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# WAYS OF TAKING MEANING FROM TEXTS: READING IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

*ABSTRACT: In this piece, a college professor and a high school teacher analyze and interpret responses to detailed questionnaires about reading practices that they administered in high school and college classrooms. The authors name recurring motifs, offering examples and some brief interpretation of six major motifs which emerged as useable analytical categories. Finding fewer differences between high school and college students than they initially assumed, the authors are lead to discuss how students' language about reading differs more from some of the most valued "ways of taking meaning from texts" in academic life. They conclude with some brief suggestions for future research and with a discussion of several ways that teachers might "teach" reading differently in order to open up a more varied repertoire of reading practices. In addition to suggesting that teachers could do more to name and to elaborate reading practices in precise terms and in specific contexts, the authors consider such pedagogical strategies such as readerly practices of "marking a text"; sequencing reading practices; and teaching the academic intertextual practices of citation much earlier in schooling.*

We met and began our friendship and our professional collaboration, across the presumed divide between high school and college teaching, in "Looking Both Ways," a professional development seminar co-sponsored by the City University of New York (CUNY) and the New York City Board of Education. Aiming for a view of literacy that spans students' development over an eight-year period, the Looking Both Ways seminar provides opportunities for high school and college teachers to share, to discuss, and to reflect upon their knowledge and experience in the interests of strengthening literacy education for the students they teach. (See <http://www.lookingbothways.cuny.edu>)

For us, one of the most powerful assignments in the seminar asked us to visit each other's classrooms. For both of us, it had been many years since we had an opportunity for direct observation of the different contexts for experiences of teaching and learning in high school

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and college classrooms. When we visited each other's classrooms at Flushing High School, a large urban high school in Queens, New York City, and Queens College-CUNY, we were struck by the sometimes different expectations of student reading and the often different practices, routines, and language that articulate and represent reading in high school and in college. Our experiences as teachers suggested that, to some degree, teacher expectations produce student performances and that students are often confused by differences in expectations for reading practices, especially when those differences are not articulated explicitly.

Shirley Brice Heath's ethnographic study of schools and communities leads her to articulate carefully the transitions that young students must make between their home literacies and often different school literacies:

Children have to learn to select, hold, and retrieve content from books and other written or printed texts in accordance with their community's rules or "ways of taking," and the children's learning follows community paths of language socialization. In each society, certain kinds of childhood participation in literacy events may precede others, as the developmental sequence builds toward the whole complex of home and community behaviors characteristic of the society. The ways of taking employed in the school may in turn build directly on the preschool development, may require substantial adaptation on the part of the children, or may even run directly counter to aspects of the community's pattern. (Heath, 119)

Heath distinguishes between different reading practices in different social contexts, an effort which leads her to invent language to describe what readers do *with* and *to* texts when they read. In the year following our participation in the Looking Both Ways seminar, we had an opportunity to undertake a small research project of our own in which we collected and interpreted some of the language that high school and college students use to represent different "ways of taking" meaning from texts (i.e., different reading practices).

Our research began with the premise that investigation and interpretation of the representations of "ways of taking" meaning from texts through written questionnaires would allow us to consider how student languages represent reading practices in high school and college classrooms. We collected responses to detailed questionnaires about reading practices and understandings of reading practices, questionnaires that called for language in response, rather than merely checking off answers, from 3 classes of high school seniors, at Flushing High School; from 1 class of the second required English course at

Queensborough Community College-CUNY; and from 4 classes of the writing-intensive “English 120: Writing, Literature, Culture” course, at Queens College-CUNY. (See questionnaire in Appendix.) We saw this research as clearly limited in its scope and, consequently, in claims that could be made, but we also saw it as deeply qualitative or interpretive in its close attention to the language and practices that teachers and students—positioned across the high school-college divide and across the teacher-student divide—use to represent “ways of taking” meaning from texts.

