence, establish evidence chains, employ member checks, use pattern matching, employ logic models, use theory in single-case studies, and follow case study protocols to ensure validity and reliability (p. 41).

To ensure the validity and reliability in my own study, I used many of the aforementioned techniques. Schwandt (2007) defined triangulation as a procedure used to ensure researchers' interpretations and claims are credible. Yin (2009) described the goal of triangulation as a means to "produce multiple measures of the same phenomenon" (p. 117). Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) argued that triangulation in qualitative research demands that researchers make their processes more public. For example, given a constant-comparative method the authors suggested that researchers publish their first stage codes and discuss how those codes led to second-stage patterns or themes and, finally, how those created an interpretation. Additionally, they described a process of matching interview questions with what needs to be known. Documents of this nature provide a trail, an audit trail or "chain of evidence" (Yin, 2009, p. 41), where researchers started and traveled between their findings. All of these processes provide accountability of the researcher. In an attempt to create my own chain of evidence, I created a code map that demonstrated how participants' online discussion transcripts were coded, organized into categories, and interpreted thematically (Appendix F).

The use of multiple sources of data is another tactic to deal with validity (Yin, 2009). In fact, Flick (2007) regarded triangulation as a way of bringing a richer understanding to data; he did not support triangulation as a means of supporting a Truth, but rather as a process of including multiple perspectives. According to Flick, multiple reference points and combinations of methodologies do not create absolute truth, but they do create rich and meaningful data. I pulled many different sources of data in my efforts to examine reading identities. Along with interviews, I used questionnaires, open-ended surveys, online class discussion threads, and participants' written self-evaluations to add "breadth and depth" to my analysis (Flick, 2007, p. 179).

I also used member checking to aid with validity issues where I asked my participants to review the data I complied, the interviews I transcribed, and the interpretations I made.

Researchers Assumptions

I approached my dissertation as the mother of a boy who was diagnosed with dyslexia in the second grade, and as a teacher of college students, mostly young adults, who struggle with certain aspects and expectations of academic reading. In my work with college freshman, I have observed some of the same frustrations as I have with my son. Many of the students who must take a college reading class describe many years of being educated through their weaknesses and many times will use the same labels of the school in their self-descriptions.

Both my vocation and my avocation converged in wanting to understand more about what it means to define oneself as a reader and the effects of the reading label so often placed on students by schools. I am reminded of my son's experience in fourth-grade literature circles. Students were introduced to several different titles and asked to rank the titles in order of their preference. Hampton was not granted any of his choices because the teacher felt he had selected choices that were too difficult for him to read; instead, she assigned him "the stupid picture book about sharks." After I called his teacher and assured her that he could handle Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet,* she allowed Hampton to switch circles. Together we ended up reading the entire series of books around *Hatchet's* main character, and the following Halloween Hampton chose to dress up as Brian for the Storybook Parade at his school. At the risk of being melodramatic, there is a lesson in Hampton's experience. I am sure the shark book would have been easier for Hampton to read; I am sure he would have learned some interesting information; however, I am also sure that it would not have sparked the enthusiasm for reading that Paulsen's survival story did. I

wish also that I could say that experience changed the way my son's education experience progressed.

I consider myself a pragmatic (sometimes too pragmatic) educator. I want my research to have classroom applications—not a manual or rulebook, but implications that would invite my readers (who will most likely be fellow educators) to consider their own pedagogical habits. Really, I imagine my audience to be many of my colleagues who teach college reading but who approach students with a remedial framework. Thus, I'd like my research with students who are in a developmental reading class to emphasize the importance of reading identities, the limitations of approaching students from a remedial mindset where students arrive deficient, broken, and in need of remedy. In addition, I hope to explore the possibilities for students when their experiences with reading become another part of a diverse story.

Conclusions

By using complementing research methods, I hoped to learn far more from this study than was possible in my pilot study. Reading identity, like other identities, is context-dependent, inconsistent, and non-linear. Thus, to better understand this complex notion, I investigated the institutionally mandated course documents. Both the departmental syllabus and the COMPASS exit test provided a framework and bookends for definitions and expectations of students who must enroll in Reading 0099. Additionally, I interviewed students about their experiences as readers as well as their participation in virtual literature circles. Finally, through a case study, I examined the potency of reading identity outside of school. My analysis pointed to the potentially alienating outcomes when students' literacy practices are unrecognized or devalued.

CHAPTER 4

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The formal documents of any class set the tone and expectations of the class for students (Singham, 2005). At many colleges and universities, the first day of class professors provide and students expect detailed syllabi (Perlman & McCann, 1999). Thus, I began the semester at Red Diamond State College Learning Support Reading as I had begun new semesters since beginning my teaching career: I presented the class syllabus. Although I typically design my freshman composition courses using a college-wide template, Learning Support Reading 0099, a developmental education course, requires me to present a standardized departmental syllabus. I can offer suggestions about the syllabus, but I am not its creator.

Typically, I ask students to email me after the first class. This request allows me to know that students' college email accounts work, and that they know how to contact me. I also ask them for an attachment that provides me a brief description of themselves. Twenty minutes after the Reading 0099 class ended, Michael (a pseudonym) sent me the following email. I have included Michael's email verbatim without any corrections in mechanics.

Hello Ms. Campbell, this is Michael from your Tuesday/Thursday class @ 10:00 AM. This letter is regarding why I believe I don't belong in this class. I understand that all students that perform poorly on the Reading portion of the Compass test must take this class, but I know that I do not belong here. During tests of all sorts I get nervous for whatever reason. Doesn't matter if I studied studiously or not at all I always get somehat nervous. And the compass test was no exception. I was litterly 1 or 2 points away from

passing but my anxiety got the better of me and thus I failed. I know that I am a great

reader and do not belong in this class. I love to read and more importantly know how to

read at a college level and I say again that I shouldn't be in this class. If I didn't have this

ludacris problem I am 100% sure that I would have passed that test with flying colors. I

just don't want to take a class that will be a waste of time of me.

All I am asking is if you can do anything about this. I'm not saying that your a terrible

teacher and I want to get the heck out of the class because of you but I am merely

wanting to get out simply because the class will not benefit me.

Thank You,

Michael's email stung me. Had I communicated in my perfunctory explanation of the

required syllabus that the class was only suited for students who were bad readers and did not

love reading? How did his experience with the COMPASS placement test reinforce his ideas of

"college level reading?" What was in these two documents that led Michael to decide he did not

belong in our class?

Singham (2005) explained that the syllabus often creates an inhospitable environment

that dehumanizes students. "It is likely that the authoritarian syllabus is just the visible symptom

of a deeper underlying problem" (p. 82). With Michael's reactions in mind, the purpose of this

chapter is to investigate the effects of institutional documents like the departmental syllabus and

the institutionally required COMPASS Test at creating a definition of reading and the identity of

readers. How do these documents affect students' expectations of reading and their identification

as readers?

Prior (2003) argued that documents form a distinct field of research. According to Prior,

documents are important artifacts because of their dynamic nature; they are "situated objects"

and thus defined by their use in a field of action (p. 26). Prior explained, "Every document is packed tight with assumptions and concepts and ideas that reflect on the agents who produced the document, and its intended recipients, as much as upon the people and events reported upon. For what is counted and how it is counted are expressive of specific and distinctive ways of thinking, acting and organizing; documents serve as a two-way mirror on aspects of human culture" (p. 48). Rossman and Rallis (2003) also discussed the possibilities when qualitative researchers supplement their data with "material culture produced in the course of everyday events" (p. 197). According to Rossman and Rallis, these documents when analyzed enrich what is known about the social setting being studied.

Love (2003) also described the importance of using document analysis on college campuses. He argued, "when conducting qualitative research in a collegiate environment with the goal of understanding something about student, faculty, academic, or administrative life, failure to include document analysis may indeed be leaving a gap in the ability to fully understand the issue or question at hand" (p. 84). He recommended that researchers combine *a priori* categorizing, coding, and content analysis to understand relationships and interconnectedness between documents and the people who use them.

<center>Departmental Reading 0099 Syllabus</center>

Many educators and researchers have described how to design an effective syllabus (e.g., McKeachie, 1986). Matejka and Kurke (1994) argued that the syllabus requires forethought so that professors design a powerful document. They explained that the syllabus functioned as a contract, a communication device, a plan of action, and a cognitive map for students. Additionally, they described a syllabus as "preventative medicine" (p. 116) that should impress students with professional looking fonts, layouts, and language. Parkes and Harris (2002) added

that the syllabus functions as a permanent record providing accountability and documentation. Similarly, syllabi provide students on-going support that assist them in becoming more responsible learners.

While the literature is replete with syllabus "how-tos" and "whys", little has been investigated about the effects of syllabi on students themselves (Parkes & Harris, 2002). Smith (1993) offered students tips for keeping up with their syllabi, Raymark and Connor-Greene (2002) suggested that a syllabus quiz would be a catalyst for students to read and refer to their syllabus, and Becker and Calhoon (2000) documented which elements students attended to on a course syllabus.

Clearly, distributing a course syllabus on the first day is widely practiced; indeed, Perlman and McCann (1999) reported a majority of the students (72%) they surveyed desired a detailed syllabus. Thompson (2007) explored teachers' communication styles when distributing the syllabus. Although she examined how instructors' presentation styles may communicate differently with students (e.g. welcoming vs. punitive or negotiating power), her study, however, included only interviews with instructors about their syllabi. The study did not investigate students' perceptions as part of the data collection.

As an instructor of the Reading 099 classes, I am required by the department to distribute the Reading Departmental Syllabus (Appendix G). This requirement is important enough to the college and department that all instructor evaluations ask students if they were given a copy of the departmental syllabus. Although I did not create the document, I have provided comments to the author, and I have asked to make a few minor adjustments from time to time. For example, I generally only use three comprehension tests in contrast to the four tests listed on the syllabus.

The document itself is a three-page single-spaced 10-point font syllabus. As previously mentioned, it is given on the first meeting day of any Learning Support class; moreover, it is put on shared class file and eLearning so that students may access it online should they need another copy. The syllabus is meant as a contract, and in that sense, it is binding to both students and instructors. The Reading 0099 Departmental syllabus is divided into seven sections: general course information, required texts, course description, course objectives, course outline, course grading, and course policies.

I examined the text structure and layout of the syllabus, the diction, the pronoun use, the sentence or phrase structures in the document, and the imagery and symbolism implied by the document. Four themes emerged from my analyses that were important for exploring students' experiences with reading and their perceptions of themselves as weak in-school readers. Specifically, the departmental syllabus relied on a formal and rigid structure; it empowered a nameless omnipotent authority; its images depicted readers as underperforming and trapped; and it created strict definitions for what counts as reading.

Formal Rigid Structure

The text functions (e.g., font styles, page placement), language-use, and appearance of the departmental syllabus all helped to create a formal, authoritative document. The college's name was centered in all capital letters at the top of the document indicating its position as fully sanctioned resource. Furthermore, Roman numerals organized the headings and subheadings of the document; thus the document actually appeared as a formal outline. The headings were all capital letters, bolded font, and underlined; subheadings were bold as well. Whereas most of the information presented appeared as bulleted phrases, existing sentences were short, staccato and terse. For example, the attendance policy subheading contained the following sentences:

"Attendance at all scheduled classes is expected. The student must adhere to the established attendance policy."

Nameless Omnipotent Authority

DiClementi and Handelsman (2005) explained that an extremely formal syllabus might communicate a rigidity that discourages students from seeking assistance. The Reading syllabus' diction presented limited control for students. For example, "specific details of this syllabus may be subject to change" appeared centered in bold font on the top of page one and at the bottom of page three. Language in the syllabus warned students that aspects of the document may change at the whim of the, unknown, document's creator. Secondly, passive voice dominated the document: "make-up work will be allowed," "completion is required," and "Compass Exam will be given" were typical phrases occurring throughout the document. The structure of these types of phrases delegated power to an unknown, unnamed being. Students unfamiliar with the workings of higher education may feel unsure of how to get assistance when needed.

Pronoun use also positioned students as passive participants in the course; the document was nearly devoid of any personal pronouns. Students were repeatedly referred to using third person ("the student") throughout the document, never calling them "you." Moreover, in the three-page document, the instructor as a person was only referred to three times. Two times the instructor was mentioned as one who gives a verbal warning for a cell phone going off in class, and once as someone whose discretion will govern student make-up work.

Finally, many phrases lacked any specific subjects; rather, interestingly, reading was anthropomorphized as the subject. For example, "READ 0099 carries four hours of institutional credit," or "READ 0099 is designed to help the student."

Image of Underperforming Student who is Trapped

Many of the words used to describe Reading 0099 literally and symbolically communicated to students that they were underperforming. For example, six out of 10 course objectives were worded "to increase;" obviously the implication with the word implied that students were deficient in these six areas and needed to increase their skills. In addition, several of the objectives stated that the class would affect their "ability" to be better readers. Objectives stated the class would "increase ability" and "develop ability." Students often enter the reading class unsure about their in-school literacy practices. The repetitive use of "abilities" throughout the document may reinforce students' insecurities.

Additionally, one section of the syllabus was devoted to "EXIT requirements" reinforcing ideas that students were trapped by the class and if they did not perform well, they would be unable to successfully exit the class. Interestingly, the word "EXIT" was used eight times. Moreover, each time the word "exit" was used it appeared in all capital letters and bold font. Visually, the word exit commanded more attention than any other single word in the document.

Finally, the last page of the document was devoted to Learning Support policies and a disruptive behavior policy. Although Roman numerals were not used, the diction in several places took on a legalistic tone. Described by Habanek (2005) as legalese, the short choppy sentences of the first two pages became longer and wordier. For example, "Students who are required to take any Learning Support courses must enroll in said courses before enrolling in any college credit courses." The obvious switch in writing style suggested that a faceless governing authority, the Learning Support Department, had labeled students as deficient, and it would monitor and assess when students were strong enough readers for the rigors of college.

Strict Definitions for what Counts as Reading

Word count is another way of examining a document (Prior, 2003). In Red Diamond State College's Reading 0099 syllabus, several words occurred frequently. Aside from articles and prepositions, "read" or "reading" occurred the most, 25 times, throughout the document; however, read or reading was only used as a verb once. Reading as an adjective, "reading problems, reading skills, reading comprehension," was used 13 times while reading, as a noun, existed 11 times. Examining the way reading was used suggested that reading was seldom an action; rather, it was a descriptor of students' weaknesses or a class they must take. Additionally, the notion of reading for enjoyment only appeared once as a supplementary project an instructor may assign. "Skills" was the next most frequently used word appearing 13 times throughout the syllabus. Again, the word was nearly always paired with reading, vocabulary or comprehension and was followed by the verb needed. For instance, "It is mandated for students whose previous academic record, admissions test scores, and/or placement test scores indicate the need for additional preparation in reading comprehension, retention, and vocabulary skills needed for college –level texts." The statement communicated the idea that low test scores rendered students unprepared for the comprehension, memory, and vocabulary required in the rigors of college reading. For students, the phrases implied that reading was comprised of certain skills, but they lacked those skills needed to be *good* college readers.

The course description itself also emphasized a narrow definition of reading. "READ 0099 is designed to help the student acquire skills needed to read textbooks, periodicals, and class assignments with reasonable speed, greater comprehension, and increased retention." The description of student resources similarly reflected reading as a set of unmastered skills. The

syllabus suggested that students who had "reading problems" should seek further assistance through computerized programs and books available from the reference librarian.

Students' Perceptions

DiClementi and Handelsman (2005) are two of the few researchers to investigate students' perceptions of the class and the teacher based on their reactions to the syllabus. For example, they explained that students might use the syllabus to evaluate instructors' characteristics such as availability and approachability. They hypothesized students may engage less with a class they perceived as overly formal and rigid. In an experimental design, they investigated students in two introductory psychology classes. In the experimental class, students collaborated to generate their own class rules; the control group was given the set of rules by the instructor. Data were collected and compared from questionnaires using a Likert scale. The results supported the authors' hypothesis that fewer rule violations occurred when students felt a sense of control over their environment. Therefore, the authors concluded, "feeling comfortable in an environment and having a sense of control over their experiences may enhance students' investment in the class" (p. 20). The formal syllabus I examined offered students little control over their environment; instead, the document emphasized how little autonomy students maintained. Instead, the diction stressed instructors' discretion and an omnipotent standardized test.

The students I interviewed had similar reactions to the syllabus. Michael's initial half-joking response when I asked him about reading the syllabus seemed to reverberate throughout participants' reactions.

Well, I try to read the whole thing but you know well in high school whenever you got a syllabus the teacher always read the whole thing so it's kinda weird cause it like trained me not to read it, but I try to read it now but ah… I usually just flip to find the grading.

When I asked students what struck them about the departmental syllabus, they all immediately responded about the grading.

JBC: Take a look, what sticks out for you?

Nikki: Um, usually when I get one of these, I look how everything is going to be graded. What are my weaknesses? What am I going to have to put more time in and so I look at the grading and see how everything is going to be broken apart.

Karen: I look toward the grading and the percentages because that really determines how I do in the class. Like what I have to pay attention to in the class and focus more of my attention on.

JBC: So, where does this tell you to put your focus on?

Karen: hm, well, on comprehension like the tests and stuff and you know I'm not that good at that so yeah I need to focus there and um, well, my struggles have always been in reading and so it's going to help me understand better, yeah.

Secondly, all participants remarked on the emphasis of the COMPASS Exit Test throughout the syllabus.

Nikki: Um, when I read it, it scared me about the COMPASS test cause if I don't pass it, then I have to take this class over and it's like no I don't want to take this class over-no, no, no.

Michael: I also look at the COMPASS score (laughs) so I know what to get this time and not miss it by one point (laughs again).

None of my students mentioned that they felt that the syllabus was overly intimidating regarding the COMPASS exit test. On the contrary, Evelyn remarked that she was glad for the "serious" tone. She explained, "If you're not anxious, you might not do good you're like it's just another class if you're nervous about it you actually have the drive—I think it's good to have a little nervous and a little scared on the first day because it makes you do good the rest of the semester."

Lastly, Karen and Michael both noticed and pointed out the punitive nature of the boldfaced font. Michael remarked that after flipping through for the grading and COMPASS requirements, he scanned for the bold faced words because they let you know "how to avoid getting in or out (laughs) of trouble. Like you want to turn that cell phone off." Karen focused more on how the policies differed from high school. She explained that all the college policies were so much more "harsh."

> I noticed how it was different from high school, cause like attendance if you missed a class in high school they would give you a day like to make up your test and if you miss it in here you don't get to take it unless it's like an excuse or something like that um. . . and then the attendance if you miss so many days in this class you are missing so much stuff so that's what stood out for me most.

Ultimately, my students viewed the syllabus as a type of institutional contract where teachers (in high school) and professors (in college) tell them what they have to do and how they will be graded. When I asked students what they might change, none had any suggestions. Karen remarked, "It's fine I mean it's just the syllabus and it just kind of maps it out, what were going to do next and that kind of stuff; it's not going to be a surprise or anything like that."

Conclusions

My students expected a class syllabus, and they expected their professors to use specific language in their presentation of classroom rules. My students have 12 years of experience in *doing* school. They know the rules of school engagements: teachers give assignments, teachers grade assignments, and teachers enforce rules. They did not mention the formality of the document; they did not question the rhetoric of the syllabus; and often they welcomed the heavy-handed tone of the document. Yet, I cannot help but restate Singham's (2005) earlier admonition; perhaps the syllabus is just a visible sign, albeit a welcomed sign, of "a deeper underlying problem" (p. 82).

Despite University System of Georgia's definition of Learning Support as a generic term for students who required further support before enrolling in core classes, Red Diamond State College's Reading 0099 syllabus communicated a remedial notion of students as readers. According to the syllabus and students themselves, they lacked the skills and the abilities needed to be successful with college reading. Moreover, if students wanted to "fix" their ailing reading comprehension, they had to "focus" on the areas that carried the most weight in the grading percentages.

<div align="center">COMPASS Exit Test</div>

American College Testing Program (ACT) designed the COMPASS, the computer-adaptive placement assessment and support system, as a tool to help colleges place students into college courses (Commander, Cotter, & Callahan, 2003). The computerized test administers questions based on students' answers; therefore, the number of passages and questions students receive is determined by their performance on early questions.

Because ACT charges the college for every test administered, I had to get permission to take the test. The COMPASS is a unique test for each student, so each student's experience and types of passages will vary. I completed six different passages each with five questions. It took me 18 minutes to work through the test reading passages and questions. In order to examine the COMPASS test, I read each passage and question aloud, and I audiotaped my session. I purposely missed one question on each passage, so I scored 86% on my test; hence, I would successfully exit Reading 0099.

The COMPASS is structured so that before each passage the screen displays a focused-reading question, the source from which the reading passage was pulled, and the author, copyright date, and publisher. COMPASS directions explained that this open-ended question at the beginning of the passage is designed, "to help you focus your reading." The passages appeared on the left side of the computer screen, and the questions appeared one-at-a-time on the right side of the screen. The passages were similar lengths about 250 words. Commander, Cotter, and Callahan (2003) explained that students could expect passages from textbooks, essays, journals, and magazines "commonly used in entry-level college courses" (p. 201). COMPASS passages included excerpts from practical reading (everyday situations and experiences), humanities, fiction, social sciences, and natural sciences. According to the directions, each passage contained five test questions. Three of the five questions asked for information directly stated in the passage (referring items) and two posed questions not directly stated (reasoning items). It was not possible to advance to the next passage without answering every question and questions could not be previewed nor skipped.

Five of the six passages I received were non-fiction passages. Passage one contrasted Aztec and Spanish beliefs about bathing; passage two explained the inadequate medical

knowledge in the U.S. during the Civil War; passage three described Xajkali architecture; passage four explained deep-sea bacteria; passage five described the difficulties for accurately mapping the surface of the Earth; and passage six was an excerpt from a work of fiction about two apprentices, Summerwishes and Mushroom, who were on a steamboat on the Yangtze River.

As per Commander, Cotter and Callahan's (2003) description, I received five questions for each passage. By far the majority of questions (56%) were literal details that asked me to look back in the passage for the correct answer. For example, "How does the Aztec opinion of bathing differ from that of the Spanish?" There were six inference questions and most of them occurred in the fictional last passage of the test. For example, "What is the relationship between the two women who happen to meet in the morning?" Five vocabulary in context questions appeared and two main idea questions were asked.

The background knowledge required to jump from various cultures, eras in history, and scientific areas was amazing. I teach students to activate prior knowledge before beginning with informational text. Given my own background, I had nothing to activate for three of the six passages. The specificity and unfamiliar vocabulary contained within each passage also surprised me; almost every passage contained a word I had never seen and that I had difficulty pronouncing. For example, passage three focused on a specific type of southwestern architecture called Xajkali that I struggled to pronounce and visualize. The Civil War passage, where I felt I was on more familiar footing, described several types of bacterial infections that I had no knowledge of.