This preliminary collection and interpretation of language used to represent reading practices connects with our larger goal of getting better at articulating reading practices in our own classrooms and among our colleagues. We want, for example, to find more effective responses to readers’ tendencies to put into a text what isn’t there, what students often represent as “reading between the lines.” Yet, we also understand that there is a productive, sanctioned “reading between the lines” in interpretive practice (just as there are both sanctioned “misreadings” and “wrong” ones). We had a sense of where we wanted to get to (of goals for our students as readers), but we had little sense—beyond the merely anecdotal—of how students and teachers use language to represent reading practices for themselves and for one another.

Prior to administering this questionnaire, we could only surmise that our students approached reading by using individual patterns that they had essentially learned early, developed over the years, and used to achieve both personal pleasure gained from reading and to fulfill school reading requirements. The data that emerged allowed us to evaluate in an interpretive, rather than a scientific, manner what motifs have evolved for our students when they describe their reading. First, we both read all the responses that we had gathered. Next, we discussed our general reactions and began, in a preliminary way, to identify commonalities. In our re-reading process, we began to notice and to name recurring motifs which allowed us to recognize analytical categories. In our analysis of our data, we found 6 dominant motifs in our students’ language which we named: (1) Logistics of Reading; (2) Duty; (3) Utility; (4) Mechanics; (5) Image; and (6) Identification. In the following paragraphs, we offer an example (or examples) and some brief interpretation of each motif.

## **(1) LOGISTICS OF READING**

We asked a very specific question: Where and when do you read for this class? The answers varied widely. It was surprising to learn

that a majority of the students surveyed read while in transit, on the bus or train, or even in the car to and from work or school. Many read in bed late at night before sleeping.

Here is an interesting revelation: "if no one is in the house, then I read out loud and pretend I'm one of the characters." Another student stated: "I read at night . . . only you and the book are alive." Many students read with music playing in the background: "I like to escape to far away places, where only I know where I am."

We had a sense of how difficult it is for most of our students to find time and space that is quiet enough, free enough of distractions for them to engage deeply in their reading, for them to concentrate for extended periods of time. Examples: "When I read, I have to be in a quiet, secluded place where I can concentrate on my reading," and "I usually read for this class very late in the evening before I go to bed because when I'm in a relaxed mood I tend to understand the reading the first time rather than having to go over it again." In general, we had a sense of our students being in search of a quiet space (and time) in their lives, so that they could concentrate on reading.

In general, our students seem to try to fit their reading between other demands, that is, in any time available in their busy lives. Some described the possibility of fitting their required English readings around other demands, in ways that would not be possible with other subjects.

## (2) DUTY

The dutiful reader. Being a good student. Reading for the goals of schooling. Students' language claims the role of the "proper" reader. Often students responded with a version of reading as a function of being a student, articulating in the process a sense of what is "proper" to school reading, and never mentioning ways of reading that might not seem to belong to their roles as students. For example, perhaps the dutiful reader may at times be pleasantly surprised when a reading experience will inspire curiosity in a topic or a desire to go beyond the assigned text. However, we saw very little evidence of this reaching beyond a very limited sense of what is "proper" to school reading. Here, we note the issue of whose authority defines acts of reading, of interpretation. While we saw little explicit claim of any reader's authority, we noted the implicit assumption of a teacher's authority in defining particular, and, hence, limited goals for reading practices (but, of course, resistance may not be articulated to us).

Example: "I read the entire text from beginning to end slowly enough to understand so that I only have to read it one time." This is

reading as a dutiful function of schooling in which other possible reasons for or uses of reading, such as reading for pleasure or intellectual curiosity, are not considered.

### (3) UTILITY

Many students are utilitarian readers, that is, they read “to get” something—a better grade, information or knowledge on how to do something. Overwhelmingly, students responded that they read material on the Internet almost daily. Many seem to focus on an interest that they may have: “I always read about basketball. I’m really interested in it and every time I’m on the Internet, I’m drawn to check the sports section.” In interpreting, we often found it almost impossible to separate “utility” from “duty”: “I listen to what the teacher says to look for in the passage.” It seems that the two work in complementary ways: teachers define, or are understood to be defining, reading practices in terms of narrow senses of use (e.g., read this in preparation for a quiz, or read and focus on something particular or for some specific “information”), and students dutifully follow their distilled sense of a particular reading experience’s utility.