My students were easily intimidated by difficult vocabulary. In fact, it was common for students to identify problems with vocabulary as one of their major reading weaknesses on their

Reading Interest Inventory. For example, three of my students this semester answered the question, "What tends you give you a hard time when you read?" in the following ways:

"Words that are difficult for me to pronounce and their meaning is hard"

"Reading big words hurts me"

"I'm slow at reading and can't say alot [sic] of words."

Therefore, the COMPASS passages may have exacerbated students' already low confidence by presenting passages laden with difficult vocabulary. Although students may define themselves as readers away from school expectations, the appearance of unfamiliar words threatened their confidence about their abilities to succeed. Beth's response about herself as a reader demonstrated the tension created when students encountered vocabulary issues. "I think, I struggle, understanding more advanced readings because I feel I do not have a strong enough vocabulary to really get it, all that it is saying to me, I mean."

Student Perceptions

ACT does not publish any computerized sample COMPASS tests; therefore, students must use other publishers and resources to find sample passages and questions. Although many instructors, including myself, have developed unofficial practice exercises for the COMPASS test, the syllabus recommended Chart Your Success on the COMPASS *(*Commander, Cotter & Callahan, 2003*)* as a supplemental text for student practice. I printed a passage from the practice workbook to use with students in a read and think aloud session as a part of the final interview meeting (Appendix H). I asked students to describe for me their thoughts before they began a standardized reading test, during their reading of the passage, and as they worked through the questions. The practice passage we worked with had similar characteristics to the COMPASS: the excerpt started with a focus question, author, and copyright information; the social science

excerpt was 225 words; and there were five questions. Unlike the actual COMPASS, however, only two of the questions on the passage were literal detail questions (referring items). The other three questions, best title, main idea, and pattern of organization, were reasoning items.

Similar to the COMPASS passages I worked on, our practice passage centered on a topic that few students have studied before. The excerpt, pulled from a textbook *Physical Science: An Integrated Approach* (Roy, 1991), presented students with a theory of the interdependence of early economics and writing. The authors explained that a system of tokens and clay balls called bullae represented early bills of lading. They linked the early symbols used in trading with the eventual alphabet and spread of written language. In approaching the passage with students, I began by asking students how they approached a high-stakes test. Participants and I then read the opening material aloud, and I asked them about their thoughts. We continued to read and think aloud three times during the 225-word passage. After the passage, I asked students to work through the questions continuing to think aloud.

Students' descriptions of their thoughts when initially engaging with a standardized test were similar. Participants described the nervous anticipation they experienced when beginning the test. Several students mentioned their anxiety, Evelyn explained, "Initially I have high anxiety, so I do some deep breathing and I try not to worry." Likewise, Michelle remarked, "I'm sweating from the minute the teacher pulls out the stack of tests. I'm usually in the front row so I try to remind myself that I will get to pass off all but one of the tests." Another student, Karen, described the paralyzing fear and voice of doubt that she battles before a big test:

What do I think? Man, I think how much is there to this? Man, this is long. I am just

feeding my worry, see. How can I ever do this I know I can't do this, I think I can't

remember everything, that's what I think oh what am I going to do I have to pass this

class I can't fail this.

Other students described flipping through the passages to figure out "how hard it is" and "how long it is" before getting started. Michelle reported that she flipped through passages when she felt "scared" by a passage. When I asked Michelle what she meant by "get scared," she elaborated, "you know, words I don't know. I'll flip to an easier thing first." Although all the participants I interviewed either mentioned flipping through the entire test or demonstrated their actions "I do like this" at the onset of a big test, this action is not possible with the computerized COMPASS test. The computer does not allow students to preview any material; instead, they must work through each passage and each question in sequence.

Reading and thinking aloud with participants also revealed several strategies for understanding the passage while they read. As we read and paused at different points to discuss what participants were thinking, participants utilized several different active reading strategies such as predicting, visualizing, restating and inferring. After we read the open-ended purpose-setting question, I asked participants, "What's going through your head now?" Most participants began by predicting what the passages would contain. Evelyn explained, "I'm wondering what, how did the use of tokens (pauses) well of course I know it's going to be about writing. How did the use of tokens influence the development of writing? What are tokens?"

As we read through the passage students also explained what they were visualizing as we read. Michelle responded, "I'm thinking of an abacus, I don't know, I may be way off." Similarly, Beth mentioned seeing the inventory or bill of sale. "Oh, like it's like a receipt only it's on a piece of clay, and it's got pictures like sheep and jugs and fish. It did say fish, right?" By far the most common strategy students reported using while they read was restatement or

summary. Several times when we paused and I queried students, they reread the section of the passage to themselves. Many times I had to remind participants, "let me hear those thoughts— you're having thoughts right now—try and speak what you're thinking." Nikki's response best demonstrated participants' attempts to put the passage into their own words:

> I'm thinking, uh, that this, uh, (long pauses as she is rereading to herself) I need to go back and be for sure, and so I'm not sure but I think that these olden days people needed to keep track of the stuff, uh, commodities, they're sending in ancient Israel or some other where, uh, like that and then the people that get it check to make sure they got what they sent for.

Finally, students attempted to infer or draw conclusions about the passage. As we got close to the end of the passage, Evelyn started laughing aloud and muttering "oh my, my." I asked her about her reaction, "What makes you go 'a ha' and clap your hands? What makes you have that reaction?" Evelyn explained while chuckling, "I'm thinking that these people finally got smart. They started putting it on paper and they're progressing because they realize one paper is much better than tokens that can break and have pictures. I mean what if like me they can't draw and the sheep looks like a cow and so I'm thinking, yeah, they finally got smart."

Participants dealt with the passages' five questions differently. Three of the five questions for this passage were reasoning items that asked students to identify the best possible title, the main idea, and paragraph organization; the two referring items asked about the stage of writing where merchants made token marks and why merchants used bullae. Michael, for the most part, relied on memory to answer the questions. He read through answer choices and answered the question from his memory of the passage. Several times I asked him "When you get a question like that what's your strategy? How do you pick an answer?" He felt that the

correct answers were "obvious" and he "just remembered what he read." Michelle, on the other hand, described a different method. "See, it just takes me a long time because I always go back. I'm a slow one," she said while she flipped the paper several times between the passage on the front side and the questions on the back. Evelyn and Karen answered some of the questions without looking back, but explained that they looked for "clue phrases" or "actual words" to help them answer questions. Finally, Nikki talked about reading the question and all its possible answers before referring back to the passage. She said, "sometimes I just read the question and all the possible answers first and then I go back to the text, I'll do better, so, uh, the main idea, I'd have to say it's, maybe, A?"

Students' work with the questions demonstrated their notion that good readers somehow just magically know the answers. Michelle's technique of looking-back indicated to students that they were slow and did not comprehend what they read the first time through. Nikki never trusted her interpretation of the passage or question, so she read every possible answer attempting to weigh the likelihood of each response. Again, students' beliefs that good readers just comprehend everything they read perpetuated participants' self-doubts when they were unsure of an answer.

<center>Conclusions</center>

For developmental reading students, the placement test and syllabus foreshadowed what students could expect from "college type" reading. Specifically, students who applied to college with low admission scores first experienced college reading through the COMPASS test-- a test that undeniably depicted reading as a series of textbook type excerpts with difficult discipline-specific vocabulary and an array of disparate topics. During their first class meeting, students

experienced the Learning Support Department syllabus that reinforced a skills-dependent view of reading where they were many times and in many ways reminded that they were deficient.

Interestingly, many of the focus areas of the Reading 0099 class according to the syllabus were not included in the COMPASS exit test. For example, of the 10 stated course objectives, five were not required in the passages presented by the test. Additionally, the last course test students took in Reading 0099 before taking the COMPASS focused on graphic materials, purpose and tone, facts and opinions, and figurative language, none of which were tested by COMPASS.

The Learning Support Reading class, by design, aims to prepare students not only for COMPASS Exit exam, but also to "enhance student academic success" (Reading 0099 Syllabus). Yet, no course objectives addressed other areas students may need for academic success, such as time management issues or technology needs like access and training. Thus, both formal documents greeted students as deficient readers and perhaps created a tone similar to the one Michael described on his first day of college where students were exiled from college level courses because they lacked the skills and abilities of good readers.

CHAPTER 5

PORTRAIT OF READING 0099 EXPERIENCES

My research goals centered on exploring the reading identities of students whom the University System of Georgia (USG) has classified as underprepared college readers. I investigated my reading participants across a variety of reading contexts in order to explore the interconnected strands that comprise reading identity. Compton-Lily (2009) wrote, "personal and shared histories as readers, past successes, shared understandings about the uses and purposes of texts, current struggles and accomplishments as well as official criteria for reading competence contribute to the ways people identify themselves as readers" (p. 36). Similarly, Rymes (2001) explained that, "identity and attitudes toward school are not only created by individuals, but are also facilitated, 'coauthored,' by society, policy makers, institutions, peers, and teachers through interaction" (p. 162). In the previous chapter, I discussed the implications for students when strict school definitions of reading were communicated to students through officially sanctioned documents. In this chapter, I examine students' perceptions of themselves as readers both in school-centered contexts and out-of-school contexts.

Reading 0099 Participants

My participants were a collection of 17 "underprepared" students whose reading habits put them at risk of failing out of college. First, their applications to Red Diamond State College were flagged by their low (or missing) entrance exams. Second, their required COMPASS Placement Test reading scores fell below 80%. Fifty percent of my students were making their final attempt to pass Learning Support Reading, meaning they faced mandatory system-wide

expulsion if they did not pass the class with a 70% and earn 80% on the COMPASS Exit Test.

The group's earlier average score on the COMPASS Placement Test was 66.3%. The diagnostic

Lexile Framework test suggested that, on average, participants read on a 7th grade reading level

(range of 5th grade-12th grade). One of the students never reported to class; three students

dropped the class at midterm, and three additional students quit attending class in the weeks just

prior to the final exam. Thus, nine of the original 17 students (50%) qualified to sit for

COMPASS Exit Test. For the nine students who took the COMPASS exit test, all but one

passed. The following table describes the 17 participants' diagnostic test scores (COMPASS

placement and Lexile reading scores), prior attempts in Reading 0099, and their outcome in the

class.

Table 1

Participants' Descriptive Information

Pseudonym	COMPASS Placement	Lexile Diagnostic	# of attempts	COMPASS EXIT Test	Outcome
Beth	63	1190	1	did not sit	suspended
Michael	69	1130	1	85	passed
Nikki	69	830	1	78	suspended
Laura	67	635	1	84	passed
Cora	72	925	0	did not sit	failed class
Jaycee	59	890	1	did not sit	dropped class
Slasher	76	995	0	88	passed
Karen	56	830	1	87	passed
Allie	49		1	did not sit	dropped class
Thomas	62	1130	1	did not sit	dropped class
Evelyn	NR	1130	0	exempt	passed
Jack	58		1	did not sit	dropped class
Michelle	NR	1205	0	exempt	passed
Vickie	76	860	1	did not sit	suspended
Sylvester	77	1130	1	did not sit	dropped class
Serge	71	1190	0	81	passed
Megan	70	635	1	did not sit	suspended

Examining participants as numbers produced by their reading tests often provided a limited understanding of students' reading practices; in fact, looking beyond these numbers suggested a much more complicated notion of reading and what it meant to be a reader. Therefore, along with the quantitative data presented above, I collected information from participants through Likert scale surveys, open-ended questionnaires, online discussion threads, and semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The purpose of this chapter is to argue for a more complex reading identity than the "reader/ non-reader" binary so often created through high-stakes reading comprehension tests. The qualitative methods I use in my analysis provide a perspective on the dynamic, complicated dimensions of what it means to be a reader in a developmental reading class in college. In the following sections, I discuss the data collected through several varied instruments. First, I describe the instrument, then I provide verbatim examples of participants' responses, and, finally, I discuss key points suggested by participants' responses.

Data Collection Instruments

Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)

Paul Pintrich and William McKeachie developed the MSLQ in the late 1980's as an instrument to help improve postsecondary teaching and learning (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005). The full questionnaire is an 81-item self-report instrument that contains a motivation section and a learning strategies section. Items are scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all true of me) to 7 (very true of me). There are 15 scales on the MSLQ; six scales comprise the motivation section while nine scales comprise the learning strategies section. Duncan and McKeachie (2005) reported that the scales might be used either together or singly. Additionally, the authors wrote that the course-level design of the MSLQ prohibited them from developing norms for the

instrument; however, they explained local norms would be an appropriate calculation for comparative purposes within an institution or between instructors.

I administered the 31-item (6 scales) motivational section of the MSLQ to students on our second class meeting (*N*=16). According to Duncan and McKeachie (2005), the motivational scales build on value components, expectancy beliefs, and affect ideas. Value components (intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, and task value) determine reasons students attempt academic tasks and the value they place in those tasks. Expectancy beliefs measured by two scales (self-efficacy and control of learning beliefs) assess students' perceptions around their abilities to be successful in the class, and affect (test anxiety) measures students' fears taking exams. Students completed the MSLQ in about 10 minutes. I calculated mean scores for each MSLQ subscale per participant. For example, a participants' task value score (items 4, 10, 17, 23, 26, 27) was computed by adding the six scores and taking their average. I then computed a class average for each scale by summing participants' averages and dividing by the number of responses (*N* = 16). The following table provides a description of each of the six scales, the items comprising that scale, and the class average for that scale. Following the table, I provide a brief discussion for participants' responses on each of the three motivational components described above.

Table 2

MSLQ Motivation Section Scales and Descriptives

Scale	Items in scale	*M* (Range)
Intrinsic Goal Orientation	1, 16, 22, 24	5.50 (3.50 - 7)
Extrinsic Goal Orientation	7, 11, 13, 30	6.06 (3.50 - 7)
Task Value	4, 10, 17, 23, 26, 27	5.61 (3.66 - 7)
Control of Learning	2, 9, 18, 25	5.76 (4.25 – 7)
Self-efficacy	5, 6, 12, 15, 20, 21, 29, 31	5.80 (4.00 – 7)
Test Anxiety	3, 8, 14, 19, 28	6.16 (2.40 – 7)

Value Components

According to the MSLQ authors, the three scales comprising the value components (intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, and task value) are based on achievement goal theory and expectancy value theory (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005). Theorists define goals as "the objectives or intended outcomes of planned sequences of behavior" (Brophy, 2004. p. 7). Typically, goal theorists describe goals as either intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic goals, often linked to the Self-determination Theory (SDT) of Deci and Ryan (1985), are those that students set because they want to; the only reward needed is the spontaneous interest and enjoyment experienced (Deci, Ballerand, Pelletier, and Ryan, 1991). Extrinsic goals focus on material rewards associated with successful learning experiences, such as good grades, money from parents, scholarships, etc. (Brophy, 2004). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), SDT also

assumes that individuals have innate desires to develop a unified self; additionally, SDT posits that elements of an individual's social context can bolster or thwart this process. Thus, SDT predicts a whole host of outcomes depending on the social context of an individual.

In the three subscales that comprise Value Component, my participants' scores in extrinsic goal orientation were highest. In other words, although the ranges for students' scores were similar for all three scales, students reported they were more likely to be motivated by making good grades and approval from family and peers than a personal mastery of course content or belief that the class content was useful beyond the scope of the semester.

Several reasons may explain participants' low Task Value (TV) scores. The class does not "count" towards college credit hours, and it does not transfer to other institutions. Moreover, the grades students earn in Learning Support classes are not calculated in students' grade point averages (GPA's). The message that the class does not matter may influence how students value the class's content. In addition, low TV scores implied that course content deemed valuable by the institution was not necessarily shared by participants.

Expectancy Beliefs

Students' perceptions that they were capable of achieving success through their personal effort and skill, as opposed to luck or a good teacher, was measured through two subscales (Control of Learning and Self-efficacy). Pintrich (1995) described control beliefs as Self-regulated Learning (SRL); Pintrich explained, "Self-regulated learning involves the active, goal-directed, self-control of behavior, motivation, and cognition for academic tasks by an individual student" (p. 5). Self-efficacy as a construct of academic motivation derives from Bandura's social cognitive research that argues that achievement works in concert with a person's belief that he/she can succeed at a given task (Bandura & Barbaranelli, 1996). According to Schunk

(2003), "those who feel efficacious for learning or performing a task participate more readily, work harder, persist longer when they encounter difficulties, and achieve at a higher level" (p. 161). My students' scores on these two subscales suggested that, at least on the second day of class, they were confident in their abilities to be successful. The ranges for control beliefs and self-efficacy were the smallest of all subsets indicating that not one of the 16 students averaged less than four in these areas.

Additionally, participants' responses suggested a schism between Task Value (TV) for the class and Self-efficacy (SE) or belief in oneself. Participants' rated Task Value, quite low; however, Self-efficacy subscales, beliefs in students' ability to accomplish a task, ranked much higher. In fact, nine participants' mean scores for Self-efficacy were an entire point higher than their Task Value scores. It would appear that while participants believed in their abilities to understand the material and skills required for the class, they did not necessarily believe the content or skills taught in the class was important or useful to learn.

Affect

MSLQ authors described the affect component as responses regarding students' worry and concern over exam situations (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005). Many researchers have reported on the debilitating effects of test-anxiety (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2006). Studies with college students often report that students' abilities to manage test anxiety significantly predict their success in the course (Keski & Erdogan, 2009). Students' scores on the test anxiety scale indicated that they do struggle with worries and fears associated with taking exams. The wide range of scores in this scale belied the fact that aside from two students who reported being relatively unconcerned with test taking, the majority of students scored well above six in this area.

Comparing MSLQ scores with other samples

As mentioned previously, there are no national norms published for the MSLQ; however, the instrument has been used widely across many contexts (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005). Educators have used the MSLQ to measure everything from bullying in elementary school (Andreou & Metallidou, 2004) to the effects of courses and teachers in undergraduate students (Hofer & Yu, 2003). The MSLQ is referenced in the research literature 129 times, and researchers have published 14 empirical research articles (Burlison, Murphy, & Dwyer, 2009). I examined the literature of empirical studies that used the MSLQ in developmental education to compare my results with others. Howey (1999) used the MSLQ to investigate relationships between motivation and academic success for first-time freshmen students enrolled in community college. Howey compared the MSLQ scores from 428 students who were categorized as either academically prepared or underprepared as determined by their ACT/ ASSET placement scores. Howey reported that significant differences existed between the academically prepared and underprepared groups in 4 out of the 6 motivational factors (Extrinsic goal orientation, Task Value, Self-efficacy, and Test Anxiety). I compared my classes' scores with Howey's underprepared sample (*N*=141) and prepared sample (*N*=287) to examine how typical my results might be for students placed into developmental education.

Figure 1

MSLQ Comparisons
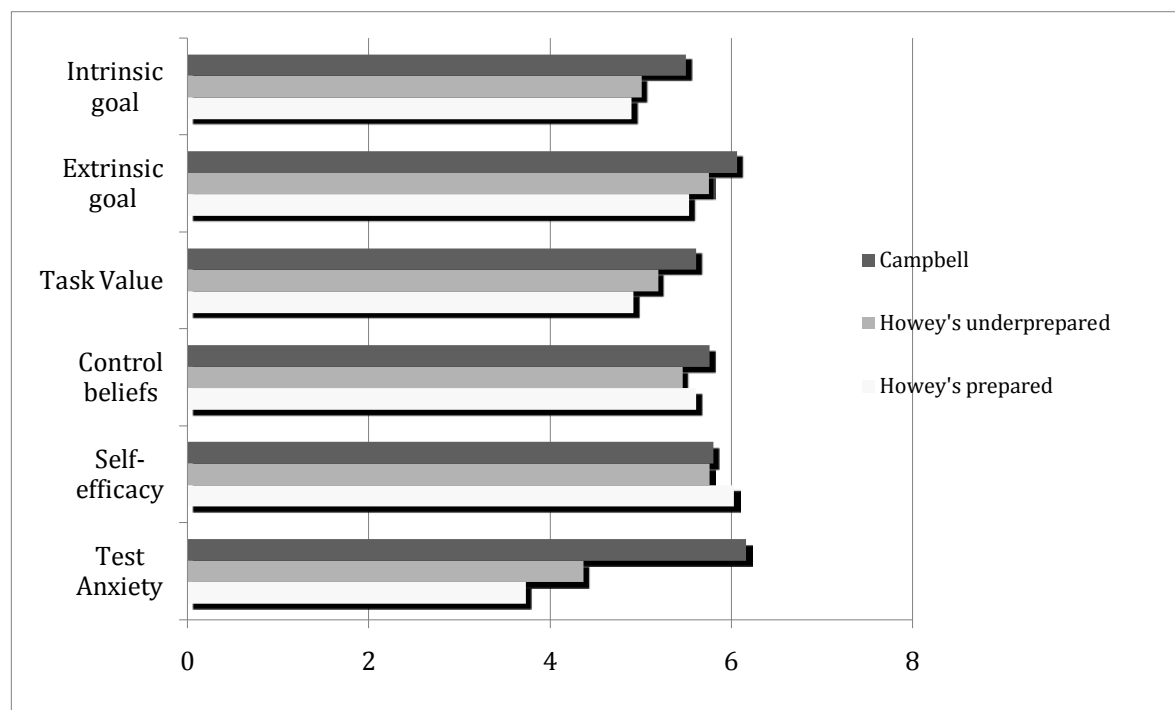
Comparing my participants with Howey's findings reinforced several important factors

unique to my developmental reading students. First, my participants placed more value in

extrinsic goals than either of Howey's groups. Secondly, my students' self-efficacy beliefs were

comparable to Howey's underprepared group; however, my students reported higher control

scores than either of the groups in Howey's sample suggesting that my participants felt strongly

that their efforts to learn would benefit them academically. Lastly, my students' elevated test-

anxiety scores when compared to both of Howey's groups suggested test-anxiety was especially

problematic for my participants.

In sum, the MSLQ provided a more robust picture of my participants than their low

diagnostic scores. As a group, my participants were more motivated by external factors, like

grades and parents than innate desires to learn class content. This finding is important when

examined through the lens of Self-determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to many SDT theorists, the presence of rewards, evaluation and deadlines actually stymie the will to learn. Moreover, self-determination theory suggests that three innate psychological criteria, autonomy, competence and relatedness, are met solely through intrinsic goals, and that without these elements students' efforts to succeed are framed for them by others (Brophy, 2004). Although the benefits for different goal orientation are controversial and often dichotomous in the educational literature (Brophy, 2004), I contend that these findings once again reinforced what is valued outside the academy may not align with school expectations. In other words, if one believes that students are most successful when their goals grow from intrinsic desires, what is the message when students reported low intrinsic desires to do well? Perhaps this score is another indication that students' identities and values are often unrecognized and unvalued by the institution.

Secondly, my participants reported high beliefs in both their abilities to succeed in the class and their control for learning. Given the literature from self-efficacy research, supporting students' self-efficacy is crucial (Schunk, 2003). According to Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2003), "Student self-efficacy is inherently changeable and sensitive to contextual features of the classroom" (p. 136). Brophy (2004) asserted that teachers looking to support their students' self-efficacy should encourage students to set specific, attainable goals, model effective learning strategies, provide encouraging feedback, and make attribution statements that help them connect their efforts with their growth. My participants' self-efficacy scores were interesting in a number of ways. First, researchers have documented that high self-efficacy generally correlates positively with academic success (Schunk, 2003); however, participants' high self-efficacy scores contrasted with the relatively low overall success rate of the class. That is, only eight

students of the original 17 successfully completed the course. While this number is typical of developmental reading courses (Attewell et al., 2006), it is hardly desirable. Additionally, the studies published examining self-efficacy in developmental students generally report lower scores than for non developmental students (Lynch, 2006; Morrison, 1999). My participants' scores suggested their self-efficacy scores more closely resembled the scores from non developmental students. I cannot explain why my students' self-efficacy scores were higher than might be expected given the literature; however, I was interested by students' early beliefs compared to my final results. Perhaps students' higher scores can be attributed to the fact that students completed the MSLQ on the second day of class. Results may have differed had I administered the questionnaire at a different point in the semester.

Finally, my participants' elevated test-anxiety scores may have reflected the damaging effects from years of high-stakes testing. In the previous chapter, I documented students' fears and difficulties with COMPASS testing. Their high MSLQ test-anxiety scores complemented that data and provided further evidence that participants often struggle with standardized reading tests. In addition, participants reported that information produced by such tests did not provide accurate pictures of their reading experiences.

Open-ended Surveys

I designed several open-ended surveys aimed at learning more about the values, practices, and expectations of my participants. Rossman and Rallis (2003) discussed the possibilities when qualitative researchers supplement their data with "material culture produced in the course of everyday events" (p. 197). According to Rossman and Rallis, these documents, when analyzed, enrich what is known about the social setting that is being studied. The researcher looks for patterns that might suggest important aspects of what is valued and emphasized in a social

setting. Using these methods allowed me to explore participants' experiences with reading and their perceptions of themselves as readers. Participants' excerpts are reproduced verbatim without any attempt to correct errors.

Reading Interest Inventory (RII)

I distributed the RII on the first day of class by attaching it to an email. This method of delivery allowed me to demonstrate how to use the attachment feature of students' school email account, and it provided students immediate practice. I collected an RII from 15 students who completed the entire survey.

The first question asked participants, "Do you like to read?" They could circle *yes*, *no*, or *sort of*. Over 50% of participants reported that they liked to read (*N*=8); five students circled that they "sort of" liked to read (33%), and two students reported that they did not like to read (13%). The survey asked students who circled "sort of" to explain what they meant. All five participants described the qualification based on their interest in the reading material. Beth's response illustrated this idea, "I'm very picky about the books I like to read and that I can enjoy." Participants' responses around the amount of time they spent reading daily and weekly varied. Daily reading amounts ranged from 0 hours to 6 hours per day; weekly ranges were reported as 2 hours to 36 hours. One student did not record times, and another wrote "a lot" for weekly time spent reading.

The next section of the RII asked students about their reading practices with books. Only one student did not report any titles to the questions, "What are some of the books you have read lately" or "What is/are your absolute favorite books, why?" Instead, the student wrote, "been a while sent [sic] I really read a book. I really don't have any at this time." Other participants' responses included adult and adolescent best sellers (*N*=20), non-fiction works (*N*=9), and

religious materials (*N*=4). One participant explained that his favorite reading material was magazines instead of books; he wrote, "I read more magazines than books *Firehouse, Cheifs [sic] Notes*, etc."

I also asked students to describe their experiences with reading as small children and throughout their schooling. Four students (27%) mentioned book titles or positive past experiences. These responses described bedtime reading rituals where they enjoyed "*Cat in the Hat*" "*Curious George*" and "*Where the Wild Things Are.*" The majority of responses (*N*=11), however, described "taking reading tests," "reading slow," "reading outloud," and "not understanding or remembering." For example, Slasher wrote that from elementary school reading, she remembered "gold stars, and candy;" from middle school she remembered, "Accelerated Reader," and from high school she remembered, "writing lots of essays." Michael's memories from school reading were, "sounding words, underlining with a note card, and reading chapter by chapter and couldn't wait till the last one!" Karen wrote of "reading many books and taking reading tests to see what reading level we were on." Vickie wrote about being "scared" in reading because she was a "slow reader" who "never caught up with others." Participants' responses generally described school reading practices as those that evaluated their abilities as readers. For many participants, the movement from enjoyable reading practices deteriorated as they progressed through school.

As I compared participants' Reading Interest Inventories using a grounded constant-comparative method (Charmaz, 2006), I became aware of an interesting similarity in the way students composed responses around their strengths as readers and their weakness as readers. Gee (2000) discussed the importance of I-Statements in discourse analysis. He explained that participants' use of first person is consequential in understanding their relationship with what is

being discussed. Sixty-four percent of participants' responses to RRI question 6 and RRI question 7 were I-Statements (N=18). As in Gee's analysis, participants generally composed one of three I-statements: (a) action type statements (I can, I understand, I read); (b) desire type statements (I like to, I love); and (c) ability/constraint type statements (I can't, I have a hard time). The distribution of different types of I-Statements and the percentages of each type is contained in the table.

Table 3

Types of I-Statements

Action I-Statements	Desire I-Statements	Ability/Constraint I-Statements
44% (N=8)	22% (N=4)	33% (N=6)

Instead of accepting the school's label of underprepared or weak reader, participants' use of I-statements suggested that they take an active role in constructing their reading identity. More often than not, they described reading practices that they *do* and that they enjoy *doing*. Hence, while tests suggested a passive or unengaged reader, RII data suggested participants' relationship with reading could be active, passionate, and shaky all at the same time.

Furthermore, question six (describe your reading strengths) and question seven (describe your reading weaknesses) were worded similarly on the RII. Six participants used I-Statements to answer both questions; however, eight students used active, first person I-Statements to talk about their strengths, but they did not use I-Statements when describing their weaknesses. Instead, participants constructed skills as subjects for their weaknesses. One student did not use I-statements to respond to either question. The excerpts illustrate participants' verbatim answers to question six and question seven, which have been copied in the table below.

Figure 2

Descriptions of Reading Strengths and Weaknesses

Question 6: Reading Strengths   Question 7: Reading Weaknesses

I'm interested, and reading can teach you and take you into another world.	Comprehension
If I read a book usually I can explained what happened.	spelling and reading big words
I can stay focused if its something im interested in.	not paying attention getting bored
I love to read and get involved in the story, getting into the story	vocabulary, more vocabulary
I can read at a steady pace and can normally comprehend easily.	words I do not know and cannot pronounce
I can read fast.	forgetting shortly after
I can read and put myself in the story or picture it in my head.	remembering the story
I can get into the book if I like it and I won't stop reading until I'm done.	not being able to understand what's going on

Therefore, for 53% of my participants (*N*=8), their answers to questions 6 and 7 suggested inconsistent notions of themselves as readers. Their language implies that they 'owned' those areas that they saw as reading competencies; in those areas where they did not

perceive themselves as competent, they seemed not to take ownership as evidenced by the lack of "I don't" or "I can't."

Adult students who come to university often have preexisting notions of themselves as students. They recognize their strengths and incorporate those strengths in their definitions of themselves as readers. Likewise, participants have developed an understanding of what reading strategies are valued by school. Students' understandings of their strengths often contrast with reading skills they deem necessary for school success and create splintered ideas of personal reading and school reading. For example, several participants described their propensities to become absorbed by personal reading while simultaneously describing their difficulties staying focused with assigned readings.

I asked students to describe magazines, movies, and online practices they enjoyed. Eleven participants reported reading magazines regularly, with *Cosmo* being mentioned most frequently. Twelve participants described a variety of online behaviors including social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, video gaming, emailing, and surfing the Internet as common responses. Three students reported no computer access and little familiarity with the Internet. For example, Cora wrote, "no, computer is my problem, at this time, I have no computer." Students have a variety of reading habits. Daily they engage in a host of literacy practices such as magazine reading and Internet surfing where they perform as readers. Cora's response illustrates the reality of limited access for many students. Thus, issues of identity comingle with school type literacy expectations in important ways.

The final question on the RII asked students to write about what they hoped to gain from the class. Five students reported they hoped to gain "better vocabulary" from the class; four students wrote about learning to comprehend what they read, and three participants listed reading

level and reading skill improvements. The final three participants wrote, "pass the COMPASS," "to improve my English," and "any that you are offering." Therefore, students reported desiring the types of literacy practices they understood as valued in the academic domain.

Midterm Reading Survey

After midterm exams (week 8), I asked students four open-ended questions aimed at exploring their definitions of "reader," "good reader," and how they compared to their definitions. Since I distributed the survey after the last day to drop the class without academic penalty, only ten participants completed the survey. Four participants defined reader in basic terms as one who reads written text; five students elaborated on this basic idea by adding that a reader also understands what is being explained. One participant wrote that a reader was "someone who enjoys to read [sic]." When asked to describe "a good reader," the majority of participants (*N*=6) wrote that a good reader comprehends and can discuss what they read. The final four responses listed a variety of definitions. All participants' excerpts are verbatim responses.

A good reader is someone who can pronounce and spell words correctly and understand the meanings.

A good reader looks over the passage, reads, and takes notes.

A good reader is a person which read a lot of books, and good speaker and writer.

A good reader reads because he or she enjoys it and wants to improve themselves.

I asked participants to compare themselves to their definitions of a good reader; only two participants unequivocally defined themselves as "good readers." Four participants wrote that they were not good readers, and they provided reasons such as not being able to "stay focused" or not knowing "enough big words." The final four participants described themselves as

"average," "OK," "pretty good," and "descent [sic]." Two of these participants also listed areas they felt prevented them from being good readers. For example, "I'm not good at spelling or using big words." Midterm surveys illustrated the difficulties participants had identifying themselves as good readers. For the most part, they struggled to identify with or internalize the skill sets they understand as required for good readers.

As with the MSLQ data, open-ended surveys contradicted the austere picture created of students through institutional reading tests. Unlike their diagnostic scores, many participants described themselves as dynamic readers who actively engaged with a variety of text on a daily basis. For example, instead of describing themselves by their reading grade-level, these participants identified themselves as lovers of mysteries, romances and biographies. Participants also generated knowledge through their literacy practices such as their interests in indie bands, fashion trends, and criminology.

In a similar way, participants described both pleasant, rewarding experiences as readers and negative, embarrassing experiences with reading. Finally, the surveys highlighted participants' propensity to separate personal reading and school reading into distinct notions of reading and readers. Often students recognized themselves as competent away from academy. Yet, by and large, they accepted the institution's definitions of them as struggling or weak readers in academic contexts. Helping participants bridge that divide requires educators to understand students' self definitions in the same way they understand diagnostic reading test scores.

<div align="center">Online Literature Circles</div>

The third week into our class, I asked students to form groups of three or four and select a book that their entire group would read. I provided a list of common young adult and bestseller

titles to guide student choices; they were not limited to the list, but each group chose a title from the list. Initially, four groups formed, but when two students from one group stopped attending class, the third member joined a different group; thus, Group One read *Nickel and Dimed* (Ehrenreich, 2002), Group Two read *Breathing Underwater* (Finn, 2002), and Group Three read *The Burn Journals* (Runyon, 2005). Participants had three weeks to read the books and have ongoing asynchronous discussions about their books using eLearning. Although participants were familiar with eLearning since we had been using it from our first class meeting, they were less familiar with having online discussions. Therefore, we spent part of one class talking about Raymond Carver's *Popular Mechanics* and we brainstormed questions that would be ideal for discussion and those that would be less than ideal. For example, we discussed the differences in the questions "is the baby a boy or a girl" and "why did Carver title this story *Popular Mechanics*." These initial online practice discussions offered students the chance to become accustomed to discussing ideas in a virtual format. As a class, we examined these early threads to troubleshoot before book discussions occurred. Students' book discussion threads were evaluated as an integral part of their final grades (10%). Although I did evaluate students' participation in their discussion groups, I did not facilitate any of the discussions. I was interested in observing students' self-generated discussions and how they behaved as readers of self-selected texts.

The following table demonstrates the three groups, the participants of each group, and the number of posts and topic threads totaled by each group. As is the case in any group discussion, students did not talk in equal amounts. I explained to students in their evaluation rubric that I expected at least 10 posts for each student; all but one student met this requirement. Many participants exceeded the expectation. Both the *Breathing Underwater* Group and the *Nickel and*

Dimed Group asked me to leave the discussion boards open after I evaluated them so that they could continue to discuss the book and the movie trailer they would create.

Table 4

Summary of Online Discussion Threads

Breathing Underwater	*Nickel and Dimed*	*The Burn Journals*
4 Participants	4 Participants	5 Participants
83 Total Posts	72 Total Posts	61 Total Posts
14 Topic Threads	16 Topic Threads	12 Topic Threads

Using literature circles (Daniels, 1994; 2002) provided an alternative way to view reading that differed from the skills-driven notion participants' so often reported. Daniels's literature circles dovetail well with Rosenblatt's (1935; 1996) transactional view of reading. Rosenblatt (1988) described reading as "interplay between reader and text" (p. 10), and the importance of the reading stance. The notion of a reading stance suggested that readers were constantly "bringing certain aspects into the center of attention and pushing others into the fringes" (p. 7). Thus, a reading stance adopted for reading a "how-to" manual was likely different from that adopted for reading a science fiction novel. For Rosenblatt, reading stance existed on a continuum with the "efferent stance" on one end and "aesthetic stance" on the opposite end (p. 12). According to Rosenblatt, the efferent stance described the reader's desire to retain or carry away information; the stance was less concerned with the full experience of reading. Conversely, in the aesthetic stance, readers were more concerned with the full reading experience, and thus they attend to more items on the periphery. Rosenblatt explained, "The aesthetic reader experiences, savors, the qualities of the structured ideas, situations, scenes, personalities,

emotions, called forth, participating in the tensions conflicts, and resolutions as they unfold" (p. 7).

Participants' online responses produced a wealth of rich data illustrating how they engaged with text and each other as members of virtual literature circles. In this section, I present ways participants' discussions exemplified their collective meaning negotiations as well as how they responded as readers to shared texts. Two over-arching themes emerged from participants' responses that directly addressed the research question: Groups actively promoted socially constructed reading identity, and participants' posts demonstrated engaged reading processes. Each section below provides a description of each theme, the actions I coded as indicative of the theme and examples of students' post that illustrated the theme.

Promoting Socially Constructed Reading Identities

Constructivists posit that, ultimately, human beings depend on social interactions with others to learn. They describe optimal learning situations as social interactions that enable learners to focus on concepts they have not yet mastered by providing expert assistance. Educators have worried that moving from face-to-face interactions to online discussions might isolate their students and strip classrooms of their collaborative atmospheres (Beeghly, 2005). Both teachers and students alike report fearing that impersonal computers will disconnect and alienate them from a classroom community (Smith, Ferguson, & Mieke, 2000). Virtual discussions from my participants suggested this worry is mostly unfounded. In fact, many posts demonstrated students' overt efforts to connect with each other personally while also offering diverse ideas about their chosen texts; not one topic thread was cold or perfunctory even when students were dealing with housekeeping type items. Thus, "Promoting Group Membership" was a large thematic category that encompassed posts I included as attempts to establish group

harmony (GH) and posts that centered on socially and collectively negotiated meanings (NM).

Several excerpts from online discussions illustrate responses indicative of different categories.

Because I have included direct quotations from students' posts, the following section may

contain misspellings and grammatical errors.

Group harmony (GH)

I selected the term group harmony to describe participants' attempts to connect with each

other personally. Responses that I coded as helping create group harmony included, piggy-

backing off an earlier idea, validating information from another's post, posing additional

questions, and dealing with another member's idea.

In most threads, participants directed ideas and responses to specific group members

throughout online discussions. Early topic threads or posts, however, often appeared as letters to

each other as opposed to group discussion. For example, the second, third, and fourth posts from

Nickel and Dimed (all composed the first days of online work) were addressed to specific group

members. For example,

> Hi Michelle,
>
> I find the point that you make about not having locks on the doors and window screens
>
> on the windows very difficult to imagine.

Yet, by the second week of posting in the thread, responses evolved from letter-like dyadic posts

to collective group conversations. In fact, in final posts from the aforementioned thread, authors

use the pronoun *we* to refer to themselves collectively. "Also, I do not find it ironic that we see

her problems with Walmart again. I'm sure we will figure this out by the end, it's a pattern,

right?" This shift in how responses were composed and the pronouns used reflected a growing

sense of membership and belonging. Participants moved beyond *this is my idea* to a negotiated sense of *here's what we think but we're still working on it*.

Participants also made efforts to validate and affirm the ideas of others aiding the groups' cohesion. For example, responses such as, "What you've shared is quite insightful; thanks;" and, "Serge, you are right, it does fit the novel" were typical of all three groups.

Negotiated meanings (NM)

As members of literature circles, participants actively discussed elements of writing while also working collectively to clarify and expand their understandings of the text. Negotiated meaning responses described participants' grappling with the story and working to make sense of the novel. These posts included everything from summary to interpretation. For example, actions such as summarizing, citing, clarifying, analyzing, interpreting, and questioning the text were all included in this category. Nikki, engaged by the action in her story, questions, summarizes and poses additional questions in her post. She wrote to the *Breathing Underwater* group:

> I think it was good for Nick to hang out with Leo. He saw how Leo treats Neysa, and maybe he will understand that how he treated Caitlin really was bad. Do you think if Nick would have stood up for Neysa when Leo yelled at her in the car that Leo wouldn't have done what he did to her and himself?

All told, participants did not provide lists of words they did not recognize from the story or try to remember story details. Instead, like Nikki's post demonstrated, participants offered tentative ideas where they asked group members for feedback; their feedback sparked a tweaking of the original idea with each member adding original bits and pieces to a shared meaning.

Engaged Reading Processes

Researchers of adult readers have documented that students often do not recognize their reading competencies (Compton-Lilly, 2009). My participants often recognized only practices described by Rosenblatt's (1988) efferent stance as important and valuable. However, my participants' online discussions demonstrated Rosenblatt's entire spectrum of reading practices. Through their descriptions of personal connections with their books and their evaluations and judgments of characters, scenes, and contemporary issues, participants demonstrated they were competent and sophisticated readers.

Text Connections (TC)

Asking students to connect their reading to themselves, other texts, and the world is a common teaching method in the English/ language arts classroom (Hancock, 1993). Participants discussed ways their books connected with their own lives, with other texts, and with the world at large. Although participants connected their books to their lives most frequently, all three groups discussed how their texts connected to other texts and to the larger world. Coded responses such as relating a personal story, drawing parallels, or connecting to character were all contained by the category Text Connections (TC).

Text-to-self. Personal connections to literature allow students to understand themselves, their peers, and the text (Atwell, 1998). Hancock's (1993) investigation of students' literature journals indicated that personal connections to text elicited personal involvement and a higher understanding of text. Participants in all three groups made numerous personal connections to characters and situations. The participants reading *The Burn Journals* really struggled with the characters' suicide attempts. They discussed feeling sorry for Brent (the main character) and being repulsed by him. Beth's post demonstrated their ambivalence:

I thought about my last post in response to this and I want to add that he did go back to being somewhat normal because he did not end up trying to kill himself again. He went to feeling empty and depressed but never took it that far. This tells me what happened to him actually did change his life for the better. He also defeated his stubbornness and got help when he needed it. I have many friends with addiction problems and only a few are like Brent and actually change the person they are. Most change a few things for a little bit of time but the people they are never change and so the old habits return. I dk but Brent seems like he will make it now.

Beth's post, reflective and engaged, demonstrated a personal connection with her novel; she connected the character's plight with those of her friends.

Text-to-text. Along with personally connecting to the text, participants also discussed how their works connected to other texts from the classics to popular culture movies. Participants reading *Breathing Underwater* discussed the way the mother figure tried to live vicariously through her daughter, "which many moms do." The thread titled "Anyone else think about Regina's Mom?" (from the movie *Mean Girls*), discussed many literary and real-life moms who attempted to be best friends with their daughters to "do high school all over again."

Text-to-world. Finally, all three groups used their books as springboards to discuss sensitive topics such as child abuse, racism, and poverty. The *Nickel and Dimed* group discussed the larger implications of their book on American society.

In Minnesota, the slave wagerers [sic] are proud for the most part for their jobs at Wal-Mart. They take pride in their work on a daily basis. However, Wal-Mart is somewhat controversial as an employer. Wal-Mart seems to me to capitalize on the fact the employees will work overtime without being paid time and half. I think that this point

that Barbara writes about the slave wagerers [sic] not being paid overtime is interesting to me and to her because Wal-Mart is the biggest retail store in the world. Wal-Mart with all of its resources has conducted business this way because it knows the slave wagerer [sic] will work under these circumstances. Hmmm. makes you wonder about the democracy of the company. Again, in Minnesota, Barbara proves that a human being cannot live on minimum wages but will continue to try out of desperation of noting knowing what else to do. (Evelyn)

I think you made a good point about it being hard for people to live off minimum wage. There is no telling how many people that are out there doing the same thing now days. It is almost scary to think about being in their shoes. How do you think they feel when minimum wage goes up and down the way it does? (Michael)

Ehrenreich's non-fiction account of attempting to earn a living provoked this group to question what they believed to be true about America's working poor. Similarly, the group grappled with Ehrenreich's motivation; they discussed her altruism versus her exploitation because she made money from people who make little. All told, the connections made by the participants demonstrated the importance of the worlds created in the text. Despite participants' personal opinions about the books, their posts reflected an understanding for important ideas raised in the stories.

Aesthetic Reading (AR)

Hancock (1993) described aesthetic reading responses as those that elicit emotional interactions with the text. Rosenblatt (1988) explained, "The aesthetic reader experiences, savors, the qualities of the structured ideas, situations, scenes, personalities, emotions, called forth, participating in the tensions conflicts, and resolutions as they unfold" (p. 7). Posts that

demonstrated when participants reveled in the sensation or experience of reading were coded as aesthetic reading. These responses demonstrated areas where the text evoked both a personal delight as well as disappointment with the author's craft. Rosenblatt described these types of responses: "This evocation, and not the text, is the object of the reader's 'response' and 'interpretation' both during and after the reading event" (p. 5).