An interesting vagueness emerged when students articulated utilitarian notions of needing to understand what one reads. Example: “It is expected for me to understand what I read. And to know how to keep everything I know in my head so if anything is asked to me about the story I would be able to answer it.” Notice the almost absolute conflation of understand and know, and also how understanding really seems to come down to being prepared for being asked, being tested. This seems to offer us an opportunity to think about how more expansive notions of “understanding” become victims of schooling. Students seem to read for a specific purpose (e.g., to pass an exam, etc.). We saw no significant evidence of students engaged in a process of collecting and relating ideas from one area with anything else they know. Moreover, we saw no evidence of reading as a practice of integrating knowledge or understanding from varied subjects or courses. Few signs of interdisciplinary or other intellectual connections appeared. Why, for example, do so few of the students we surveyed seem able to think about knowing something the way one knows an answer on a test as different from understanding something the way one engages in interpretive speculation, conversation, and revision about a text’s possible meanings? Their experiences with reading in and for school seem not to have suggested such uses for reading practices.

#### (4) MECHANICS

Reading from beginning to end; reading the ending first; note-taking and underlining; re-reading and reviewing; skipping to middle or end; checking how many pages and/or chapters in assigned reading; using a dictionary; making outlines; reading blurbs, introductions, back covers, and Cliff notes.

Some students are “mechanical readers.” They follow a learned or prescribed method which provides them a comfort zone, as long as the text doesn’t challenge their familiar methods. Students reveal their inabilities to tolerate not understanding what they have read. They feel obliged to be able to understand, to analyze, and to evaluate critically what they have read. They express a need to learn and to improve vocabulary as they read. (More depend on dictionaries than on context clues.) They reveal a fear of failure, a lack of self-esteem, and a fear of difficulty in understanding required readings.

Many students re-read particular passages over and over in an effort to clarify the meanings to themselves. Some feel, at times, that they are expected to absorb and to retain what they have read. Example: “When you read you can digest the story. Get the nutrition from the story and keep it.”

Students seem to be either stuck on understanding each sentence as they proceed or, in contrast, skimming and skipping ahead. That is, there seems to be a general division between the two strategies, and little sense of a dynamic between both strategies in an individual reader. So that, it seems one is either a reader paralyzed by the need to understand sentences, or a reader cavalier about sentences and local details.

Examples: “It’s like I read a sentence word for word & at the period I make sure I understand the sentence’s whole meaning before I go on to the next sentence. And, with every comprehensible sentence that I pass, my understanding of the context widens.”

“An experience is when I read the short story ‘The Problem of Cell 13.’ The story was interesting but it had parts that made me want to put the book down and stop reading it. So what I did was read the first few pages and some middle pages and the end and I understood the story.”

Although we did notice some students combining these strategies, overall we saw reliance on a technique of reading, rather than a repertoire of techniques. Students’ dutiful representations of their mechanics of reading show them to be learning or to have learned some reading practices that characterize schooled literacies.

In contrast, for non-required reading, magazines and newspapers stand out as the favorites. The reasons stated were that these allow readers great freedom to flip through pages and to peruse rather than to read whole articles or sections. In our students’ busy lifestyles

(work, travel, study, home), the portability of these texts is a great asset.

## (5) IMAGE

The visual reader: "I picture"; "I saw the image." Reading to see pictures. A kind of reading that pays attention to one modality of representation. For example, in reading a passage from Nathaniel Hawthorne's story, "The Birth-mark," no mention is made of the sound, of hearing the narrator's voice. Here is a slightly more sophisticated articulation of the very frequent references to 'picturing' or making an image of what one reads: "As I was reading this section of "The Birth-mark," I was creating a visual picture of the birthmark in my head."

Example: "While reading this passage the author had many descriptions of a woman and I tried to visualize her in my mind. He used vivid descriptions that made me imagine her. But honestly I was bored of listening to him speak about a woman and her birthmark." Notice the effort "to visualize," and the praise for Hawthorne's vivid description, although here we also detect a dutiful response. Compare this interest in seeing what's in the text, with the honest admission of boredom when "listening." This raised some questions for us, such as: What can be read by seeing? What must be heard? What can be seen? What must be heard, listened for?

## (6) IDENTIFICATION

The most meaningful reading that students have done in class to fulfill requirements has been the reading of literature that has allowed them to relate the experiences of the characters to their own lives. Many feel that they have established a better understanding of life situations through reading. Some commonalities that emerged were trying to imagine oneself as the main character, undergoing or experiencing the character's thought processes and emotions, and trying to live the part of the character. As one student wrote, "I am Romeo the one who kissed Juliet for the first time."

Example: "I try to read every story as if I was living it. I like to feel as if I were one of the characters in it or the writer himself/herself." There's strength in this strong desire for identification with fictional characters. However, the other side seems to be the large number of students who describe reading what is other to them as beyond identification, as somehow not relevant to their experiences, or even to the "real" world.

Example: "And I try to make the best out of the book by paying

attention to what the writer has to say and seeing if it relates to my own life." Here, we see an effort to make the best of a bad situation and almost the only way to do this is by relating to one's own life—a sort of narcissistic solipsism. This need "to relate" seems to drive students' reading, making it impossible for reading to provide the sort of vicarious experiences, the unexpected relations, that we and our colleagues have come to value as readers.

## PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

Despite our expectations, we found fewer differences between these high school readers and these college readers than we had anticipated, and the differences we did find were more between why and how we read and why and how our students read. It's interesting to note that students appear to read primarily to fulfill assignments. When they read for their own reasons, their reading does not appear to be what we consider literary. Overwhelmingly, the differences between the high school students and the college students were minor. Rather, significant differences in ways of articulating reading and in "ways of taking meaning" from texts seem to be more between "our" literate practices and those of many of our students. It's fair to say that we were troubled by a certain lack of a sense of reading as an exciting, self-forming, meaning-taking, meaning-making, life-changing activity, in most but not all cases. Now, we would be interested in asking more bluntly: "Why do you read—both for school and in the rest of your life?"

We did see that students' experiences of reading are almost entirely shaped by their schooling (or perhaps their responses to our surveys are what is shaped by schooling). We have discussed the six major motifs we found in students' articulations of reading. We saw very little articulation of reading as pleasure or of reading as art.

Are we seeing the place of reading in these students' lives? We want to be cautious about assuming that just because we don't find what we value that we don't find anything to value. For example, a few students described their reading pleasure ("I like reading and I do it all the time."); their interpretive freedom ("As a reader, I can interpret a work anyway I wish, as long as I can support it textually."); their ability to bond with others, "even the teacher" ("One class I remember, we were talking about Mr. Vertigo by Paul Auster. A student was reading aloud one of the funniest paragraphs in the text. It was very ingenious in the humor. We all laughed aloud, even the teacher."); and their capacity for surprise ("I don't read the ending first because I try to guess it, and am always pleasantly surprised when I'm wrong.").

We would like to suggest some questions for future investiga-



tion. These include the following: If students retain such emphasis on making pictures of what they read and on identifying with what they read, what happens to thinking about form? Implicit in the above is the larger question of how students from K through 12 are taught to read texts. How are student readers being asked to engage texts? Where is the response that is not merely naive realism or identification? For example, when a student is asked to describe a character, how does this question – whether asking for an oral or a written response – lead to “ways of taking” meaning from the text? Do we know how to invite students into a dynamic move between initial impressions and close reading, between a first sense of what we experience in a text and what happens when we return to specific language? Are we introducing the mysterious alchemy of practices represented too simply and too singularly as “close reading”?