As described in participants' text connections, groups often pursued tangents generated by their stories. However, I coded participants' responses as aesthetic when the text itself—its plot, characters, even themes were pushed to the periphery. Codes in this category included delighting in language, evaluating author's craft, questioning author's intent, and finding satisfaction or dissatisfaction in narration. Posts that demonstrated when participants moved beyond the text and reveled in the sensation or experience of reading were coded as aesthetic reading. These responses demonstrated areas where the text evoked both a personal delight as well as disappointment with the author's craft.

The students in *Breathing Underwater* group discussed the reason behind Finn's title choice. The students all offered suggestions regarding the author's intent:

Breathing underwater is how he felt, he felt as is he was suffocating (like he went snorkeling during Thanksgiving). Once he stood up to his dad and really apologized to Cat, he finally felt like he took his first breath of air.

Now he finally feels like he is not 'breathing underwater'

As humans we need oxygen to breathe, but when we're underwater we cannot breathe. For the longest time Nick was not living. He could see everything happen to him but he wasn't in control because hypothetically he wasn't alive . . . hence the title.

Participants' efforts to understand the title underscored their movement away from reading-test type information that they could memorize and reproduce in a testing situation. Instead their ideas demonstrated dynamic and sophisticated ideas around what they read.

Daniels (1994; 2002) explained, "the goal of literature circles is to have natural and sophisticated discussions of literature" (p. 75); participants not only achieved Daniels' goal, but they also demonstrated through their literature circles the behaviors of readers. Therefore, participants' discussions in their literature circle became another way of analyzing their reading identities in action. Although the analysis was not as direct as asking students to describe themselves as readers, it was a powerful way of glimpsing participants' ways of being readers. Every student joined a group, every student obtained the chosen book, and every student discussed the book through eLearning. An anonymous survey at the conclusion of the novel project suggested that all but one student read the entire book; one student wrote that he or she finished all "but the final 15 pages of the book." Participants' separate notions of personal reading and school reading blended naturally through their work in literature circles. Although they were assigned the project, and they were evaluated on their responses, they engaged with the book personally as opposed to memorizing small details for a test. Thus, their membership in literature circles became another layer of their reading identities that remained either overlooked or ignored by their "underprepared" reading label produced by their low test-comprehension score. In fact, participants' actions were those of "good" readers: They self-selected reading texts, they engaged with their texts in sophisticated processes, and they engaged with each other as co-readers.

Participant Interviews

In order to explore participants' reading identities in the required developmental reading class, I used constructivist, interview methods. According to Seidman (2006), in order to understand the experiences, values, and expectations important to students required me to listen to how participants explained their "lived experience and the meaning participants gave to that experience" (p. 16).

To organize my questions, I used the three-section format proposed by Seidman (2006); thus, I devoted the first interview talking about early experiences with reading, the second interview explored participants' experiences in the developmental reading class along with their reactions to the departmental syllabus, and the final interview focused on participants' reflections and goals as well as the COMPASS exit test. I also understood that students themselves were not uniquely and independently creating their identity as readers since their reading ability has been evaluated many times throughout their lives and, in many instances, labeled inadequate. Moreover, I attempted to cull together students' experiences with reading and their interpretation of themselves as readers in social arenas (education) where reading abilities are valued. The following table provides information regarding participant interviews.

Table 5

Description of Participant Interviews

Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3
55-65 Minutes	45-60 Minutes	33-75 Minutes
8 Participants	5 Participants	5 Participants

I interviewed eight students in the initial session. Five of those participants returned for the second interview, and five returned for the third and final session. Each of the participants

was interviewed for about an hour, and each interview was audio taped. Interviews took place in a quiet room on the campus of Red Diamond State College. For the first interview, I choose to follow Charmaz's (2003) and Seidman's (2006) recommendation for beginning the interview by allowing the participant to reflect on experiences for reading.

Although I designed my initial question to gather rich detailed information from participants' past experiences, participants often struggled with what I meant by the question. They were confused by what I meant by early experiences of reading. Several participants attempted to describe learning-to-read experiences. Another participant tried to describe the importance of reading every day. My interview with Karen demonstrated early problems.

JBC: Okay, so how would you describe your early experiences with reading?

Karen: Just reading period? Or like reading books or something?

JBC: Yeah, reading books like as a child

Karen: Um, it was okay, you know, I always like tried to read good books that I didn't really know about like you know just to learn information and stuff--pretty cool.

Yet, when we were discussing her family, Karen recalled getting in trouble for reading *Goosebumps* books under the bedcovers with a flashlight. I believe that even from the beginning participants were confused because they associated me with school notions of reading. Once I started discussing participants' background and families as my first questions, their responses around reading became richer and more detailed.

Nearly all of the participants (*N*=7) described a favorite childhood picture book they enjoyed reading. Likewise, six participants described bedtime rituals they spent with parents and grandparents. One student described making up her own stories from picture books and

pretending to read to her younger sisters. Beth described reading with her grandmother who always "challenged" her to be active with her learning. She explained

> Beth: I remember a *Pocahontas* book that I loved. I was obsessed with Pocahontas with all Disney princesses, but my grandmother is Native American, so we always read about Pocahontas. My hair is like hers so I pretty much thought I was Pocahontas.
>
> JBC: Talk about reading with your grandmother. Did she live with you?
>
> Beth: Yeah, she did, then, not now, she died several years ago. She was really good at challenging me to say words when we read. She was so patient with me, sounding out and saying words.

Beth connected reading with her grandmother. She started by describing a shared bedtime story, but then she described practicing reading with her grandmother. Her descriptions of learning to read were surrounded by the fond memories she had of her grandmother and their shared heritage.

Similarly, I asked students to recall their experiences with reading throughout their schooling. Participants did not struggle with what I meant with this question. School reading was specific and easy to recall. Participants discussed nice teachers and mean teachers. They described positive experiences listening to read alouds and negative experiences where they felt embarrassed or ashamed of their reading abilities. Several students recalled titles they enjoyed such as *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Likewise, many participants described reading groups, sounding out words, and assigned book titles. All but one participant described incentive programs used early in their educations. For example, Megan explained, "I remember first grade we read like these little books and after certain amount we'd get prizes, um like once we read a number of hours you got a Happy Meal."

Discussions around participants' early experiences with reading generated several common threads. Initial interviews demonstrated students' fondness for many personal literacy practices. Students described relationships around shared readings with parents, grandparents, siblings and their children. Their nostalgic associations with reading disappeared, however, when they described early school experiences with reading. Although participants experienced different levels of success in elementary and middle school, they time and again described school reading as something requiring a specialized skill set.

The second interview session focused on participants' experiences in the Reading 0099 classroom and with the departmental syllabus. Karen described her work in the literature circle as being her favorite part of the class.

> Karen: Yeah that was the best because I really did enjoy reading the book, so when I like got finished, I wrote a whole bunch but I didn't use examples so I went back and found the examples. That was really cool because I knew what I thought but when I went back I understood *why* I thought that about Brent. He was a sad guy.
>
> JBC: So you enjoyed the book. Would you recommend it for next semester?
>
> Karen: I already have! To that girl, Laura, she liked it, cause she asked me like could she read it and I said yeah it's good and I told her about it so she enjoyed it too.

When I asked Karen what else she enjoyed about the class. She paused and then described the vocabulary, which she found the most "helpful" part of the class. Her description of this skill that we practiced in class was different from her animated description of her work in literature circles. Instead, Karen talked about the vocabulary book and vocabulary cards she made. She said, "The vocabulary cards are a pain but they helped. I learned all 200 of the words, so that's going to help me a lot in the future."

Similarly, Slasher described how much she enjoyed the literature circle groups because she could read "everyone's perspectives." Yet, she described a comprehension technique that she found helpful for dealing with "hard to understand" texts as being the most useful part of the class. For example, she focused on a specific strategy that she learned in the class for getting through informational texts.

> "Like um first when you look at an article you just like scan through it like to see what you know already before you just like try to go in and like answer the questions and so that's like what I do and the engaging part like how you said even if it's a short paragraph see if you chunk it into smaller sentences and you can just work through it."

For the most part, when I asked for class-specific feedback, all five participants discussed skill acquisition. Participants described resources and skills they found valuable for helping them become more likely to do well on COMPASS exit test. For example, like Karen, several participants spoke of the vocabulary book and vocabulary requirements as helpful for bolstering their confidence as readers. Laura recounted recognizing some of the vocabulary words on TV, *"It's pretty cool, when I was watching TV and I heard some of our words, yeah, I was like I know that word. I can use that word."*

Interview session two focused on the developmental reading class. Participants' responses further illustrated their understanding of differences between personal reading practices and school-defined reading practices. Although several of the participants described their enjoyment and success with the small group shared text, they reported specific reading skills as most helpful. None of the students connected their work in literature circles with COMPASS expectations.

The final interview asked participants to think about their futures and how the skills they learned in Reading 0099 would prepare them for other classes. Additionally, I asked the five participants to do a read aloud and think aloud with a sample COMPASS exit test. I discussed excerpts from students' interviews in the previous chapter that demonstrated their worry regarding the COMPASS exit test. Borrowing from Charmaz (2003), I also asked participants about advice they might give to future students. In general, participants spoke of having determination and perseverance to succeed with passing the COMPASS. For example, Laura's advice for other students who must take reading 099 reflected students' preoccupation with the COMPASS as a measurement of their reading skills. It took her two times to pass the exit test with the required 80%. She attributed skill practice and her determination for helping her succeed. She advised others "don't worry about your score, if you read and study hard you can get 80 or above. I have confidence about that."

In sum, interview data provided additional evidence that participants' personal reading identity often contrasted with institutional label of "underprepared" college readers. Participants discussed rich and varied histories with reading. Many participants spoke at length about specific titles they enjoyed as children; they described the way books felt and the ways words sounded. They also discussed the classics they encountered in school where they sympathized with the characters or enjoyed the challenge presented by new language. Finally, they spoke fondly of sharing texts with friends and family members. Clearly, these participants were not unsophisticated, dull, remedial readers or non readers. They were participants who loved *Wuthering Heights*, true crime, indie music magazines, and who also scored poorly on a computer-generated reading comprehension test.

Interview data also described participants' notions of in-school reading practices. While data from the first interview session generally described early experiences as readers, in subsequent interviews participants' described more in-school ideas of reading. Their responses focused more on skills required to pass the COMPASS as their yardstick for measuring their reading abilities.

In essence, the picture of a reader produced through one standardized test often classifies the reader as "good" or "struggling" as though the literacy practices outside the school do not matter. Examining those elements beyond the test's focus is crucial for understanding the reader; there are reading experiences, strengths and weaknesses, that create a much more complex picture than one test can offer. Therefore, in the next section, I will attempt to cull from all instruments to create a much richer portrait of my readers.

Combining Data Sources

The information gleaned from surveys and interviews provided interesting rich data about participants; however, the combination of sources provided robust themes regarding the intersection of reading identity and developmental reading classes. The next section of this chapter, then, is to highlight the important themes I discovered across data sources. First, I explored participants' dual concepts of reading identity across several contexts. Then I compared participants' extrinsic motivation scores with their early experiences with reading. Additionally, I further investigated students' personal and intimate relationships through reading.

Dual Concepts of Reading and Readers

Students' Reading Interest Inventory, other open-ended questionnaires and interviews demonstrated students' complicated relationship with reading. Participants' ways of talking about reading differed greatly when they talked about personal reading versus school reading.

When students described their favorite books, magazines or websites, their word-choice reflected interest-driven strong verbs such as "love, enjoy, absorbed, hooked." For example, Megan wrote that her favorite book was *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* because, "I felt like a character in the book when I read it." Laura wrote, "I enjoy reading *Horse Illustrated*, and I love Facebook and Myspace." Vickie described *Cosmopolitan* as her favorite magazine, "I love it and could read it every day." Beth described *Lucky* as her absolute favorite book because "it touches me on a deep level." Karen wrote, "*Breaking Dawn* was so great it kept me hooked!!!"

Yet, participants' word choices shifted when they described their experiences and memories with school-based readings; skills-based concerns replaced participants' strong emotive verbs. Michael's descriptions of "sounding words," "underlining with a note card" and moving slowly "chapter by chapter" were common descriptions of school experiences. Although most participants described titles of favorite books as preschool children, they described reading skills as more important in middle and secondary school settings. For example, during our interview, Megan remembered, "I used to have to leave the classroom for lower level reading to get my reading skills up so, yeah, that's what I remember. By second grade I was up to the rest of the class." Participants described titles encountered in high school where they had both positive and negative experiences. Slasher's description of having to read "more difficult, harder, stuff like *Beowulf*" was typical as was her summation of reading in high school. She explained, "you read it or you didn't read and then you got to do papers on it. I'd rather just read it and talk about it." Overall, it was surprising to me to learn that few students either through surveys or interviews described themselves as non-readers. In fact, none of my participants wrote or stated that they did not read or that they hated reading.

Although students did not define themselves as non-readers, some of them defined themselves as "weak" or "slow" readers. Again, across a wide range of data sources, participants often reported not having the skills that "good" readers possess. I noticed that when students were writing or discussing school-based reading practices, they centered on certain skills necessary for school reading. By and large, participants identified vocabulary issues or "knowing big words" as crucial for successful reading. Throughout the semester, participants reiterated many times on several different measures that reading, insofar as we were talking about reading done for school, was about knowing, reading, and pronouncing "big words." Ten out of 15 participants in the Reading 0099 class wrote that vocabulary issues were what they considered their major weakness. Karen's answer that she struggled with "spelling and reading big words" was common. Not surprisingly, given their descriptions, students also wrote that learning new vocabulary was what they hoped to gain from the class. Karen stated that she wanted to "learn vocabulary better;" Evelyn wrote that she wanted to "learn new words and how to use them right," and Slasher hoped for "a broader vocabulary."

Vocabulary development appears so central for students that participants wrote about it on their RII, their midterm survey, and in our discussions. For instance, Beth's midpoint definition expressed a common theme for the class. She wrote, "I think I am a descent [sic] reader. I struggle understanding more advanced readings because I feel I do not have a strong enough vocabulary." Similarly, students discussed their struggles with vocabulary in interview sessions. Karen's interview highlights participants' perceptions regarding the primacy of improving vocabulary in order to become a "good" reader.

JBC: So what does it mean to be a *good* reader? How would you describe *good* readers?

Karen: uh, (laughs) hm a good reader? I guess someone who pronounces who can pronounce and spell words correctly and understands all the meanings, yeah.

JBC: Do you mean our vocabulary units?

Karen: well, yes, those, but just words, like you know, big words that you need to know how to say to understand the passage.

JBC: How do you define yourself as a reader? How do you compare that to yourself?

Karen: I'm okay (laughs again). I mean, okay reader because I can read and answer questions but I'm not good at using big words or spelling but I can get some of the info that I need.

Thus, I became aware that participants often struggle with their dual notions of themselves as readers with school readers who have sets of skills that they do not posses. In fact, only two participants defined reader as "anyone who reads" or "someone that likes reading;" all other definitions of reader referred to reading skills. The idea that they were skill-deficient readers remained widespread among participants who explained that knowing big words held the key to admission into the good reader club and to a successful college experience.

Elevated Extrinsic Motivation

I noticed early in the semester that my participants' extrinsic motivation scaled score was much higher than their intrinsic or task value scale on the MSLQ. Moreover, the comparison data I examined from Howey's (1999) study with similar students further intrigued me. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to give a causal relationship for their elevated scores; however, I also noticed how frequently students described reading rewards offered throughout their education. Megan and Nikki from two different school systems described an intricate reward

program for reading hours. Megan's school provided all students with predetermined reading hours Happy Meals while Nikki's school held weekly candy parties and parades for top readers. Thirteen students mentioned these types of Accelerated Reader or other incentive programs linked directly to reading. Perhaps students have become so accustomed to receiving external recognition for reading behaviors that they are likely to look for continued extrinsic rewards.

Familial Relationships

When I interviewed students about their out-of-school experiences with reading, a different notion of reader emerged that was more intimate and included themes as personal as the role of reading within the context of close familial relationships. For example, Slasher talked about reading *Where the Wild Things Are* almost every night with her mother. When she ripped one of the pages, her mother taped it together so that Slasher could continue to read it. Likewise, another participant discussed her family's tradition with *The Little Prince*. She explained:

The first time I read it, it was difficult because I was in 2nd or 3rd grade so I did not understand what it meant—what the author wanted to say by this book. But my mother said that you have to read *Little Prince* at least three times if you want to understand, so I read it three times and I understood the book. I liked it so. . . the little prince and his flower. He loved the flower and he took care of the flower and I really like that part of it.

One of my participants was a new mother. She enjoyed reading Sesame Street and Dr. Seuss books nightly to her son. Although he was not quite a year, and he tried to "eat all his books," she hoped that by encouraging him to love books, he "would have a more positive attitude [about reading] and a higher reading level than me."

Identities: Inconsistent and Complicated

Just as themes emerged across the different data sources I collected, I also looked across participants. Two participants in particular demonstrated how difficult it is to categorize students as either readers or non readers. I introduced Nikki in the opening chapter and I return to her story below.

Nikki

Nikki is a 19-year old African American student who was in her second semester of college at Red Diamond State College. She reported that she was not the first member of her family to attend college, and she provided a list of cousins and uncles who had graduated from universities in South Carolina. Nikki was the first member of her immediate family to attend college. In Nikki's first semester she had to enroll in three Learning Support Classes: English 0099, Math 0099, and Reading 0099; she was successful in all of her first semester classes, but she did not pass the COMPASS exit test in reading. Thus, Nikki had to reenroll in Reading 0099 for a final attempt. She was also enrolled in Freshman English (English 1101), college algebra (Math 1111), and an economics course. Nikki described herself as "more of a math person" but one of her passions was reading. Nikki's introduction to her classmates on eLearning echoed her Facebook profile description. She wrote about her love of reading and shopping. During our first interview, she remarked, "I love to read!" We discussed John Grisham, Terry McMillan, and *My Sister's Keeper,* which Nikki had just finished over the semester break. Nikki admitted, shyly, that she preferred romance and mysteries to the "kind of reading" we were doing together. She described successful reading experiences throughout her schooling where she always attended the parades and pizza parties given for top-earning reading points. In fact, she won the Accelerated Reader top award when she was in 4th grade and smiled while she explained, "I had

over 100 points, so, yeah, I got to hold the poster, I've always been a good reader." Nikki could

not understand why she was having such a hard time passing the COMPASS reading test. When

I asked her about the COMPASS, Nikki stopped smiling, dropped her eyes and mumbled, "I

don't know, I just don't know, I don't think I was nervous, I don't know."

Nikki's MSLQ scores indicated that she struggled with test anxiety (7 pts) and that she

was extrinsically motivated (7 pts). Her task value score and control beliefs scored much lower

(5.5 and 5, respectively). I believe her scores reflected her bewilderment with having to take the

class a second time (she successfully earned a "B" the previous semester). While Nikki's MSLQ

indicated lower beliefs in the usefulness for course content, she remained a hard-working student

who had perfect attendance. She continued to struggle on class tests modeled after the

COMPASS (63, 74, 64, 64), but she was much stronger with the online discussions from her

literature circle. Nikki acted as the group facilitator many times, and she was instrumental in

creating an impressive movie trailer from their chosen book. The following excerpt from Nikki's

online work demonstrated her role as facilitator and her strong engagement with *Breathing

Underwater*. I have copied Nikki's post verbatim.

> First of all, I HATE SAINT O'CONNER! He is a JERK! He shouldn't have backstabbed
>
> his ex friend no matter what. He also shouldn't talk about Cat like he was on pg. 138 but
>
> the fact that Cat said she could never like Saint like she is now is stupid of her. She
>
> knows that she is getting under Nick's skin with that. IT MAKES ME SO MAD! Do you
>
> think she really likes Saint, or is she doing this to stay in the group?

On class surveys, Nikki described herself as a good reader when she had a good book that

she could understand. She wrote, "if it's a book not interesting, than my weakness would

probably be understanding what I read. Difficult books give me hard time understanding what is

happening." She answered the question "what do you hope to gain this semester" with her singular goal: "pass the Compass." By the midpoint, Nikki continued to discount her reading ability since she did not understand "everything that I read."

Nikki's experience does not end happily. Although her final average in Reading 0099 was 82%, she scored 78% on COMPASS; thus, she missed passing by two points. During her final interview, a crushed young woman discussed her options.

> "I don't think I'll appeal it. I guess. I can transfer somewhere not in Georgia, or private. I thought I did it, I felt confident, I took notes like we practiced, I thought it was easy. I took my time, I"

Nikki's mother came to my office to take her daughter home for the summer. They hugged each other and took the appeals paperwork that I offered. Nikki's Facebook posting from later that afternoon could not have been more ironic: "Nikki needs a good Zane book to read! Now!" Thus, a young woman suspended from college because her reading abilities were deemed too weak for college by a computerized reading test searched for solace through a book.

Nikki's poignant experience highlights the problems when students' out-of-school identities are either not recognized or not valued. Nikki was not a "broken" reader in need of remedy; she would not benefit from a third attempt in developmental reading class (if she appealed). Nikki was a dynamic reader who read for pleasure and knowledge daily; yet, her reading abilities were evaluated with static measures that demonstrated a limited notion of reading. These results were not inconsequential. Given her COMPASS results, Nikki was suspended from all 35 University of Georgia institutions for three years.

Evelyn

Evelyn is 54 year-old non-traditional college student who had not been in school for over 30 years. Although her COMPASS score exempted her from Reading 0099, she elected to take it to help her "brush off the cob webs." Like Nikki, Evelyn was a self-described reading addict. The following portion of our interview demonstrated Evelyn's strong personal identification with reading.

> Evelyn: Well, I'm a reader. I'll read anything (laughs). I like to read forensics things or novels or romance sometimes, things like that. My mother got me into that early on; she was a crime-addicted person (laughs).
>
> JBC: I like true crime too! Have you read *In Cold Blood*?
>
> Evelyn: Of course (laughs again)
>
> JBC: That's what got me into that genre, I like it but it makes me too scared.
>
> Evelyn: Sometimes it shakes me up so bad, I have to get another topic, or subject, cause I get really shaky and I live by myself you know.
>
> JBC: Okay, so when you need a break, what do you read?
>
> Evelyn: I'll read anything. Something that can hold my interest, cause, I know that you know this, but not all writers can really write. I had one book. . .I can't remember it, but this woman couldn't write. I said no way am I wasting my time (we laugh together). Mother and I shared books and like I'd call her and say Mom I'm reading this book and I can't wait for you to read it, and she would do me the same way, we switched around, you see. And so when I had my children I always read to them.
>
> JBC: What do you remember reading to them?
>
> Evelyn: Everything.