What might teachers do to teach reading differently, or to open up a more varied sense of “ways of taking meaning from texts”? Since, as we suggested at the beginning, teacher expectations tend to produce student performances and students often remain confused by differences in expectations for reading practices in different academic contexts, especially when those differences are not articulated explicitly, our first suggestions have to do with both teachers and students moving toward more explicit articulation of reading, that is, naming and elaborating reading practices in precise terms and in specific contexts. For teachers, this will mean not assuming ourselves and hence naturalizing the ways of reading that we have come to take for granted. Do teachers have precise and elaborated language for describing how they take meaning from texts, or how they use their reading, both in the sense of reading as a varied repertoire of practices and as texts? Our attention to the language of response in our survey – both to what is spoken and to what is not – leaves us even more convinced that a multiple and varied repertoire of practices lurks inside the term (the gerund) *reading*, just as multiple differences lurk inside the gerund *writing*. For example, experienced readers sometimes read quickly for the gist and, at other times, follow different practices for deeper and closer understanding. As we have noted, very few student responses seemed to suggest an awareness of varied and multiple reading practices.

We suggest, then, the value and necessity of having an explicit conversation with students about *how they read* and not just about *what they read*. By “how,” we have in mind both the material dimensions of reading (e.g., where and when; with or without a pencil in one’s hand) and the conceptual understandings of reading (e.g., for what purposes, in relation to what sense of identity – intellectual, student, information-seeker, pleasure-seeker, etc.). Thus, we encourage a meta-conversation about literacy practices, including writing, often and infor-

mally, about the varied experiences of reading for our classes and also in different disciplines and in non-school reading (e.g., religious uses of texts; following directions in a cookbook; employment related literacies; etc.). Such conversations with their explicit focuses on different literacy practices need to include specific articulation (i.e., naming and elaboration) of reading as an intellectual practice. How do we make meaning when we read? How do we use writing *and* reading to discover ideas? When reading Gertrude Stein's so-called "difficult" texts with college English majors, for example, students were invited to write analytical narratives of their reading experiences, which meant, for most of them, describing an encounter with texts that resisted their usual sense of mastery over meanings and that, hence, required new reading strategies and new conceptualizations of what it means to read. While many narrated their frustration and even anger with texts that wouldn't bend or yield to their interpretive wills, many also began to put into question previous assumptions about what it means to read, in general, and about what it means to read "literary" language, in particular. Writing an analytical narrative of a reading experience meant telling a story of making one's point of view, of developing an interpretive response. It meant working to find a language to account for texts that demand different reading practices, and, in the process, having to find language to describe what had previously been taken for granted about reading literature. An analogous pedagogical practice used in high school classes has students keep literature logs, not using the logs specifically to react to the literature being read, but also to engage in an internal dialogue about *how* one reads a particular text.

One specific *material* practice that we are concerned to emphasize is marking a text, taking a pencil in one's hand with the authority to begin speaking back to an author. As educators, we want to produce occasions for reading to become *literally* a form of writing, the beginning of writing; we explain to our students that writing in the margins and/or elsewhere in response to what one has read is always a part of how one takes meaning from a text in school, or better makes meaning *with* a text. When the one of us who teaches college visited the other's public high school classroom on the day on which new books were being distributed, a stunning and obvious realization became available. Because they don't own their books, students were explicitly told to return the books in exactly the condition in which they received them. Years of urging student readers to interact with their reading *through writing questions and comments in the margins* became newly legible as counter-intuitive for students after many years of being told not to mark their texts. Becoming an anecdote that it has been useful to recount many times to college teachers of reading and writing, this experience complicated the superficial sense that college students don't mark their books simply because they plan to re-sell them.

Years of one kind of literacy practice and its sense of books as needing to remain unchanged and to be returned to the institution unchanged by one's particular experience as a reader go deeper than the immediate desire to get some of one's money back through resale; these assumed relations between reader and text come down to fundamental conceptualizations of what books are, what it means to use them, and who has authority (ownership) over books as objects and as texts. College teachers can certainly address these issues explicitly, rather than merely wondering about their students' resistance to marking texts. Moreover, given the institutional ownership of books and given the effect on readers of years of such a proprietary relationship with books, we can suggest alternative methods of "marking" a text or recording one's response as one reads and thinks (e.g., using post-its to "mark" the text, or note-taking on other paper, or keeping a journal or, as we mention above, a literature log in which one records one's experience as a reader and not merely a summary of the content.) Whatever method of "marking" a text is used, we have found it to be helpful to recur frequently to these records of reading in order, for example, to model how initial responses might lead to new questions, to re-reading of certain parts, and to the composing of a larger interpretive synthesis.

We also want to suggest that, as teachers, themselves, become more precise in articulating reading practices in their own classrooms and among their colleagues, lesson plans and assignments might name different ways of reading, and that we might sequence reading practices as a way of teaching them. In an example taken from the experience of teaching with David Bartholomae's and Anthony Petrosky's *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*, first-year college writing students, having read a section of Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory*, "The Achievement of Desire," were asked to relate their reading of Rodriguez with their experiences of schooling and in particular with Rodriguez's claim that "education requires radical self-reformation" (*Ways* 636). It will surprise few experienced teachers that most students conceived of the intellectual work of relating the text to experience as comparison, and, in many cases, as a rather weak form of comparison that doesn't really foreground the reason for the comparison, or the terms of the comparison. This way of reading deepens, however, when, rather than simply leaving this complex text behind as if they had finished with it, the students were asked to consider in depth *the sorts of reading practices that Rodriguez himself enacts* when he uses his reading of Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* to frame his own experience, a framing that Rodriguez accomplishes as much through revision of Hoggart as through mere extension or application of Hoggart. Then, in a sequenced reading and writing assignment, students moved to a consideration of an excerpt from Paulo Freire's *Peda-*

*gogy of the Oppressed*, "The 'Banking' Concept of Education." At this point, their reading of Freire's text became a way of re-considering or re-reading Rodriguez, a process that, for many, meant returning to an essay, which they had mostly considered a story, in order to unpack the ways that it makes an argument about education and literacy that can be seen in relation to Freire's explicit argument for "problem-posing" education (Ways 354). (Many examples of sequencing reading and writing can be found in the assignments provided in Bartholomae's and Petrosky's *Ways of Reading*.) In addition to having students practice varied, albeit connected, ways of taking meaning from texts, such a reading and writing sequence also foregrounds explicitly the conceptualization that there are varied ways of working with texts.

In literature classes, too, we have found that the thing we call "close reading" (or working closely with local examples of language) is more a complex dynamic or set of practices than it is a single practice. Rather than simply naming it "close reading," therefore, we have tried to explore how different modalities of response are engaged when we read closely. For example, what students often represent as "reading between the lines" can be engaged explicitly as an idiomatic figure for the sense that something besides what's literally *in* or *on* the lines enters into our reading. In other words, as we suggested earlier, there is a productive, sanctioned "reading between the lines" in interpretive practice (just as there are both sanctioned "misreadings" and "wrong" ones). When language engages a reader's imagination, she might be tempted to make it mean whatever she imagines it to mean. On the other hand, without such an engagement of imagination, nothing of much value or interest will come from attention to the text, no matter how "close." The complex, interactive dynamic between our imaginative responses and the discipline of learning to attend to what's actually written is as difficult to learn as it is crucial to meaningful interpretation. Only repeated practice can teach a reader both to trust her intuitive imaginative beginnings as starting points and to return to the text with a more skeptical and disciplined attention to the specific language. This repeated practice can be sequenced, so that readers metacognitively know that they are doing different, but related, things in response to a text's possible meanings, that they are enacting a complex dialectic between their readerly imaginations and their abilities to focus on what's on the page.