JBC: Anything in particular that you remember?

Evelyn: (moves to the edge of her seat and imitates a crawling motion) What is the world that baby sees as he creeps around on his little hands and knees (we laugh). From beginning to end that is one of the books I read to the three of them. It was the cutest book and they just loved it.

JBC: Are your children still readers?

Evelyn: yes, I'd say so. They're grown. Richard will call now and say "I've got this book you've got to read now" and I'll do the same with him. It's a pattern came out of my relationship with my mother and my daddy was illiterate.

JBC: Really?

Evelyn: Yes and he was a phenomenon of a man absolutely brilliant and uh he was a successful man even though he couldn't read or write. Not one word.

JBC: Wow.

Evelyn: It did not hold that man back. That was his life.

Evelyn's life was rich with examples of reading. Although she described elsewhere in our interview of growing up as one of eight children in a very poor family with few "reading materials," she spoke fondly of trading books among the women in the family. She described passing "romance" books between her sisters, aunts and her mother because it was what "we all loved so."

Evelyn's MSLQ, however, depicted a different reader; although she was exempt from COMPASS exit test, her Self-efficacy score was the second lowest in the class (4.5), and her written description of herself as a reader completely belied her personal experiences. She wrote,

"I am a fair reader. Sometimes I need to reread or recite the words to determine what the meaning is."

Additionally, Evelyn reported reading "at least 3 hours a day" and reading "anything that was lying around." Throughout the semester, though, Evelyn continued to worry about her comprehension and vocabulary skills. She explained that a "good" reader must always "understand and comprehend the author's meaning." She admitted that she did not know all the words in *Nickel and Dimed*, and she could not depend on context clues, so she "relied on a dictionary." She worried about having to reread parts of her book for understanding because she felt good readers understand "the first time around."

Two participants, both avid readers, struggled with an elusive idea of what it meant to be successful in-school readers and how to bridge their practices and affinities outside the classroom with expectations of the academy. Notions of readers who comprehend everything they read after an initial reading and who command large vocabularies dominated both Nikki and Evelyn's definitions for good readers. Despite the fact that both women reported reading a variety of texts daily, neither would unequivocally categorize themselves as Reader. Nikki's and Evelyn's stories provide evidence regarding the way we educators *do* reading in schools; that is school-based reading definitions and expectations often alienate our students from realizing the readers within themselves.

Conclusions

Probst (2004) argued that reading for information, Rosenblatt's (1988) efferent stance, remains the most common reading taught and evaluated in schools throughout the nation. Probst posited reading in school is merely a prescriptive process; he wrote, "raised on a diet of multiple choice questions, students come to view thinking as a process of choosing from among several

statements" (p. 39). According to Probst, the over-emphasis of the efferent stance has stripped away students' motivation to become readers because it has little to do with students themselves. When I asked participants about their experiences reading in school settings, few had any positive experiences. Additionally, when I asked students for their definitions of good readers or reading practices, students spoke of the importance of vocabulary and understanding the first time through, which demonstrates a static school-generated linear view of reading (Street, 1995). It was only when I probed students' experiences as readers away from school and examined their reading practices from multiple perspectives that a different definition of reader emerged.

CHAPTER 6

HIGHLIGHTING LAUREN: A CASE STUDY

The first day of classes on a college campus can be overwhelming for students and faculty-- new schedules, new faces, new classrooms. This feeling is especially true for first year students: everything about the college environment is new. My first day of class with new college students ends half an hour early to give them a chance to come and talk to me. Typically, students who want to tell me something with a little more privacy will approach. Lauren was one of those students. She hung behind the line of three students who waited to tell me of their accommodations and class scheduling conflicts.

Lauren was nervous about talking to me; her voice fluctuated, and she giggled nervously as she greeted me. Lauren explained that she had always been an honors student in high school and that she was attending Red Diamond State College (RDSC) supported by the HOPE scholarship. She continued that she had always been in college-prep classes and that she had *never* been in the low groups in her previous educational experiences. Lauren's jaw began twitching and I knew she was about to cry. I invited her to my office to continue our discussion. Once in my office Lauren admitted that she was embarrassed about being placed in a "remedial" class. She could not understand how she did so poorly on her placement tests when she "broke 1000 on her SAT's." She wanted me to know that even though she did not feel she belonged in the class, she was going to work hard and make the best of it. She wondered if having this class on her transcript would hurt her chances for being accepted as a transfer to UGA after 30 hours at Red Diamond State College.

Lauren's situation was not unusual; indeed, several students enrolled in my Reading 0099 class attended college as HOPE scholars. Yet, she was one of the few to openly discuss her embarrassment and fears with me. Lauren decided to attend Red Diamond State College when she was not accepted to The University of Georgia. She, like nearly 60% of RDSC students, was from one of the local counties. She was a traditional college student who matriculated the fall after high school graduation. She was a white, middle-class young woman whose parents both graduated from college. Along with the descriptors mentioned above, Lauren was also labeled underprepared by the University System of Georgia and had to spend her first semester as a Learning Support student. University System of Georgia requires students with Learning Support (LS) requirements to complete those courses first (USG Academic Affairs Handbook 2.9 Learning Support). Depending on how many Learning Support courses are required and the type of courses required, students might not have the prerequisites needed to enroll in their Core Curriculum. Students who require Learning Support Reading, for example, cannot register for art history or art appreciation until they pass the reading course. Because Lauren required only one Learning Support course in reading, she was permitted to co-enroll in some of her core classes.

Here I examine how Lauren's mandatory placement in Reading 0099 affected her reading identity and her experiences as a college student. I collected and analyzed data from Lauren's college entrance exam scores, institutional pre and post test scores, Motivated Strategies of Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) results, open-ended surveys, classroom performance indicators, online book discussion posts, and verbatim transcripts from three one-hour interview sessions to better understand the factors shaping Lauren's reading identity. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on one student's experiences to investigate how reading identity develops alongside and in opposition to other identity positions. Through a variety of instruments, Lauren communicated

her perceptions of herself as a good student, a terrible test-taker, an unengaged reader, and a young woman struggling to accept the "shame" of her Learning Support Placement. Lauren's descriptions of herself as a reader as well as her descriptions of her reading practices did not follow consistent or straightforward progressions. Specifically, Lauren described herself as a bad reader in one context and a non-reader in another context, while almost simultaneously describing many types of reading practices she used for knowledge and pleasure. Lauren's story, then, exemplified that her reading identity, like her other identities, was multidimensional and context-bound.

Identity as a Student

When I met Lauren in the fall of 2009, she was just beginning her journey as a college student. Because she lived within three miles of Red Diamond State College, Lauren had decided to live at home while she went to college, but she planned to move out once she transferred to The University of Georgia. She planned to transfer to UGA after 30 hours when she would major in business and get a real estate license. She explained, "but I really want to be a real estate agent so if that doesn't work out I'll have a business degree." Lauren held a part-time job at a clothing store in the town's mall where she reported working between 20 to 25 hours a week "mostly on weekends."

In high school, Lauren had been a member of the National Honor Society and volunteered her time in different community functions. Lauren took both the SAT's and ACT's in her final semester in high school to make "her application to UGA look better." Although Red Diamond State College did not require College Board Exams, Lauren had both of her scores sent. Clearly, Lauren perceived herself as "college material," and she expected to be a successful college student.

Lauren's responses on her Reading Interest Inventory (RII) further illustrated her identification as a good student. She typed her responses on the form, and she answered all 11 questions in complete sentences. She reported reading every day for an hour each day, and she listed six titles of books that she had recently read. She wrote that *A Streetcar Named Desire* was her favorite book, "because of the sense of reality Tennessee Williams pulls the reader in, and every reader can relate back to the character in the piece."

In addition, Lauren's scores on the MSLQ reflected her beliefs in herself. Her average on the eight Self-efficacy questions was a 6.7 out of 7. On one item, "I expect to do well in this class," Lauren wrote "7+☺". Similarly, Lauren's Task Value score was one of the highest in the class (6.4). Lauren's scores indicated that she was confident in her abilities to do well in the class, and she felt the class would be useful for her.

Her work in the reading class also demonstrated Lauren's perception of herself as successful. When I asked the class if anyone was interested in being an official note taker for student support services, Lauren was the first student to raise her hand. Lauren made copies of her notes throughout the semester and provided them to students whose accommodations indicated the need for a note taker. Additionally, Lauren attended all but one of our class meetings and attended three optional "boot camp" meetings focused on COMPASS exit strategies. Lauren completed all the required elements, passed the exit test with a 95% and earned a "B" in the class.

Lauren's work with her literature circle and her online discussion posts also reflected her identity as a good student. Lauren naturally facilitated the group's discussions by posing questions and beginning threads. The assignment required students to post ten times, but Lauren posted 18 times in the two weeks the discussion boards were active.

After interviewing Lauren three times, it became evident that getting good grades was a central element of Lauren's student identity. Regardless of what class we discussed or when our discussions occurred, Lauren reported on her grades in her classes. In fact, when I asked Lauren for reactions to the departmental syllabus, her first response, like many other students, dealt with grading. She explained:

> The grading. I noticed that like my first day. How each thing would be graded and what like I needed to focus on more, and, um, I kinda wish vocabulary would count a little more since it's, you know, not that bad. But since it's not that hard, I guess it can't be counted the most.

Similarly, when I asked Lauren if she thought our reading class was helpful she answered with evidence from her grades. The following excerpts come from the interviews at the end of our reading class and again at the end of the subsequent semester. I have included the questions I posed to demonstrate the similarities between Lauren's responses.

> JBC: So, do you think it's (Reading 0099) helping you at all?
>
> Lauren: Yeah, I do a lot cause in my history class I just made like 80's on both my tests. I'm making, I think, an A in the class. So, yeah and political science is hard, it's a hard class but I think it's helping me in there too (November 2009).
>
> JBC: Wow that's a lot of hours (in a semester) and a lot of reading, right?
>
> Lauren: (nods her head) It's going good though. I did make a 70 on my first test, but it was, I didn't know what to expect. I guess that was it, but she said my writing was okay in it. It's just some of the answers I got wrong and then I didn't have enough detail like describing it and all that kind of stuff, but I got most of the multiple choice (April 2010).
>
> JBC: Tell me about English 1101—what novel are y'all reading?

Lauren: We're not. I wrote my first paper. I made an 85. It was a definition paper, I

dunno, It's a hard class since we've only written one paper (April 2010).

Earning good grades was important to Lauren, and, not surprisingly, she associated them with

being a good student. She had been a successful student during her entire K-12 experience, and

she expected to earn A's and B's in all her classes. When I asked Lauren why she felt she was

not accepted UGA, she talked about the "horrible pressures" of taking her SAT's. On one hand

she blamed her high school for not preparing her for the COMPASS (November 2009) that had

led to her placement in the developmental class. On the other hand, she felt her teachers had

done a good job of getting her ready to be a college student (April 2010).

<p align="center">Identity as a Test Taker</p>

Lauren blamed her placement in the class on weak testing abilities. In our first interview,

Lauren described her frustration with friends not understanding how she was placed into the

class.

Yeah, like if you tell them (friends), oh I'm in a reading class. They're automatically like,

what are you like slow or is something wrong or why aren't you getting this? And it's

like no. It's all because I did bad on a test—that's the only reason I'm in here, and they

don't really get that.

On Lauren's RII survey she wrote, "I am a bad test-taker" for her weakness, and she

wrote that her number one priority for the class was "to pass the COMPASS test." Likewise, on

the MSLQ, Lauren rated several of the test anxiety items with the highest score possible. For

example, Lauren marked "7--very true of me" for "when I take tests I think of the consequences

of failing, I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam, and I feel my heart beating fast

when I take an exam." Yet, she also spoke of a calmness she felt toward the end of the semester

with tests. She described her waning test anxiety as one of the most helpful aspects of the class. She explained, "Cause, I've always had test anxiety too and in the reading class, I don't for some reason, um, it's come to a halt or slowed down."

When I met with Lauren the semester after our class, she continued to describe dealing with test anxiety as the most helpful thing she took away from the class. She discussed her COMPASS Exit score of 95:

> I was just shocked! Why couldn't I get that before (laughs). But then again, I didn't. You know what I mean, I wouldn't have learned what I did about testing and all that kind of stuff, so I guess it happened for a reason (we laugh together).

Although Lauren spoke several times on different occasions that she no longer worried about tests, she returned to the topic of her upcoming Regents Reading Test, another exit requirement for University System of Georgia. The test was comprised of a one-hour reading test (9 passages, 54 questions) and a one-hour essay test. Lauren talked to me about how English 1101 had prepared her for the test, which Lauren had scheduled to take the Monday after our meeting.

> I'm taking that Monday. I made, we took a practice one, in the writing, we haven't taken one on reading because she says we should all be good on that. But I took the writing and she graded it and I made a 85 or high 80's.

I had asked Lauren about the switch in her class schedule from being a morning student to an evening student. She started talking about being in class until 9:45 at night, but she returned our conversation to her Regents concerns. "What are the passages about? She (her English teacher) said we shouldn't even be worried about the reading part." As we finished the interview, Lauren once again asked me about the Regents:

Do you have any sample tests? I'm kind of getting nervous about this one, the Regents, I

know you can take it again. Because my friend, Danielle, she passed one section but she

didn't pass another so she is going to have to take that section again. And she's like it

wasn't hard but I didn't expect it. So I want to know, like, what is the expectation.

I provided Lauren with several practice Regents Reading Tests and their answer keys. I emailed

Lauren about a week after our interview to thank her for her time. She replied and wrote the

following concerning her Regent's Test.

The regents test went well actually. The practice you gave me really helped. I was kind of

nervous going into the test but once it started I got better. I did finish both sections!

At the end of the semester, Lauren emailed me again to let me know that she passed both

sections of the Regents.

Lauren reported struggling with test-anxiety on several measures. Lauren's test scores

from the class, however, were above the class average. In fact, Lauren was able to exempt the

vocabulary final due to her 96% average on vocabulary tests. Additionally, as previously

mentioned, Lauren scored a 95% on COMPASS exit test, which is one of the highest exit test

scores that I have seen in my six years teaching this class.

<div align="center">Identity as a Reader</div>

Lauren described herself on her RII and in our first interview as "not much of a reader."

She wrote on her RII about her early reading experiences, "I haven't been much of a reader, even

when I was younger. I can only remember a few times when I was read to. I just never had the

patience." While Lauren did list several titles that she had read recently, she did not list any titles

from childhood. She reported reading several popular fashion magazines although she did not

subscribe to any. "I have to admit that I'm one of thees [sic] people that loves personality type

quizzes so I always take them." Lauren wrote that she had two daily reading habits—Facebook ("I probably check it 1000 times a day") and the newspaper, which she wrote she picked up when her older sister still lived at home. Lauren reported her strengths as a reader included understanding "the majority of the vocabulary;" she described her weaknesses as being a poor test taker and not always "soaking up what I read." Along with wanting to pass the COMPASS, Lauren wrote that she hoped to "understand everything I read."

Thus, Lauren's RII, her first written description of herself as a reader in the class, revealed several interesting issues related to her identity. First, Lauren defined herself as a non reader. Likewise, she wrote that she did not have many memories of reading experiences. Yet, she also described reading the newspaper with her older sister who was away from home attending medical school. Secondly, Lauren's definition of school reading revealed another interesting perception; she considered both her strengths, vocabulary, and weaknesses, comprehension, as isolated reading skill sets. Finally, Lauren discounted her personal reading practices (Facebook, newspapers, magazines) as helpful for achieving her goals ("understanding everything I read").

During our interviews, I asked Lauren many questions aimed at exploring her identification with reading. When I asked her about her early experiences with reading in school, she described mostly negative and passive experiences. Although the following excerpt is lengthy, it establishes Lauren's relationship with reading in school.

> Lauren: They (teachers in elementary school) read books to us. We didn't read a lot and
> so they picked them, and they weren't interesting but you had to listen (laughs). Carpet
> time was trouble time (we laugh together). We didn't really practice reading; we
> practiced grammar more than we did reading. And then we would have like silent reading

time where they would assign a book. Like the whole class would have to read it, and they were boring books.

JBC: Do you remember any of them, titles?

Lauren: (shakes her head) No, I just remember I didn't like any of them. And then in middle school, like in English class, they read books to us and they assigned books to us to read. But then in high school we had summer reading books where we had to read like *A Separate Peace*, *Of Mice and Men*, *A Farewell to Arms* and *Frankenstein* and all those books.

JBC: How were they?

Lauren: I didn't like *Frankenstein*. I liked *A Separate Peace*. Oh we had to read *The Scarlet Letter*, loved the *Scarlet Letter*. Um. *Of Mice and Men* was sad. We had to read *The Great Gatsby,* and I didn't really like it. *Things Fall Apart*. Have you read that?

JBC: I have, and I have taught it too.

Lauren: It was, it was hard to understand for me cause it was so . . the names so confusing and stuff but the point was good, yeah. Since I was in honors classes, they had us do assignments during the summer and when we came back we would have to take quizzes and I don't like reading and taking quizzes. Um if I'm going to read, I just want to read not have to be tested on it and stuff like that.

Lauren's experiences and definitions of school reading depicted skills-heavy notions of reading practices. She described the most helpful part of Reading 0099 as the vocabulary work. "It helps, the vocabulary does with the reading because you remember vocabulary words and then you see them again and you know them." Thus, Lauren's depiction of reading as a list of school-assigned titles, vocabulary memorization, and first-time through comprehension indicated her

understanding of school literacy. For Lauren, reading was a practice that was assigned and assessed. Compton-Lilly (2009) argued schools are the primary context where students' identities are constructed. Lauren's perceptions of herself as a reader relied heavily on those reading skills she deemed valued by academic institutions.

Conversely, when I asked Lauren about her favorite part of Reading 0099, she described her work with her online literature circle. Her group read and discussed *Shattering Glass* (Giles, 2003*)*. When I asked Lauren about her experience with the book, she responded in a much more personal way than she responded earlier:

I loved that book! It's one of the first books I've actually like finished cause I'm not a big reader so it's one of the only books I've actually finished.

Lauren continued to discuss how much she enjoyed online discussions because people said so much more than they would in class. She attributed it to "being like Facebook" which she opened several times a day. Additionally, Lauren's work in her literature circle demonstrated her engagement efforts. In the 15 days I asked students to discuss their books online, Lauren posted 18 times (8 times above the requirement). Often she worked to facilitate the group's discussion by asking questions of others. For example, she asked the group, "So why do yall think Rob is so power hungry? He will do anything to rise in social class no matter who he hurts? Are we really like this in high school?"

Lauren's posts documented her ongoing relationship with reading. For example, her discussion thread from *Shattering Glass* hinted at Lauren's emerging sense of herself as a reader: Lauren's excerpts are copied verbatim from the discussion board.

I have never read those books but this does remind me of *Mean Girls*. Have yall [sic] seen that? Do you agree?

I JUST FINISHED THE BOOK!!!

I really think the passages at the beginning of each chapter was to keep the reader

interested. It gave hints of what was going to happen, so it made me want to keep

reading.

In the progression of Lauren's posts, she moved from using a movie as a comparison to

becoming engaged by the story. In the last post above, her antecedent "the reader" is replaced by

the pronoun "me." Lauren internalized the story and became the reader. Additionally, I found it

interesting to examine the terse way Lauren discussed the books she read in high school, "Of

Mice and Men--sad" with the more personalized connections and emotional responses (the

response in all capital letters) described above.

In describing herself as a reader, Lauren was full of contradictions. She described the

most helpful part of Reading 0099 as skill acquisition; however, she reported that her favorite

part of the class was reading and discussing a shared novel. She hated to be tested on readings

because she just wanted to read for pleasure, but she reported that she did not have the patience

for pleasure reading. Lauren remarked that she had never really finished a book and then later

described a list of books she read for school. When I asked if she finished her school readings,

she responded "most of them."

<center>Identity as a Learning Support Student</center>

One of the most reoccurring themes prevalent in my study of Lauren was her ongoing

difficulty with the Learning Support label placed on her by Red Diamond State College.

Although most prevalent in our interviews, Lauren's open-ended surveys also reflected her

struggle.

At the end of our semester, I asked Lauren to return to my office so that I could interview her regarding her experiences in a developmental reading class. We began the interview reflecting on Lauren's first visit to my office. She recalled those early feelings:

> I felt dumb, like I really did, cause in high school, like I wasn't part of the lower classes and then it's just like in college you're in a reading class, and I thought What? How did this happen? That's what I thought that first day, why am I even in this class, but it's actually helped some, like with my other classes, actually like comprehend the stuff better. It's actually helped me being in the class, so I guess it's good.

In the semester after taking Reading 0099, I asked Lauren about the shame she reported she felt being placed in a Learning Support class.

> JBC: Last time we talked, you didn't want people to know you had to take a reading class. Talk some about that.

> Lauren: Since then I've actually met a lot of people that took the class. They either took reading or they took math, so I'm not so. . . , I say now, oh yeah, I took that too. Those people took math and I didn't have to take math, now I wish I did because then I might understand my math teacher more (laughs).

Yet, her advice to fellow students who might find themselves in her situation reflected continued ambivalence.

> It's not that big of a deal. It really does help you in the long run. I wouldn't even say it's like a Learning Support, it just helps you go more in depth with reading and that stuff or it's like a sl. . . , not a slower approach, but I dunno.

Lauren's word choice was interesting and suggestive. She simultaneously pulled away from her negative associations with learning support, "not a big deal," while also fighting her instinct to describe it as "slower."

Conclusions

My work with Lauren reinforced Compton-Lilly's (2008) argument that reading identity in never simple or one-dimensional. Compton-Lilly explained, "Identity construction always involves tensions. We all experience pressure from people, institutions, and social groups to behave in particular ways" (p. 22). Lauren came from a home of college graduates and a sister who was in medical school. Lauren's family and Lauren herself expected that she would attend a university. Clearly, academics were an important part of her childhood; however, Lauren was not accepted to either of the universities where she applied. Lauren's placement test rendered her an "at-risk" college student. Lauren, though, rejected that label and described herself as an honors student who simply tested poorly. She claimed to have gotten her testing issues under control only to ask for practice materials for an upcoming test. Lauren claimed to be a "non reader" who read Facebook "probably 100 times a day" and discussed the accuracy of *The Red Tent* with me. Lauren's reading identity is situated in the crosshairs of two disparate contexts: her unofficial personal practices and her understanding of official school expectations. Therefore, the ways Lauren described herself as a reader were also contradictory. Lauren was unable to perceive of herself as a successful reader because she both accepted the importance of school's labels, (she was an honors student who prided herself on good grades), and rejected their test-driven label of her as Learning Support Student.