We also want to suggest the importance of introducing and discussing early in schooling what it means to cite and to quote. By the time that most students arrive in college, this particular use of texts — and the intertextual conversation between and among authors that it represents and allows for — remains foreign territory. Whether in the form that academic writers use of explicitly locating one's observations in relation to what others have said, or in the less-defined ways

that writers allude to what and how others have written, seeing intertextual connections between texts and imagining that texts have this dimension and are not merely discreet units in a lesson plan could become the familiar terrain of reading. Through this representation of the work of connecting texts, student readers and writers might move beyond the sort of written response of offering a string of quotations and toward the more difficult practice of integrating one's own voice as a writer (following on active reading) through connections with and differences from the specific emphases and particular words of quoted material. We need to explore (and to think with our students about) such issues as: why writers cite, why they sometimes don't, which genres require careful citation, which genres invite more subtle acts of borrowing. An early emphasis on citation can also engage the syntactical and grammatical difficulties that emerge for all of us as writers when we quote, difficulties that emerge on the boundaries between our language and the language of quotations. Learning to think about how – at least in certain disciplinary representations of knowledge – our writing enacts a record of our reading practices can help lead to specific considerations of such issues as how much of the writer's language should accompany a quotation, why the quoted language is not self-evident, why academics care so much about citation, how citation is linked to a sense of reading and research as an intellectual and intertextual conversation, what scholarly and non-scholarly sources are, how different media make different uses of evidence and authorship (e.g., the Internet), and why plagiarism is considered such a crime in the academy. Our experience suggests that, without deep and early exploration of the high value we put on citation, our urging of citation and our punishing of plagiarism can appear to be merely arbitrary or idiosyncratic, rather than arising out of particular and strongly held conceptualizations of reading and writing.

Finding fewer differences between high school and college students than might have been assumed is potentially useful for building alliance, empathy, and a sense of common purpose among high school and college teachers. This might also offer some useful examination of the "B" in LBW (Looking Both Ways) – maybe the "both ways" need not always be between high schools and colleges as if across a great divide?

## APPENDIX

### Reading Questionnaire

We would like you to offer your honest responses to these questions. Every response is important to us. Each question calls for several sentences, rather than merely words and phrases.

1. In your own words, describe the different kinds of things you do when you read for this class? (e.g., Do you look over the entire text? Do you read the ending first?)
2. (a) Tell about an experience of reading for this class.  
2. (b) Tell about a recent non-school related reading experience. Remember that reading takes place anywhere and with a wide variety of texts (e.g., magazines, maps, the Internet, etc.).
3. Please read the following selection from Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story, "The Birth-mark," and then describe how you read this passage, or, in other words, what you did as you read it:

... it must be mentioned, that, in the centre of Georgiana's left cheek, there was a singular mark, deeply interwoven, as it were, with the texture and substance of her face. In the usual state of her complexion, — a healthy, though delicate bloom, — the mark wore a tint of deeper crimson, which imperfectly defined its shape amid the surrounding rosiness. When she blushed, it gradually became more indistinct, and finally vanished amid the triumphant rush of blood, that bathed the whole cheek with its brilliant glow. But, if any shifting emotion caused her to turn pale, there was the mark again, a crimson stain upon the snow, in what Alymer sometimes deemed an almost fearful distinctness. Its shape bore not a little similarity to the human hand, though of the smallest pigmy size. Georgiana's lovers were wont to say, that some fairy, at her birth-hour, had laid her tiny hand upon the infant's cheek, and left this impress there, in token of the magic endowments that were to give her such sway over all hearts. Many a desperate swain would have risked life for the privilege of pressing his lips to the mysterious hand. It must not be concealed, however, that the impression wrought by this fairy sign-manual varied exceedingly, according to the difference of temperament in the beholders. Some fastidious persons — but they were exclusively of her own sex — affirmed that the Bloody Hand, as they chose to call it, quite destroyed the effect of Georgiana's beauty, and rendered her countenance even hideous. But it would be as

reasonable to say, that one of those small blue stains, which sometimes occur in the poorest statuary marble, would convert the Eve of Powers to a monster. Masculine observers, if the birth-mark did not heighten their admiration, contented themselves with wishing it away, that the world might possess one living specimen of ideal loveliness, without the semblance of a flaw. After his marriage—for he thought little or nothing of the matter before—Alymer discovered that this was the case with himself.

4. Describe how you understand what is expected of you as a reader in this class.
5. Where and when do you read for this class?

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