The evidence gathered here suggests, "identity development is multifaceted and messy" (Compton-Lily, 2008, p. 23). It is also ongoing. Students' interests and competencies exist on a

big spectrum over a lifetime; their relationship with reading will not be static or easily categorized by a dichotomy. The reader who has a hard time sitting still in elementary school may easily be the reader who shares mysteries and romances with her mother as well as the reader who struggles to understand multiple choices questions on an informational passage. "Readers" are inconsistent and complex and certainly not easily categorized into reader and non-readers, or even "good readers" and "struggling" readers. Most readers are both, depending on both the text being read and the context in which it is being read. Lauren's self definitions illustrated students' multiple relationships with literacy. Like Lauren, adult students often have complicated and contradictory notions of themselves as readers and as college students. It is incumbent that educators understand and honor the full range of their students' literacy practices to help them realize their academic goals. Practices that honor divergent ideas may allow educators to bridge students' competencies with those practices valued by institutions of higher learning.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this project I set out to investigate the reading identities of students who had been placed at matriculation in developmental reading classes and labeled by the institution as "at risk" due to their low test scores on a standardized reading comprehension test. I examined the concept of reading identity to explore how the identities of students as readers helped shape their reading practices and attitudes in a developmental education college reading class. Thus, I answered my research questions by concluding that students describe themselves as readers in a myriad of ways; yet many students describe splinted notions of their home reading practices and their school reading practices. In fact, the importance of literacy in the academic area often caused students to devalue their own reading practices. My understanding of learning was based in part on the ideas of Vygotsky (1986) who described learning as a process initiated through social relationships. Vygotsky differed from other psychologists who argued that learning and development followed a series of pre-determined stages. Instead, Vygotsky (1978) argued that social interactions allowed learners to focus on unmastered concepts by providing expert assistance that was crucial in the learning process.

I was influenced as well by the work of other sociocultural scholars who similarly claimed that authentic learning required social contexts for practice, guidance, and mastery (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Furthermore, research done by critical literacy scholars argued for the importance of dominant cultures that often mediate what knowledge is valued in the classroom setting (Gee, 2001a). Within this theoretical framework of how humans learn and how literacy

behaviors develop, I examined the history of developmental education (often called remedial education) in institutions of higher education in the United States. The research argued that students needing additional academic preparation for college were not a recent phenomenon (Merisotis & Phipps, 2000). I also discovered that remedial notions for preparing college students both dominated and divided the literature. Ultimately, I contended that skills-based strategies for student learning approached students by their weaknesses and aimed to fix students' weaknesses through skill and drill type methods until students either passed the class or dropped out altogether (Casazza, 1999). Like Hull et al. (1991) and Hall (2007) documented, I witnessed how years of schooling under a "struggling reader" label reinforced students' beliefs that they were not college material.

Secondly, I examined the identity research spurring literacy educators to understand how students' past experiences with literacy affected their definitions of themselves as adult readers. In chapter two, I described researchers such as Delpit (1988) and Rodriguez (1982) who have described the tension for students when their out-of-school identities are not valued by their academic communities. Additionally, the chapter discussed literacy educators' interest in students' away from school literacy practices. For example, Bean and Moni (2003) argued that students, especially adolescent students, were constantly reconstructing their identities depending on their social contexts. The authors suggested students' out of school practices might be a way to capture students' waning interest in school literacy practices. Finally, I discussed how educators recognized the disconnect and hegemony present in many literacy classrooms, and their attempts to find ways to respect and connect with students' out-of-school identities for bolstering school literacy expectations (Lewis & Del Valle, 2008). Moje (2008) argued that students' identity issues are relevant to English teachers and literacy researchers. She warned

teachers and researchers not to ignore students' in-class literacy struggles by solely investigating their mostly out-of-school multimedia and digital literacy practices.

Moje's (2008) ideas were influential and relevant to my study. My participants were adults with many years of literacy practices in and out of classroom situations. Furthermore, my students had two attempts to perform successfully on a comprehension test before they could be admitted unconditionally to The University System of Georgia's institutions of higher learning. To investigate their away-from-school practices such as readers of trade magazines, true crime fans, and digital literacy practices without connecting it to the institution's final expectation felt irresponsible.

Therefore, using social constructionist qualitative research methods, I examined formal institutional documents such as the course syllabus and COMPASS exit test, students' open-ended questionnaires, surveys, online discussion posts, and one-on-one interview transcripts. Grounded theory methods provided the bulk of my analysis. An advantage of the constant comparative method was its ease in comparing students' responses across several types of instruments (Charmaz, 2006). For example, initial codes from interview transcripts were compared across participants, but also codes were compared between interview data and the Reading Interest Inventory responses. I followed initial coding with focused coding and theoretical coding attempting to understand relationships that existed within and between students' responses.

I hope that my research contributes to the literature on the importance of identity issues in literacy education, especially when dealing with adult readers. My work with my participants provided further support for Barton and Hamilton's (2000) argument that "socially powerful institutions, such as education tend to support dominant literary practices" (p. 12) while

marginalizing others. Specifically, my work offered three important implications for education: (a) It explored students' past experiences with literacy in and out of school settings and argued those experiences helped shape students' reading identities; (b) It demonstrated that reading identity was dynamic, context-dependent, and many times "messy" (Compton-Lily, 2008, p. 23); and (c) it argued that educators must recognize and validate their students literacy practices in order to prevent the good reader/ struggling reader dichotomy that often prevented students from recognizing their own strengths as support for new practices and abilities they desire.

Implications for Instruction

Consistent with research by Delpit (1988), Heath (1983), and Rodriquez (1982), my students described themselves as readers in multiple ways. Throughout this study, I examined what it means to be a reader in an era of skill-dependent notions of reading. Gee (2007) argued that "people have differential access to different identities and activities, connected to different sorts of status and social goods, and his is a root source of inequality in society" (p. 13). Similarly, Compton-Lilly (2009) wrote about schools' interest in promoting reading competence as cognitive skill acquisitions. Not surprisingly, school-centered definitions of reading dominated my students' perceptions so much that they devalued their personal competencies as readers.

For example, participants' descriptions of themselves as lovers of mysteries, as people who were "hooked" by a good story and as family members who would swamp romances between generations became secondary to their perceptions that they did not know enough "big words;" or they were unable to understand informational text after one reading; or they could not remain focused on passages that they found boring. They would answer questions regarding their reading strengths with active, I-centered statements, such as I love the *Twilight* saga while

addressing their reading weaknesses with a list of reading comprehension skills, such as finding main idea.

For some participants, years of being educated under struggling reader labels did not necessarily affect their perceptions of themselves as readers away from the academy, but it did reinforce notions that they were slow or needed more time and effort to accomplish readings that others could do much better. Several students wrote and discussed having to leave their regular classrooms for additional reading support in elementary school before finally "catching up" with the rest of the grade. Rawley and Beth both defined themselves as good readers when they picked their text; however, their core identity as struggling readers followed them to college and continued to nag at their self-confidence for exiting our reading class.

Understanding students' dual reading identities-- that is, how they perceive of themselves as readers in and out of school-- has implications throughout their education. Education has a history of intensive yet often damaging attempts at remediation (Casazza, 1999; Hull et al., 1991); however, how to scaffold students who struggle with academic reading without approaching them through a deficit model is a conundrum. Cone (1994) discovered that self-defined readers existed across all levels of school achievement and SAT scores. In order to help students move beyond insidious notions of themselves as weak or slow school readers, educators can broaden the typically narrow view of valuable reading practices (Hall, 2009; Stone, 2007). My investigation of the course syllabus demonstrated the often negative and remedial approach implied through the document's rhetoric. Likewise, Hall's (2009) research demonstrated how reading pedagogy is often comprised of a specific skill set that prohibited educators from recognizing other reading abilities present in a classroom. Similarly, my students' work in literature circles demonstrated the same sophisticated reading practices that they reported as

weaknesses. For example, students' posts showed examples of textual connections and understanding of author's point, style and thematic concerns. Students lead rich literacy-filled lives (Williams, 2008). Placing value in the literate practices students report engaging with may help students recognize these practices as scaffolding to literate practices where they feel less confident.

Clark, Osborne, and Ackerman (2008) of the National Literacy Trust investigated the importance of readers' self concepts. The authors reported that students' most widely practiced literacy practices such as emailing, blogging, and social networking were the least likely practices to be identified as practices of readers by the same students. Similar to my participants, the students who they surveyed reported good readers read long books with big words. It is important for educators to encourage students to read and to actively validate a range of reading materials as valuable and appropriate.

Finally, although I am arguing against a much larger educational problem, educational policies must move away from one-size-fits all assessment practices. My participants were diverse readers, yet; in general, they shared a fear of standardized tests. My analysis of the COMPASS exit test demonstrated the tests' many shortcomings. For example, the test used detail-driven questions around specific topics that students were unlikely to have familiarity with such as architectural features in the Southwest United States. Additionally, the test passages, which pulled from a wide variety of topics, used unfamiliar vocabulary that often intimidated students. Perhaps when education shifts its focus from skill-dependent notions of good reading or scantron-based answers, students will more easily connect the reading they do away from school with the reading practices the academy expects.

<div align="center">Implications for Research</div>

Reading identity, like other types of identity, is shaped by the discourse community of which it is a part and is often inconsistent. Lauren spoke of not being a reader and then discussed how she quit reading *The Red Tent* because it opposed her understandings of *The Old Testament*. Compton-Lilly (2008) found similar contradictions with her own adult readers. She explained, "Identity construction always involves tensions. We all experience pressure from people, institutions, and social groups to behave in particular ways, and sometimes these expectations do not resonate with our values, experiences, and practices" (p. 22). Thus far, a narrow view of what readers should be able to do dominates the research with college readers. In fact, much of the literature with these students approached them from a deficit model. Researchers must continue to examine the intersection of students' reading experiences away from school with their reading identities in school to approach reading as a more inclusive and holistic process.

A sociocultural perspective of literacy and identity asserts that people's identities are fluid, changing and constantly influenced by family, institutions and the contexts in which people live (Gee, 2007; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Caine, 1998). Additionally, literacy researchers posit that literacy is more than a sum of acquired skills; rather, it is a set of varied practices existing in social and cultural milieus (Street, 1995). Hence, to continue approaching developmental reading students as a set of unmastered skills continues a tradition of remediation with all of its damaging notions. Educators who teach and investigate developmental education courses must also research their courses and publish their findings. Lesley (2004) posited that to empower students who have been placed into college reading classes, educators must instruct students with models that re-examine their perceptions about themselves as readers. She explained that students' reading experiences must be "recast and re-visioned sans the stigmatism of remediation before developmental readers can begin to express their unfettered literacy

selves" (p. 63). Yet, as I write this conclusion in late 2010, Lesley's study remained only one of a handful that explicitly examined developmental college students' reading histories.

Furthermore, educational research must look for strategies that mitigate students' low self-esteem with academic reading that may ultimately prohibit them from participating in reading education efforts (Hall, 2009). Investigating ways that reading identity is both fluid and stable, that is, hybrid, allows educators to balance their desires to help students be literate in ways sanctioned by the academy and the community with the literacies and talents our students bring with them to the classroom. Guzzetti and Gamboa (2004) examined the covert zine-making literacy practices of older adolescent girls. The authors suggested that the work done within the walls of the classroom was only the tip of the iceberg compared with the literacy activities students often engage in outside school; they posited that young people's multiple literacy abilities were important windows for discovering students' out-of class identities. Other researchers have investigated instant messaging (Lewis & Fabbos, 2005), fandom (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000), and gaming (Hammer, 2006) as important unsanctioned literacy activities of today's students. However, educators and researchers should heed Moje's (2008) caveat about delving into adolescents' more captivating literacy practices in lieu of those skills educators know students must master. Conversely, researchers must investigate how to bridge the two practices without ultimately co-opting students' private literacy practices. These reconstructed alternative spaces of knowledge are crucial because they permit educators to scaffold students' attempts to mediate the academic literacy practices demanded in school. For readers like Evelyn, who lead rich literate lives outside the academy, simply investigating her passion for true crime and forensics does little to scaffold her perceived identity and her institutional identity as an unprepared reader. Additionally, it does little to help her battle her anxiety with understanding

big words that she feels prevents her from succeeding with academic reading. Moje (2008) suggested that the polarization of identity as either stable or dynamic created a binary; accordingly, Moje argued that educators and researchers merge investigation into students' literate lives with the literacies of the classroom.

Finally, researchers should look for alternative ways of assessing students' reading abilities. Students are complex readers (Hall, 2009) with a lifetime of literacy practices; however, educational policy continues to employ a one-size fits all testing policy. Teachers need empowering so they can challenge the crippling effects and institutional labels created by state-mandated tests. Nikki's experience demonstrated the power of COMPASS exit test. Nikki successfully completed the developmental reading class, twice. Nikki was an avid and sophisticated reader of various texts. Nikki passed college economics, college algebra, and freshman composition; however, Nikki did not pass a standardized reading test, so Nikki was suspended from The University System of Georgia for three years.

<div align="center">Personal Implications and Reflections</div>

As I explained in my introduction, I arrived at reading identity through personal attachments. My son's struggles with reading and my work with college readers suggested that something about the way we teach reading in school created a dichotomy: the good reader and the struggling reader. The good reader could expect academic success while the struggling reader was often relegated to "other" classrooms, flashcards, and frequent reading-level tests. However, to explain what I have come to understand about reading identity, I turn to a different metaphor.

I run several times a week. I run for exercise, stress relief, and because I enjoy how it makes me feel. I have entered many races, both 5K's and 10K's; however, I do not consider myself "a runner." For one, in my mind, I do not look like a runner. I am neither long and lean

nor small and petite, which is how I envision *real* runners. In addition, I am a slow runner; generally, I finish in the bottom half of my age group in local races. Finally, I lack the competitive edge of my husband and other *real* runners who can catch racers in a group and pass them before the finish line; instead, I am satisfied with finishing the race. Clearly, my actions suggest that I am a runner, but my individual and innate ideas of what is means to *be* a runner prevent me from accepting that identity.

Thus, my metaphor returns to my son and my students who are reluctant to accept the identity of "reader." Despite my insistence with my son that he is a reader—he loves stories, he blogs, he games--he refuses to accept that identity. Even at 11 years old, reading encompasses too many bad experiences and empty efforts for him to consider himself a reader. Yet, my runner metaphor invariably falls short, because it is a low-stakes identity. I am never grouped in a "slow" runners' group; I am never denied access to races or trails because I fall below anyone's expectations. Local newspapers do not publish race-time averages and bemoan the end of an area of faster more able athletes. It does, however, provide a paradigm for understanding the importance of hybrid notions of identity. Just as I do not see a contradiction with not *being* a runner but enjoying running, I understand how teachers can help students challenge debilitating labels without asking them to adopt new identities. Adult students have a long history with in-school reading; often times their memories of reading in school does not permit them to see themselves as readers. Approaching students' reading experiences as fluid, inconsistent, and changing allows me to partner with them exposing their strengths instead of drilling their weaknesses.

My project taught me about reading identity, but I also realize that my study was not without limitations. Investigating my own class provided both benefits and limitations for this

project. The small number of students in the class, and the four hours the class met allowed me to create a good rapport with my participants. All of my students wished to be interviewed, and they spoke freely and honestly (I assume) when we met. This particular class had three grandmothers, who had never before checked an email, and who often reminded other students that if they could succeed at their ages, anyone could; thus, the atmosphere of the class was positive and conducive to my research. Yet, I was the professor of this class, and that relationship certainly affected students' survey responses, interviews, and work in the literature circles. Although the final survey was anonymous, students may have altered their responses in attempts to please me.

Additionally, being an active instructor in the course sometimes prevented me from observing student interactions and behaviors. I am sure my data would be different if I had collected field notes through observing students' interactions with another reading teacher. Additionally, many of my participants enrolled in several learning support courses and for credit college courses. I believe I could have learned much more about academic identities by observing students across their entire semester schedules. I also have begun thinking about a longitudinal study where I follow and interview these students throughout their college careers. Lauren, my case study participant, provided interesting data the semester following her learning support classes.

Conclusions

Currently, as institutions of higher education struggle with massive budget reductions and dwindling resources, courses aimed at preparing underprepared college students have come under increased scrutiny. *USA Today* headlines from May 2010 declared that one third of today's students required remedial college math and reading. The article suggested that these large

numbers of students who were recent high school graduates were potential roadblocks to President Obama's goal for the U.S. to lead the world in college degrees, and they were costing taxpayers over 4 billion dollars annually since they needed to be retaught basic skills. The photograph accompanying the article depicted the professor apparently counting on her fingers in front of adult students. The caption read, "Lizette Foley teaches John Tucci, 21, and other students during a preparatory math class at Broward College in Davie, Florida." ("One-third of college students," 2010) The message conveyed by the article that the government is wasting its money on students who are not capable of completing college affects many students who require college preparation.

The status of students in Georgia's system of higher education is similarly in flux; at the end of the 2010 academic year The University System of Georgia Learning Support Task Force prepared several recommendations at the request of Georgia's Board of Regents. Beginning Fall semester 2012, students whose placement scores on reading, math and English fall below institutional cutoffs will be denied admittance into any of the systems 35 institutions including its community colleges. Furthermore, minimum cutoff scores will be established for all COMPASS placement tests. The assumption appears to be that students who require additional preparation in all three courses are so unlikely to graduate that they create too heavy of a burden on the system.

The assumption and Georgia's policy flout much of the research provided about student success in developmental education. Adelman (1998) reported that while 60% of students who did not require any academic support services graduated from college, 55% of students who required only one developmental course graduated. Moreover, students who needed 5 or more courses still had a graduation rate of 35%. Merisotis and Phipps (2000) concluded, "data seem to indicate that remediation is, in fact, quite effective at improving the chances of collegiate success

for underprepared students" (p. 75). Perhaps most importantly, however, is the notion that America's institutions of higher learning provide access to all those who desire an education (Casazza, 1999). Developmental education allows the open access Shaughnessy (1973) argued for by providing classes aimed at preparing students often marginalized in America's public schools (Brier, 1984)

Beyond these statistics, many of my participants' stories contradict Georgia's negative assumptions about them. Nikki, Matthew, Beth and many others have been rendered long shots by their COMPASS placement exams. In fact, beginning Fall semester 2011, all three would be denied college acceptance; however, my participants were much more than "long shots." Instead, they were mothers who read daily to their children or young adults who had difficulties learning to read inside the school walls but who reported many literacy practices in their homes.

In sum, reading identity, like other academic identities, is complex and incapable of being captured by through a single test. Moreover, Sarup (1996) explained that people may have multiple and seemingly contradictory identities simultaneously. Identity construction is ongoing (Compton-Lily, 2009); so too, then, is the construction of reading identity. If we want to help our students transition successfully to the academy, we must cease labeling their reading practices as a checklist of skills they do not possess and help them bridge their successful practices away from school with those behaviors needed at the academy. Most important, we are not classrooms full of readers and non-readers; instead, we are classrooms full of students with different reading histories, practices, and competencies.

REFERENCES

ACT Educational Resources. (n.d.) Setting the right course for college success. Retrieved June 20, 2010, from http://www.act.org/compass/.

Adelman, C. (1998). The kiss of death? An alternative view of college remediation. *CrossTalk, 8*, 11.

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2006). *Fact Sheet for Adolescent Literacy.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Available:http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/fact_sheets.

Alvermann, D. E. (2001). Reading adolescents' reading identities: Looking back to see ahead *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 44*, 676-90.

Alvermann, D.E. & Hagood, M. C. (2000). Fandom and critical media literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 43*(5), 436-446.

Andreou, E., & Metallidou, P. (2004). The relationship of academic and social cognition to behavior in bullying situations among Greek primary school children. *Educational Psychology, 24*, 27-41.

Anfara, V.A., Brown, K. M., & Mangione, T. L. (2002). Qualitative analysis on stage: Making the research process more public. *Educational Researcher*, 31(7), 28-38.

Attewell, P., Lavin, D., Domina, T., & Levey, T. (2006). New evidence on college remediation. *Journal of Higher Education, 77*, 886-924.

Atwell, N. (1987). *In the middle: New understandings about writing, reading, and learning.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishing.

Au, K. H. (1998). Social constructivism and the school literacy learning of students of diverse backgrounds. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 30, 297-319.

Bandura, A. & Barbaranelli, C. (1996). Multifaceted impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic functioning. *Child Development* 67, 1206-1222.

Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (2000). Exploring situated literacies. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton and R. Ivanic (Eds.), *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context* (pp. 1-15). New York: Routledge.

Beach, R., Thein, A. H., & Parks, D. (2008). High school students' competing social worlds: Negotiating identities and allegiances in response to multicultural literature. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bean, T. W., & Moni, K. (2003). Developing students' critical literacy: Exploring identity construction in young adult fiction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 46*, 638-648.

Becker, A. H., & Calhoon, S. K. (1999). What introductory psychology students attend to on a course syllabus. *Teaching of Psychology*, 26, 6-11.

Beeghly, D. G. (2005). It's about time: Using electronic literature discussion groups with adult learners. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 49, 12-21.

Berg, C. G. (2002). If a tree falls in the forest. . . A new look at old assumptions about developmental college students. In J. L. Higbee, D. B. Lundell, & I. M. Duranczyk (Eds.) *Developmental education: Policy and practice* (pgs. 3-16) [Monograph]. Auburn, CA: National Association for Developmental Education.

Brier, E. (1984). Bridging the academic preparation gap: An historical view. Journal of Developmental and Remedial Education, 8 (1) 2-5.

Brophy, J. (2004). *Motivating students to learn*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Burlison, J. D., Murphy, C. S., & Dwyer, W. O. (2009). Evaluation of the motivated strategies for learning questionnaire for predicting academic performance in college students of varying scholastic aptitude. *College Student Journal* 43, 1313-1323.

Calvo, M. G., Estevez. A., & Dowens, M. G. (2003). Time course of elaborative inferences in reading as a function of prior vocabulary knowledge. *Learning and Instruction.* 13,611-631.

Caverly, D. C., Nicholson, S. A., & Radcliffe, R. (2004). The effectiveness of strategic reading instruction for college developmental readers. *Journal of College Reading and Learning, 35*(1), 25-49.

Casazza, M. (1999). Who are we and where did we come from? *Journal of Developmental Education,* 23(1), 2-7.

Charmaz, K. (2003). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. InJ.A.Holstein & J.F Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: New Lenses, new concerns* (pp. 311-330). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London: SAGE publications.

Clark, C., Osborne, S. & Akerman, R. (2008). Young people's self-perceptions as readers: An investigation including family, peer, and school influences. London: National Literacy Trust.

Commander, C., Cotter E., & Callahan, D. (2003). *Charting your success on COMPASS*. Raleigh, N.C.: Contemporary Publishing Company.

Compton-Lilly, C. (2008). Sociocultural considerations for students and classrooms: The case of Alicia Rodriquez. In C. Compton-Lilly (Ed.), *Breaking the silence: Recognizing the*

social and cultural resources students bring to the classroom (pp. 1-9). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Compton-Lilly, C. (2009). Disparate reading identities of adult students in one GED program. *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal*, 3 (1), 34-43.

Cone, J. K. (1994). Appearing acts: Creating readers in a high school English class. *Harvard Educational Review, 64*, 450-473.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Creswell, J.W. & Miller, D. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice,* 39 (3), 124-130.

Crisco, V. (2002). Conflicting expectations: The politics of developmental education in California. In J. L. Higbee, D. B. Lundell, & I. M. Duranczyk (Eds.) *Developmental education: Policy and practice* (pgs. 45-54) [Monograph]. Auburn, CA: National Association for Developmental Education.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research*. London: SAGE publications.

Cukras, G. (2005). Importance of peer interaction for at-risk college students in their comprehension of college material. *Research & Teaching in Developmental Education,* 21, 5-9.

Daniels, H. (1994; 2002). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom.* New York: Stenhouse Publishers.

Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenam.

Deci, E.L., Vallerand, R.J., Pelletier, L.G. & Ryan, R.M. (1991). Motivation and education: The self-determination perspective. *Educational Psychologist* 26, 325-347.

Delpit, L. (1988). *Other people's children*. New York: New Press

DiClementi, J. D., & Handelsman, M. M. (2005). Empowering students: Class generated course rules. *Teaching of Psychology*, 32, 18-21.

Duncan, T. G., & McKeachie, W. J. (2005). The making of the motivated strategies for learning questionnaire. *Educational Psychologist*, 40 (2), 117-128.

Ediger, M. D. (2001). Assessing methods of teaching in the social setting. *Education*, 122, 123-127.

Ehrenreich, B. (2002). *Nickel and dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

El-Hindi, A.E. (1997). Connecting reading and writing: College learners' metacognitive awareness. *Journal of Developmental Education,* 21(2), 10-16.

Ferdman, B. M. (1990). Literacy and cultural identity. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60, 181-203.

Finders, M. J. (1996). Queens and teen zines: Early adolescent females reading their way toward adulthood. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 27, 71-89.

Finders, M. J. (1997). *Just Girls: Hidden literacies and life in junior high*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Finn, A. (2001). *Breathing underwater*. New York: Harper

Flick, U. (2007). Triangulation revisited: Strategy of validation or alternative? *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 22 (2), 175-197.

Gee, J. P. (2000). Teenagers in new times: A new literacy studies perspective. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43, 412-420.

Gee, J. P. (2001a). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, 99-125.

Gee, J.P. (2001b). Reading as situated language: A sociocognitive perspective. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy,* 44, 714-725.

Gee, J.P. (2006). Pleasure, learning, video games, and life: The projective stance. In C. Lankshear & M. Knobel (Eds.). *A new literacies sampler* (pp. 95-114). New York: Peter Lang.

Gee, J. P. (2007). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Gillham, B. (2000). *The research interview.* London: Continuum.

Guthrie, J. & Wigfield, A. (1997). *Reading engagement: Motivating readers through integrated instruction.* Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association

Guzzetti, B. J., & Gamboa, M. (2004). Zines for social justice: Adolescent girls writing on their own. *Reading Research Quarterly, 39*(4), 408.

Habanek, D.V. (2005). An examination of the integrity of the syllabus. *College Teaching*, 53, 62-64.

Hagood, M. C. (2002). Critical literacy for whom? *Reading Research and Instruction*, 41(3), 247-266.

Hall, L. A. (2007). Understanding the silence: struggling readers discuss decisions about reading expository text. *The Journal of Educational Research* 100(3), 132-141.

Hall, L. A. (2009). Struggling reader, struggling teacher: An examination of student teacher transactions with reading instruction and text in social studies. *Research in the Teaching of English,* 43, 286-309.

Hammer, J. (2006). Agency and authority in role-playing "texts" In C. Lankshear and M. Knobel (Eds.), *A new literacies sampler.* (pp. 67-93). New York: Peter Lang.

Hancock, M. R. (1993). Exploring and extending personal response through literature journals. *The Reading Teacher,* 46, 466-474.

Hardin, C. (1988). Access to higher education: Who belongs? *Journal of Developmental Education*, 12, 2-6.

Heath, S.B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hebel, S. (2000, January 14). Remedial work cutbacks fall behind at Georgia's public colleges [electronic version]. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 46. Retrieved May 2010 from http://chronicle.com/article/Remedial-Work-Cutback-Falls/16710/

Higbee, J. L. (1996). Defining developmental education: A commentary. In J. L. Higbee and P. L. Dwinell (Eds.), *Defining developmental education: Theory, research, and pedagogy* (pp. 63-66). Carol Stream, IL: National Association for Developmental Education.

Hofer, B. K. & Yu, S. L. (2003). Teaching self-regulated learning through a learning to learn course. *Teaching of Psychology*, 30, 30-33.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Jr., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Howey, S. C. (1999). The relationship between motivation and academic success of

community college freshman orientation students. Unpublished Dissertation. Kansas State University.

Hull, G., & Rose, M. (1989). Rethinking remediation: Towards a social/cognitive understanding of problematic reading and writing. *Written Communication*, 8, 139-154.

Hull, G., Rose, M., Fraser, K. L., & Castellano, M. (1991). Remediation as social construct: Perspectives from an analysis of classroom discourse. *College Composition and Communication, 42*, 299-329.

Jehangir, R. R. (2002). Higher education for whom? The battle to include developmental education at the four-year university. In J. L. Higbee, D. B. Lundell, & I. M. Duranczyk (Eds.) *Developmental education: Policy and practice* (pgs. 17-34) [Monograph]. Auburn, CA: National Association for Developmental Education.

Jenkins, D., Smith Jaggers, S., & Roksa, J. (November, 2009). *Promoting gatekeeper course success among community college students needing remediation*. Retrieved June 20, 2010, from http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu.

Jordan, E. (1996). Improving college-prep students' reading skills through the use of selected comprehension strategies. (Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, 1996). EDRS ED 399 991.

Josten, D. (1997). Ideas in practice: How can I tell what's important? *Journal of Developmental Education.* 20(3) 28-32.

Kaestle, C. (1988). Literacy and diversity: Themes from a social history of the American reading public. *History of Education Quarterly*, 20, 523-549.

Kozeracki, C. (2002). Issues in developmental education. *Community College Review*, 29(4), 83-100.

Kunjufu, J. (2002). *Black students/ middle class teachers*. Chicago: African American Images.

Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing.* Los Angeles: SAGE publications.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2007). Sampling "the new" in new literacies. In C. Lankshear &M. Knobel (Eds.). *A new literacies sampler* (pp. 1-24*)*. New York: Peter Lang.

Larson, J. (2008). New literacy studies: Learning through a sociocultural lens. In C. Compton-Lilly (Ed.), *Breaking the silence: Recognizing the social and cultural resources students bring to the classroom* (pp. 1-9). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lesley, M. (2004). Refugees from reading: Students' perceptions of "remedial" literacy pedagogy. *Reading Research and Instruction, 44*(1), 62-86.

Lewis, C., & Del Valle, A. (2008). Literacy and identity: Implications for research and practice. In L. Christenbury, R. Bomer & P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent literacy research,* (pp. 307-322). New York: The Guilford Press.

Lewis, C. & Fabos, B. (2005). Instant messaging, literacies, and social identities. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40(4), 470-501.

Ley, K., & Young, D. B. (1998). Motivation in developmental and regular admission students. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education, 14*(2), 29-36.

Linnenbrink, E.A., & Pintrich, P. R., (2003). The role of self-efficacy beliefs in student engagement in the classroom. *Reading and Writing Quarterly* 19, 119-137.

Love, P. (2003). Document analysis. In F. Stage & K. Manning (Eds.), *Research in the college context: Approaches and methods* (pp.83-96). New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Lynch, D. J. (2006). Motivational factors, learning strategies and resource management as predictors of course grades. *College Student Journal, 40*(2), 423-428.

Mahiri, J., & Godley, A. J. (1998). Rewriting identity: Social meanings of literacy and "revisions" of self. *Reading Research Quarterly, 33*, 416-433.

Maitland, L.E. (2000). Self-regulation and metacognition in the reading lab. *Journal of Developmental Education,* 24 (2), 26-32.

Marcus, J. (1999). Revamping Remedial Education. *National Cross Talk*, 7 (2).

Martino, N.L., Norris, J.A., & Hoffman, P.R. (2001). Reading comprehension instruction: Effects of two types. *Journal of Developmental Education, 25(1)*, 2-9.

Matejka, K., & Kurke, L. (1994). Designing a great syllabus. *College Teaching*, 4, 115-117.

Matthews, L. O., Zeidner, P., & Roberts, T. L. (2004). Seven myths about emotional intelligence. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15, 179-196.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach (2nd ed.).Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

McCabe, P., Kraemer, L.A., Miller, P.M., Parmar, R.S., & Ruscica, M.B. (2006). The effect of text format upon underachieving first year college students' self-efficacy for reading and subsequent reading comprehension. *Journal of College Reading and Learning,* 37(1), 19-42.

McCarthey, S. J., & Moje, E. B. (2002). Conversations: Identity matters. *Reading Research Quarterly, 37*, 228-238.

McDermott, R., & Varenne, H. (1995). Culture as disability. *Education & Anthropology Quarterly, 26,* 323-348.

McKeachie, W. J. (2002). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Mealey, D. L. (1990). An analysis of the value of preteaching content area vocabulary to college developmental readers. *Forum for Reading, 22* (1), 24-30.

Merisotis, J.P., & Phipps, R. A. (2000). Remedial education in colleges and universities: What's really going on? *The Review of Higher Education,* 24(1), 67-85.

Moje, E. (2002). Re-Framing adolescent literacy research for new times: Studying youth as a resource. *Reading Research and Instruction,* 4, 211-228.

Moje, E. (2008). Youth literacies, identities, and cultures in and out of school. In J. Flood, S. Heath & D. Lapp (Eds.), *Handbook of research in teaching the visual and communicative arts 2nd ed.,* (207-219). Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Moje, E. & Lewis, C. (2007). Examining opportunities to learn literacy: The role of critical sociocultural literacy research. In C. Lewis, P. Enciso & E. Moje (Eds.), *Reframing Sociocultural Research on Literacy. Identity, Agency & Power* (1547). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Moll, L. C. (1992). Literacy research in community and classrooms: A sociocultural approach. In R. Beach, J. L. Green, M. L. Kamil, & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Multidisciplinary perspectives in literacy research* (pp. 211-244). Urbana, IL: National Conference on Research in English and National Council of Teachers of English.

Morrison, B.H. (1999). Acknowledging student attributes associated with academic motivation. *Journal of Developmental Education 23(2),* 10-17.

National School Boards Association. (2007). *Creating & connecting/research and guidelines on online social-and educational-networking.* Alexandria: National School Boards Association. DOI: July 2007.

One-third of students need remedial college math, reading (May 11, 2010). *USA Today*.

   Retrieved August 1, 2010, from http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-05-11-

Parkes, J., & Harris, M. B.(2002). The purposes of a syllabus. *College Teaching*, 50, 55-61.

Perlman, B., & McCann, L. I. (1999). Student perspectives on the first day of class. *Teaching of*
   Psychology, 26, 277-279.

Peterson, C.L., Burke, M.K., & Segura, D. (1999). Computer-based practice for developmental
   reading: Medium and message. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 22(3), 12-15.

Peverly, S. T., Ramaswamy, V., Brown, C., Sumowski, J., Alidoost, M. & Garner, J. (2007).
   What predicts skill in lecture note taking? *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 99 (1),
   167-180.

Pintrich, P. R. (1995). Understanding self-regulated learning. In P. R. Pintrich (Ed.),
   Understanding self-regulated learning (pg. 3-12). *New Directions for Teaching and*
   Learning, no. 63 (Series Editors R.J. Menges & M.D. Svinicki).

Pintrich, P.R., & DeGroot, E. (1990). Motivation and self-regulated learning components of
   classroom academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82*, 33-40.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. [Electronic version]. *On the Horizon*,
   (9), 5. Retrieved August 1, 2009, from http://marcprensky.com.

Prior, L. (2003). *Using documents in social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications.

Probst, R. E. (2004). *Response & analysis: Teaching literature in secondary schools* (2[nd]edition).
   Toronto: Heinemann

Ray, M., Garavalia, L., & Murdock, T. (2003). Aptitude, motivation, and self-regulation as
   predictors of achievement among developmental college students. *Research & Teaching in*
   Developmental Education, 20, 5-21.

Raymark, P. H., & Conner-Greene, P. A. (2002). The syllabus quiz. *Teaching of Psychology*, 29, 286-288.

Reed, J., Schallert, D., Beth, A., & Woodruff, A. (2004). Motivated reader, engaged writer: The role of motivation in the literate acts of adolescents. In T. Jetton, & J. Dole (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy research and practice,* (pp. 251). New York: The Guilford Press.

Rodriguez, R. (1982). *Hunger of memory*: *The education of Richard Rodriguez: An autobiography*. New York: Bantam.

Rosenblatt, L. (1988). Writing and reading: The transactional theory. (Technical report no. 416). Washington, D. C.: Office of Educational Research.

Rosenblatt, L. (1996). *Literature as exploration*. New York: Modern Language Association of America

Rossman, G.B., & Rallis, S.F. (2003). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research* (2ⁿᵈ ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE publications.

Runyon, B. (2005). *The burn journals*. New York: Vintage Books.

Rymes, B. (2001). *Conversational borderlands: Language and identity in an alternative urban high school*. New York: Teachers College.

Sarup, M. (1998). *Identity, culture, and the postmodern world*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (3ʳᵈ ed.). New York: Teacher's College Press.

Schunk, D.H. (2003). Self-Efficacy for reading and writing: Influence of modeling, goal setting, and self-evaluation. *Reading and Writing Quarterly 19,* 159-172.

Schwandt, T. A. (2007). *The Sage dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

Shaughnessy, M. P. (1973). Open admissions and the disadvantaged teacher. *College Composition and Communication*, 24, 401-404.

Singham, M. (2005). Moving away from the authoritarian classroom. *Change*, 37 (3), 50-57.

Smith, R. A. (1993). Preventing lost syllabi. *Teaching of Psychology*, 20, 113.

Smith, G. C., Ferguson, D. & Mieke, C. (2000). Online vs face-to-face. *THE Journal*, 28 (9), 18-25.

Spann, G., & McCrimmon, S. (1998). Remedial/developmental education: Past present and future. In J. L. Higbee & P. L. Dwinell (Eds.), *Developmental education: Preparing successful college students* (pp. 37-47). Columbia, SC: National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, University of South Carolina.

Stahl, N. A., Simpson, M., & Hayes, C.G. (1992). Ten recommendations from research for teaching high risk college students. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 16(2), 2-10.

Stone, J. (2007). Popular websites in adolescents' out-of-school lives: Critical lessons on literacy. In M. Knobel, & C. Lankshear (Eds.), *A new literacies sampler* (pp.49-63).New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Street, B. V. (1995). Social literacies. London: Longman Publishers.

Street, B.V. (2003). What's "new" in new literacy studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Studies in Education*, 5(2), 77-91.

Taraban, R. & Becton, S.M. (1997). Developing underprepared college students' question-answering skill. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 21(1), 20-26.

Thompson, B. (2007). The syllabus as a communication document: Constructing and presenting the syllabus. *Communication Education*, 56 (1) 54-71.

University System of Georgia (2010). *Board of Regents policy manual*. Retrieved June 20, 2010, from http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/

U.S. Department of Education. (2007). *Digest of Education Statistics: 2006.* (NCES 2007-017)Washington, DC, National Center for Education Statistics. Available: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d06.

Van Blerkom, M. L., & Van Blerkom, D. L. (2004). Self-monitoring strategies used by developmental and non-developmental college students. *Journal of College Reading and Learning, 34*(2), 45-56.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. From *Mind and Society* (pp. 79-91). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language*. Trans. Alex Kozulin. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Wambach, C., Brothern, T., & Dikel, T., (2000). Toward a developmental theory for developmental educators. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 24, 2-29.

Weiner, E.J. (2002). Beyond remediation: ideological literacies of learning in developmental classrooms. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 46, 150-168.

Williams, B. T. (2008). Tomorrow will not be like today: Literacy and identity in a world of multiliteracies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 51*, 682-686.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE publications.

Young, D.B. & Ley, K. (2004). Effectiveness of POME instructional model. *Research & Teaching in Developmental Education*. 21(1), 4-13.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

<u>Initial Interview</u> (have students reconstruct early experiences with reading). The parenthetical

questions are possible probes if the question did not elicit any response.

1. Describe your earliest experiences with reading.

   (As a kid was there anything in particular that you remember reading, favorite stories or

   books, etc)

2. Talk to me about your memories of reading in elementary school.

   (How was reading handled in your elementary school? Did you have reading groups? Did

   the teacher do read-alouds, do you remember any of the titles?)

3. Now describe for me reading in middle school. Tell me what you remember about your

   middle school reading experiences.

   (What do you remember about your language arts teachers, the class, what kinds of things

   did you do in language arts in 6, 7, and 8th grades?)

4. How about high school? Talk to me about English classes in high school.

   (What kinds of things do you remember reading, did the whole class read the same

   works, what were some of the assigned titles? What did you like and dislike?)

5. Tell me about your thoughts and feelings when you learned that you had to take a reading class in college.

   (How was taking the placement test? Did you learn right away that you must take Reading 0099, how did you feel about having to take the class?)

The second interview (address details of being in developmental reading-occurs no earlier than midterm)

1. Describe for me what it's like for you being in a reading class in college.

2. I've brought in a copy of the departmental syllabus. Take a look at the syllabus and talk to me about what's in this syllabus. (What sticks out for you from the syllabus? what do you notice about the departmental syllabus?)

3. How would you change the syllabus?

4. Talk to me about some of the strategies and reading skills you are working on in Reading 0099.

5. Describe for me your college goals. Where do you see yourself this time next year? How about in 5 years?

The final Interview (asks students to reflect on the meanings of their experiences—occurs after COMPASS exit test and final grades posted).

1. Describe any ways that Reading 0099 has changed the way you view yourself as a reader. (Compare yourself as a reader before the class with yourself as a reader now).

2. I've brought in a practice passage from the COMPASS test that I'd like to read together. Take me through your thoughts as you read the passage and answer the questions.

3. Describe as best you can what is going through your mind as you prepare to deal with this type of reading assignment.

4. Talk to me about any strengths you developed in the class that might help you with the reading requirement of some college courses.

5. Tell me about any feelings of doubt that may or may not worry you regarding your future college success.

6. After taking Reading 0099, what advice would you give to someone who has just discovered that he or she must take the class next semester?

7. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

APPENDIX B

READING INTEREST INVENTORY

Please answer the following questions aimed at describing yourself as a reader. Do not worry

with trying to sound "smart"; instead reflect on your reading self as honestly as possible.

1. Do you like to read?—*yes—no—sort of.* If you circled "sort of", then please explain:

2. How much time do you think you spend reading?_____ per day;_____per week.

3. What are some of the books you have read lately?

4. What is/are your absolute favorite book (s)? Why?

5. Describe yourself as a reader. You might want to think about when you were little and in

    elementary school before thinking about your current self.

    a. Describe you earliest memories of reading

    b. Describe what you remember about reading in elementary school.

    c. Describe what you remember about reading in middle school.

   d. Describe what you remember about reading in high school.

6. What do you think your strengths as a reader are? What do you think you do a pretty solid job of regarding reading?

7. What do you consider as your weaknesses as a reader? What tends to give you a hard time when you read?

8. Describe any magazines that you subscribe to or read on a regular basis.

9. What are the two best movies you have ever seen? What did you enjoy about them?

10. Describe your online practices. Do you read Facebook or other social networking sites, websites, computer games, or any other online activities?

11. What strategies do you hope to gain from this class?

APPENDIX C

MOTIVATED STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate the following items based on your expectations and beliefs in this class. Your rating should be on a 7-point scale where:

1= not at all true of me to 7= very true of me

1. In a class like this, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things._____

2. If I study in appropriate ways, then I will be able to learn the material in this course._____

3. When I take a test I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students._____

4. I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses._____

5. I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class._____

6. I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course._____

7. Getting a good grade in this class is the most satisfying thing for me right now._____

8. When I take a test, I think about items on other parts of the test I can't answer._____

9. It is my own fault if I don't learn the material in this course._____

10. It is important for me to learn the course material in this class._____

11. The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade point average, so my main concern in this class is getting a good grade._____

12. I'm confident I can learn the basic concepts taught in this course._____

13. If I can, I want to get better grades in this class than most of the other students._____

14. When I take tests I think of the consequences of failing._____

15. I'm confident I can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor in this course._____

16. In a class like this, I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn._____

17. I am very interested in the content area of this course._____

18. If I try hard enough, then I will understand the course material._____

19. I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam._____

20. I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this course._____

21. I expect to do well in this class._____

22. The most satisfying thing for me in this course is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible._____

23. I think the course material in this class is useful for me to learn._____

24. When I have the opportunity in this class, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade._____

25. If I don't understand the course material, it is because I didn't try hard enough._____

26. I like the subject matter of this course._____

27. Understanding the subject matter of this course is very important to me._____

28. I feel my heart beating fast when I take an exam._____

29. I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in this class._____

30. I want to do well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others._____

31. Considering the difficulty of this course, the teacher, and my skills, I think I will do well in this class._____

APPENDIX D

MIDTERM SURVEYS

1. Knowing what you know now about the book your group chose, answer the following

questions: (please answer both A & B)

       a. Explain why you would choose the same novel to read as a group choice (what was

"good about your book?)

       b. Explain why you might not choose the same novel to read as a group choice (what was

"bad" about your book?)

2. Think about your online book discussions for the next two questions.

       a. Describe any advantages with discussing the novel online.

       b. Describe any disadvantages with discussing the novel online.

3. Would you want to be part of another virtual book club? Explain.

4. Please define the term reader in your own words.

5. Please define the term "good reader" in your own words.

6. Do you consider yourself a "good reader?" Please explain your response.

Reading Exit Survey

    In working to improve the reading class, I would like to have your input regarding beneficial

assignments. Suggestions for improvement are most welcome.

    1. Class organization—did class time seem well spent? Did you feel prepared for activities

        on a day-to-day basis? Did lectures seem clear? Are the PowerPoint handouts helpful?

2. Textbooks—Bridging the Gap, Vocabulary, Did the textbooks present material in a clear, manageable way? Were exercises in books beneficial? Do you have any suggestions regarding any aspect of the required texts?

3. Myreadinglab software—did you find the computer exercises worth your time? Please explain why or why not.

4. APEC strategy. Do you think the strategy is helpful for understanding informational text such as Newsweek? Please explain your answer. Have you used the APEC strategy other than when forced in class? When? How? Explain its helpfulness or lack of helpfulness.

5. Vocabulary group work—Are the group presentations helpful to the group who presents? To the audience? How can this assignment be improved to improve students' vocabulary use?

6. Novel presentations—did creating your project improve your understanding of the characters, the plot, and the author's reason for writing? What suggestions would improve presentations and/or students' analysis?

7. Elearning—please describe your experiences discussing information with your classmates in a virtual environment. What did you like about this experience; what did you dislike about this experience. What suggestions do you have for me in designing online discussions?

APPENDIX E

MEMO: PERSONAL IDEAS OF READER/READING

Reading is highly personal and individualistic. Many participants described reading as important part of connecting with family members. Participants also described out-of classroom reading experiences as active, interest-driven and context-dependent. The following excerpts from interviews and Reading Interest Inventories (RII) were coded as highlighting personal notions of reading.

<u>Connecting to family relationships</u>

"I remember *Pocahontas* book because my grandmother used to read with me. She was really good about challenging me" (Beth, interview 1/21, line 182).

"My mother got me into that very early on. She was a crime-addicted person" (Evelyn, interview 3/ 4, line 71).

"But my mother said that you have to read *Little Prince* at least three times if you want to understand, so I read it three times and I understood the book. (Vickie, interview 1/20, line 223).

"I read Sesame Street to my son. He likes to eat the pages" (Megan, interview 3/1, line 8).

"*Where the Wild Things Are*! My parents read it every night to me and then my brother. Definitely books like that" (Slasher, interview 1/29, line 60).

"My mom would always pick out a book and she would have me read so many pages per night" (Laura, RII, question 5a).

"My sister gave me *Twilight* and I was hooked" (Karen, RII, question 9).

"Nightime [sic] story books" (Cora, RII, question 5a).

<u>Pursuing specific interests</u>

"I really like reading books about black people and the way they were treated and all" (Megan, interview 2/8, line 49).

"Fashion underground stuff, um, NYLON—I read every issue also underground music ones that I'll pick up from friends like articles from underground bands that I haven't heard about" (Slasher, interview 1/29, line 25).

"I'm reading a book called *Paramedic* and it is based on my career that I plan to go into" (Laura, RII, question 4).

"I read more magazines than books about my job like *Firehouse, Cheifs* [sic] *Notes*, etc." (Michael, RII, question 4).

"Yes, I look at many blogs and Facebook stuff for inspiring things. I am a creative person and I surf the web a lot to keep me going" (Vickie, RII, question 10).

"I want to improve my English [sic]. I have a Facebook and Wikipedia helps me" (Serge, RII, question 10).

"National Geographic Magazine I like most because it has stories about different cultures and people around the world" (Serge, RII, question 8).

APPENDIX F

CODE MAP OF PARTICIPANTS' ONLINE DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPTS

FINAL ITERATION: Theoretical Codes	
Socially Constructed Reading Identities	Sophisticated Reading Processes

THIRD ITERATION: Data Categories			
Group Harmony (GH)	Negotiated Meaning (NM)	Text Connections (CT)	Aesthetic Reading (ET)

SECOND ITERATION: Focused Codes

Addressing members by name or specific idea (GH) Piggy-backing off an earlier idea (GH) Validating information from an earlier post (GH) Posing additional questions for group (GH) Disagreeing with an idea or interpretation (GH)	Summarizing plot or character development (NM) Analyzing elements of fiction (NM) Offering interpretations (NM) Citing textual information to support or disprove interpretations (NM) Questioning textual elements (NM)	Connecting text to another text (CTT) Connecting text to self (CTS) Connecting text to world (CTW)	Delighting in author's craft (ET) Criticizing author's craft (ET) Enjoying the reading experience (ET)

FIRST ITERATION: Initial Codes

Piggy backing Offering different interpretation Discounting idea understanding Housekeeping Saying hello to everyone Complimenting members' ideas Thanking member Validating ideas Anticipating movie Using we over you	Trying to understand characters Revising original idea Summarizing reading Researching for more information Wanting to know more Addressing specific members Summarizing plot Finishing book Supporting with evidence Deciding to re-read for Predicting next chapter Recognizing and figuring out Wondering about plot	Connecting to another post Supporting summary with life Connecting story to life Connecting text to text Questioning self and ability	Questioning allusion Theorizing Disagreeing with author Wishing for an alternate ending Revealing confusion Realizing something not given Noting weak writing style Understanding names Criticizing author Noticing cool language Enjoying illustrations Enjoying author's craft

APPENDIX G

RED DIAMOND STATE COLLEGE
SYLLABUS: Learning Support Reading, Revised Spring Semester 2009
READ 0099
Note: Specific Details of this syllabus may be subject to change.

I   <u>GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION</u>: Provided by instructor per semester calendar.

II   <u>TEXT AND OTHER MATERIALS</u>:

     A.   **Required Texts: (available in the College Bookstore)**

          1.   Comprehension Text: John Langan, *Ten Steps to Advancing College Reading Skills*, 4th ed., Townsend Press, 2004.

          2.   Vocabulary Text: Donald Goodman and Carole Mohr, *Improving Vocabulary Skills*, Short Version, 3rd ed., Townsend Press, 2002.

     B.   **Supplemental Text**: Nannette Commander, Walter Cotter, and Carol Callahan, *Chart Your Success on the COMPASS*, 3rd ed. Contemporary Publishing Company of Raleigh, 2007.

     C.   **Other Resources/Materials:**

          Oakwood Campus:

               ACTT: Academic Computing, Tutoring, and Testing Center. Reading materials and computerized programs designed to deal with specific reading problems as assigned by instructor through ACTT staff.

               LRC: Learning Resource Center (Library). Books, periodicals, and computer resources available with student identification through reference librarian.

          Oconee Campus:

               OCTT/LRC located in library

III   <u>COURSE DESCRIPTION</u>: This course is designed to increase students' vocabulary and improve reading comprehension. It is mandated for students whose previous academic record, admissions test scores, and/or placement test scores indicate the need for additional preparation in reading comprehension, retention, and vocabulary skills needed for college-level texts. READ 0099 carries four (4) hours of institutional credit, which is not applicable to the requirements for graduation, but is a prerequisite or co-requisite for college level contextual courses.

IV   <u>COURSE OBJECTIVES</u>: Learning Support Reading, READ 0099, is designed to help the student acquire skills needed to read textbooks, periodicals, and class assignments with reasonable speed, greater comprehension, and increased retention, which will enable the student to meet the requirements of the University System of Georgia COMPASS Exit exam. In keeping with the college mission, READ 0099 is offered as a part of the Learning Support Program to enhance student academic success. The specific course objectives address an integral part of the College's general education outcomes.

     Specific objectives of this course are as follows:

     1.   to increase reading vocabulary through the use of context clues, word analysis, and extensive reading

     2.   to increase ability to understand information and details with a passage of reading (literal comprehension)

     3.   to increase understanding of how to find the Main Ideas in paragraphs and in longer passages

     4.   to improve understanding and recall by recognizing four of the most commonly used paragraph patterns

     5.   to increase ability to make logical inferences based on the text

     6.   to provide methods of interpreting specialized material such as maps, charts, diagrams, tables, etc.

     7.   to develop ability to distinguish between fact and opinion in various reading materials

     8.   to increase ability to recognize, identify, and understand figurative language

9.   to help increase reading rate and flexibility

10.   to enhance comprehension through the recognition of restatement and pronoun reference

V   COURSE OUTLINE:

    A.   Vocabulary Enrichment: Study of unfamiliar words through vocabulary textbook, reading assignments, and instructor presentation.

        9.   Completion of vocabulary unit assignments

        10.   Word cards

        11.   Unit tests, mid-term vocabulary test, and comprehensive final exam

    B.   Enhancement of Comprehension Skills: Study of literal and inferential comprehension through classroom assignments in textbooks, resource materials, and computer aided instruction.

        12.   Unit I: Context clues, restatement, pronoun references, facts and details.
                   Unit I Test

        13.   Unit II: Main ideas, supporting details, and patterns of organization.
                   Unit II Test - Comprehensive I & II

        14.   Unit III: Inferences, graphic materials, purpose & tone, facts & opinions, and figurative language.

    C.   Semester Project: Designated by instructor to provide comprehensive skill application and reading pleasure.

    D.   **Comprehensive Final Exam**: Including all comprehension and vocabulary skills studied.

VI   COURSE GRADING:

Grades will be based on the following criteria

Vocabulary		30%
Comprehension	(2 or 3 unit tests) 20-30%	
Project		20-30%
Final Exam		**20%**
	Total 100%	

Exit Requirements:

        15.   The student must complete all assignments and have a final average of **C** or better.

        16.   The student must pass the COMPASS Exit test in reading with a score of **78** or higher.

        17.   The student must adhere to the established attendance policy.

VII   COURSE POLICIES:

    A.   **Attendance**:   Attendance at all scheduled classes is expected. A student who misses more than five classes will fail class. Any exceptions will be handled on an individual basis at the discretion of the instructor.

    B.   **Make up work**: Make up work will be allowed only at the individual instructor's discretion after a conference with the student.

    C.   **Completion of Assignments**: Completion of all assignments is required and factors in the final grade average.

    D.   **Tests and Final Exam**: Dates for these will be announced at least one week in advance and must be taken at the scheduled times. Make-up dates will be arranged (preferably in advance of the scheduled time) only for verifiable, legitimate excuses.

    E   **COMPASS**: The Collegiate Exit Exam (COMPASS) will be given at the end of the semester. Eligibility requires:

        18.   completion of all course assignments.

        19.   class average of **70** or above.

        20.   acceptable attendance record.

    E.   Grading Scale for Class Work:

              A = 100-90

              B = 89-80

              C = 79-70

              D = 69-60

              F =   59 or lower

RE-TESTING FOR COMPASS EXIT:

If a student does not pass the COMPASS Exit Test on his/her first attempt, the student may re-take the test at a specific time that will be announced at the beginning of the semester.

EXIT SCORE: 80 OR ABOVE

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY:

1. Students who are required to take any Learning Support courses must enroll in said courses before enrolling in any college credit courses.

2. However, if only one or two Learning Support courses are required, the student may enroll concurrently in college level courses for which the LS courses are a co-requisite or for which he or she has satisfied the prerequisite.

3. The maximum college credit which can be earned before completion of all Learning Support requirements is twenty semester hours of college-level credit.

4. If a student withdraws from a Learning Support class, he/she will **not** be allowed to remain in any college-level course or CPC course with the exception of GSCE 1101.

5. The student who is unable to complete a given Learning Support course in one semester may be allowed additional time to complete the course, provided he or she is making satisfactory progress. He or she will receive the grade of IP and repeat the course. He or she will receive a grade and institutional credit for the course when he or she meets its requirements. **The maximum time allowed is two semesters for READ 0099.**

6. For READ 0099, a grade of U is issued when a student has not completed a Learning Support course in two semesters. The U may also be given before the second semester if a student shows little interest in or promise of passing a Learning Support course. The U results in the student's suspension for three years after which time the student may apply for readmission with a fresh start, retake the placement test, and have his or her records indicate "0" attempts in the Learning Support area for which he or she was suspended.

7. **Learning Support Appeal**: A student who is suspended from an exit level Learning Support class may appeal for one additional semester. Refer to the GSC Catalog page 84 for further details.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY: Students who exhibit behaviors which are considered to obstruct or disrupt the class or its learning activities will be considered under the Board of Regents Policy on Disruptive Behavior. Behaviors which are considered to be inappropriate in this classroom include sleeping, eating (optional), coming in late, interrupting others, talking out of turn, **leaving a cell phone on**, inappropriate behavior during group work, verbal behavior that is disrespectful of other students or the teacher, or others that may be disruptive. Students who exhibit such behavior will be given a verbal warning by the class teacher, then will be given a written warning in a meeting with the chair of the Department/Division, and then will be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in the Gainesville College Student Handbook.

Cell phones must be turned **OFF** and kept out of sight; **beepers** must be turned to **vibrate mode only**.

I   **GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION:** Provided by instructor per semester calendar.

II   **TEXT AND OTHER MATERIALS:**

D.   **Required Texts: (available in the College Bookstore)**

1. Comprehension Text: John Langan, *Ten Steps to Advancing College Reading Skills*, 4th ed., Townsend Press, 2004.

2. Vocabulary Text: Donald Goodman and Carole Mohr, *Improving Vocabulary Skills*, Short Version, 3rd ed., Townsend Press, 2002.

E.   **Supplemental Text**: Nannette Commander, Walter Cotter, and Carol Callahan, *Chart Your Success on the COMPASS*, 3rd ed. Contemporary Publishing Company of Raleigh, 2007.

F.   **Other Resources/Materials:**

Oakwood Campus:

ACTT: Academic Computing, Tutoring, and Testing Center. Reading materials and computerized programs designed to deal with specific reading problems as assigned by instructor through ACTT staff.

LRC: Learning Resource Center (Library). Books, periodicals, and computer resources available with student identification through reference librarian.

Oconee Campus:

OCTT/LRC located in library

III   <u>COURSE DESCRIPTION:</u> This course is designed to increase students' vocabulary and improve reading comprehension. It is mandated for students whose previous academic record, admissions test scores, and/or placement test scores indicate the need for additional preparation in reading comprehension, retention, and vocabulary skills needed for college-level texts. READ 0099 carries four (4) hours of institutional credit, which is not applicable to the requirements for graduation, but is a prerequisite or co-requisite for college level contextual courses.

 IV   <u>COURSE OBJECTIVES:</u> Learning Support Reading, READ 0099, is designed to help the student acquire skills needed to read textbooks, periodicals, and class assignments with reasonable speed, greater comprehension, and increased retention, which will enable the student to meet the requirements of the University System of Georgia COMPASS Exit exam. In keeping with the college mission, READ 0099 is offered as a part of the Learning Support Program to enhance student academic success. The specific course objectives address an integral part of the College's general education outcomes.

        Specific objectives of this course are as follows:
        21.   to increase reading vocabulary through the use of context clues, word analysis, and extensive reading
        22.   to increase ability to understand information and details with a passage of reading (literal comprehension)
        23.   to increase understanding of how to find the Main Ideas in paragraphs and in longer passages
        24.   to improve understanding and recall by recognizing four of the most commonly used paragraph patterns
        25.   to increase ability to make logical inferences based on the text
        26.   to provide methods of interpreting specialized material such as maps, charts, diagrams, tables, etc.
        27.   to develop ability to distinguish between fact and opinion in various reading materials
        28.   to increase ability to recognize, identify, and understand figurative language
        9.   to help increase reading rate and flexibility
        10.   to enhance comprehension through the recognition of restatement and pronoun reference

 V   <u>COURSE OUTLINE:</u>

        A.   <u>Vocabulary Enrichment</u>: Study of unfamiliar words through vocabulary textbook, reading assignments, and instructor presentation.
                29.   Completion of vocabulary unit assignments
                30.   Word cards
                31.   Unit tests, mid-term vocabulary test, and comprehensive final exam

        B.   <u>Enhancement of Comprehension Skills</u>: Study of literal and inferential comprehension through classroom assignments in textbooks, resource materials, and computer aided instruction.
                32.   Unit I: Context clues, restatement, pronoun references, facts and details.
                        Unit I Test
                33.   Unit II: Main ideas, supporting details, and patterns of organization.
                        Unit II Test - Comprehensive I & II
                34.   Unit III: Inferences, graphic materials, purpose & tone, facts & opinions, and figurative language.

        C.   <u>Semester Project</u>:   Designated by instructor to provide comprehensive skill application and reading pleasure.

        D.   **<u>Comprehensive Final Exam</u>**: Including all comprehension and vocabulary skills studied.

 VI   <u>COURSE GRADING:</u>

Grades will be based on the following criteria

Vocabulary		30%
Comprehension	(2 or 3 unit tests)	20-30%
Project		20-30%
Final Exam		**20%**
	Total 100%	

Exit Requirements:

35. The student must complete all assignments and have a final average of **C** or better.
36. The student must pass the COMPASS Exit test in reading with a score of **78** or higher.
37. The student must adhere to the established attendance policy.

VII COURSE POLICIES:

A. **Attendance**: Attendance at all scheduled classes is expected. A student who misses more than five classes will fail class. Any exceptions will be handled on an individual basis at the discretion of the instructor.

B. **Make up work**: Make up work will be allowed only at the individual instructor's discretion after a conference with the student.

C. **Completion of Assignments**: Completion of all assignments is required and factors in the final grade average.

D. **Tests and Final Exam**: Dates for these will be announced at least one week in advance and must be taken at the scheduled times. Make-up dates will be arranged (preferably in advance of the scheduled time) only for verifiable, legitimate excuses.

E **COMPASS**: The Collegiate Exit Exam (COMPASS) will be given at the end of the semester.
Eligibility requires:
38. completion of all course assignments.
39. class average of **70** or above.
40. acceptable attendance record.

F. Grading Scale for Class Work:
A = 100-90
B = 89-80
C = 79-70
D = 69-60
F =   59 or lower

RE-TESTING FOR COMPASS EXIT:
If a student does not pass the COMPASS Exit Test on his/her first attempt, the student may re-take the test at a specific time that will be announced at the beginning of the semester.

EXIT SCORE: 80 OR ABOVE

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY:

1. Students who are required to take any Learning Support courses must enroll in said courses before enrolling in any college credit courses.
2. However, if only one or two Learning Support courses are required, the student may enroll concurrently in college level courses for which the LS courses are a co-requisite or for which he or she has satisfied the prerequisite.

3. The maximum college credit which can be earned before completion of all Learning Support requirements is twenty semester hours of college-level credit.

4. If a student withdraws from a Learning Support class, he/she will **not** be allowed to remain in any college-level course or CPC course with the exception of GSCE 1101.

5. The student who is unable to complete a given Learning Support course in one semester may be allowed additional time to complete the course, provided he or she is making satisfactory progress. He or she will receive the grade of <u>IP</u> and repeat the course. He or she will receive a grade and institutional credit for the course when he or she meets its requirements. **The maximum time allowed is two semesters for READ 0099.**

8. For READ 0099, a grade of <u>U</u> is issued when a student has not completed a Learning Support course in two semesters. The <u>U</u> may also be given before the second semester if a student shows little interest in or promise of passing a Learning Support course. The <u>U</u> results in the student's suspension for three years after which time the student may apply for readmission with a fresh start, retake the placement test, and have his or her records indicate "0" attempts in the Learning Support area for which he or she was suspended.

9. **Learning Support Appeal**: A student who is suspended from an exit level Learning Support class may appeal for one additional semester. Refer to the GSC Catalog page 84 for further details.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY: Students who exhibit behaviors which are considered to obstruct or disrupt the class or its learning activities will be considered under the Board of Regents Policy on Disruptive Behavior. Behaviors which are considered to be inappropriate in this classroom include sleeping, eating (optional), coming in late, interrupting others, talking out of turn, **leaving a cell phone on**, inappropriate behavior during group work, verbal behavior that is disrespectful of other students or the teacher, or others that may be disruptive. Students who exhibit such behavior will be given a verbal warning by the class teacher, then will be given a written warning in a meeting with the chair of the Department/Division, and then will be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in the Gainesville College Student Handbook.

Cell phones must be turned **OFF** and kept out of sight; **beepers** must be turned to **vibrate mode only**.

SPECIFIC DETAILS OF THIS SYLLABUS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

APPENDIX H

COMPASS PRACTICE PASSAGE

PASSAGE ONE

You may use the following question to help you focus your reading:

How did the use of tokens influence the development of writing?

(*The following text is adapted from R.A. Roy, Physical Science: An Integrated Approach, 1991 by Contemporary Publishing.*)

One scenario for the development of writing uses four stages. In the first stage merchants used the tokens to represent commodities such as sheep, jugs of oil, or clothing materials. This allowed them to keep track of their "inventory." In the second stage merchants began to use the tokens in actual trading. When they shipped goods, they would enclose the appropriate tokens in sealed clay balls called bullae. When the goods arrived, the recipient would break the bullae open and check the shipment against the tokens which acted as an invoice. Thus the bullae were the first bills of lading. In the next stage, merchants made token marks on the outside of the bullae before firing them so there was a record inside and outside. Finally merchants realized they could more easily just make all the token marks on a clay tablet and disperse with lots of tokens and sealed balls. Thus, "pictographs," the shapes and marks on the tokens began to represent real objects. Then the pictographs would easily represent, in a more abstract way, a work, the name of the object. As symbols began to represent sounds, which could be put together to make words, alphabets were developed. Because writing was tied in with trade, it developed and spread rapidly. (Using symbols to represent objects also let to another useful invention: money.)

1. The best title for the above passage is

A. Trade and The Development of Writing

B. Tokens, Bullae, and Pictographs

C. The Invention of Money

D. Trade and Inventory

2. At what stage in the development of writing did merchants make token marks on the outside of the bullae before firing them so there was a record inside and outside?

A. the second stage

B. the third stage

C. The final stage

D. the stage where symbols represent sounds

E. the first stage

3. Bullae were used by merchants for what purpose?

A. The bullae held the tokens, which acted as the merchant's invoice

B. Pictographs, the shapes and marks that began to represent real objects, were written on the bullae

C. The bullae represented commodities such as sheep, jugs of oil, or clothing materials.

D. Bullae was the name given to the clay tablet used as the invoice for shipment of goods.

E. Bullae were used by merchants in place of tokens.

4. The best statement of main idea of the above passage is:

A. writing developed as merchants of trade began using symbols to represent objects.

B. bullae and tokens were the base of our alphabet

C. marks on a clay tablet, bullae, and tokens played important roles in the trade process.

D. the inventions of writing and money were based on using symbols to represent objects.

E. bullae were the first bills of trading.

5. The author discusses the four stages in the development of writing through

A. cause and effect

B. demonstrating a comparative relationship among the stages

C. sequential order of the stages

D. a pattern where one element is seen as causing another element

E. comparison and contrast