

“WHAT YOU NEED, EDDIE, IS ANOTHER REMEDIAL READING CLASS”:
A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF REPRESENTATIONS OF LITERACY IN
POPULAR SCHOOL FILM

by

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B.S., University of Oklahoma, 1996

M.S., Kansas State University, 2006

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This study examines representations of literacy and literacy pedagogy in films about school. Grounded in research traditions of textual analysis and cultural studies, the present study is a semiotic analysis of critical scenes in a study corpus comprised of key scenes from fifteen school films from the 1930s to present. Films were selected for inclusion in the study corpus based on five criteria: setting of the film in a K-12 school, teacher as a central character of the film, a school film with a serious message, a film that includes at least one literary event, and a film that is available for rent in the United States.

Key scenes (those that embody the film's stance toward literacy and literacy pedagogy) were selected by an inter-rater group of veteran educators and researchers. A semiotic analysis of the texts determined what denotations, connotations, and myths exist in the following:

- Components of literacy
- Expressions of literacy
- Importance of literacy
- Role of the teacher
- Role of the student
- Role of the school

The analysis was conducted through a textual study of the dialogue, basic cinematic techniques, and the semiotic codes of body codes, commodity codes, and behavioral codes found in the critical scenes to identify emerging themes.

During the open coding stage, data revealed twelve categories that contributed to the four axial codes of Self, Beyond Self, Critical Connections, and Representations of Literacy. The four axial codes contributed to three different themes that emerged in the representations of literacy in popular school film: internal versus external forces, traditional versus non-traditional pedagogy, and traditional representations of literacy versus new literacies. A grounded theory based upon the research data proposes a symbiotic relationship between

educational policy and the portrayal of literacy pedagogy in serious school film. This qualitative study brings to light the potential impact of media and popular culture on education and literacy pedagogy.

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Approved by:

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Dedication

For all of the teachers I know who within them have a little bit of Mr. Chips, Miss Moffitt, Mr. Dadier, Mr. Thackeray, Miss Barrett, Mr. Conroy, Mr. Jurel, Mr. Escalante, Mr. Keating, Mr. Holland, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Garfield, Mr. Clark, Mr. Lowrey, and Ms. Gruwell.

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

Alex Jurel, a history teacher at John F. Kennedy High School, shoves a magazine under the nose of a student, Eddie, and asks him to read a passage from it aloud. Eddie glares at the magazine, then at Mr. Jurel, and then begins to read silently to himself, pretending to mouth the words in order to simulate an understanding of the words on the page.

Mr. Jurel [*insistently*]: What you need, Eddie, is another remedial reading class again! You're not foolin' anybody.

Eddie [*emphatically*]: What? I passed that class! You can't make me take it again. I read fine, so don't you worry about it, OK? Just lay off!

This scene, from the popular school film *Teachers* (1984) highlights in its brevity a multitude of issues and questions in regards to our schools and literacy. Would society consider Eddie to be illiterate? How can Eddie pass a reading class and still not be able to read?

Popular films hold a mirror to society, reflecting the values and beliefs of the time. While *Teachers* is mostly understood to be an indictment of American public education, in this short scene we have complicated messages about literacy and schools.

If we assume *Teachers* is an accurate reflection of at least a portion of the public sentiment, that view of education in 1984 included the following:

- Schools have lost their sense of direction.
- Parents are more concerned with their own problems than those of their children.
- Teachers and administrators are largely incompetent.
- The schools are focused on moving students through the system rather than teaching them anything of lasting value.

But surprisingly, the answer to Eddie's problem in the scene is another remedial reading class.

The present study served to better understand popular culture representations of literacy through semiotic analyses of critical moments in popular school film. This first

chapter presents the central research question, the significance of the study, the study's core methodology, its limitations and definitions of important terminology.

Overview of the Issue

Consider for a moment a brief, but important scene in the school film *School of Rock*, when an outcast fifth grader, a prodigy of a piano player, explains why he wouldn't fit in enough to join the class's rock band. "I'm not cool. . . . Nobody ever talks to me."

Jack Black, the rock-n-roll teacher, emphatically replies: "Those days are over, buddy . . . 'cause you could be the ugliest sad sack on the planet, but if you're in a rocking band, you're the cat's pajamas, man."

And just like that, the fifth grader landed on a different life trajectory. And many fifth graders who watch the movie understand the message of those very short lines, go to their parents, and ask for piano lessons or guitar lessons or drum lessons, hoping to be the cat's pajamas as well.

Americans are voracious consumers of popular culture. Not only is popular culture a representation of the society in which it exists, but also an inventor of society itself. Popular culture is a sculptor of our society, molding the views and opinions of its consumers. What was once considered uncool, as in the *School of Rock* example, can immediately become cool, if this thing called 'popular culture,' like a Magic 8 Ball, is shaken to reveal the message, "Let it be so."

Whether it is from industries such as music, news, fashion, motion pictures, or entertainment, all facets of daily life are shaped by the very culture that we mold by our choices. The basic understanding of the reciprocity of popular culture is that it affects everyone who consumes it and everyone that consumes it defines the culture. Indeed, knowledge emerges from the media-saturated cultural landscape that changes our ways of thinking (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1995).

One specific area of popular culture makes a tremendous impact on society, media. Media plays a critical role in influencing attitudes, marketing and developing trends, and most importantly, informing citizens. Media, especially through television and film, gives society a snapshot of itself, as it was in the past, as it is in the present tense, or as it will be in the future. An analysis of what television and film images say about American education is

needed in order to understand where literacy pedagogy has been and where it is going in the future.

Film critic James Agee wrote that the best films “awaken curiosity and intelligence in the viewer (Agee, 1958). Pervasive and influential, popular culture films are a means by which ideas are communicated to the culture. But what causes these Hollywood constructions to impact our culture in a significant way?

A brief history of films reveals that for much of the past century, film has been a reflection of the American way of life. Thomas Edison predicted that “the motion picture is destined to revolutionize our educational system and. . . in a few years it will largely supplant, if not entirely, the use of textbooks” (Hays, 1922). Although textbooks continue to be predominant in pedagogy, Edison’s prophetic statement is somewhat true. The integration of films and media in and outside of the school curriculum has revolutionized our teaching and culture in many ways.

Andrea Walsh, a scholar of film history, says that the production and reception of film into the popular culture reflects an interactive process, embodying the power relations and cultural conflicts of a larger society. This interactivity reflects the reciprocity of film and popular culture as well as the reciprocity of the representations of life on film and the reality of life outside of film. Film becomes the visual texts of our lives. John Fisk (1992) says, “the text is incorporated into the reader’s everyday life.” If text is indeed incorporated into the reader’s life, then film is as well.

Film analyst James Combs (1990) says that “movies are such a powerful and compelling form of popular communication that even those not directly part of the mass movie experience have been subtly affected by them.” The effects of film on popular culture influence more than just the viewers of the films, but everyone in our culture.

Literacy depicted in film

Brownyn Williams and Amy Zenger have contributed a current overview of the representations of literacy in popular culture. In their book *Popular Culture and Representations of Literacy*, Williams and Zenger (2007) ask the very important question “how do we in the audience interpret the literacy practices we find in popular culture?” (p. 5). The book addresses how everyday literacy practices are represented in popular culture,

particularly in mainstream, contemporary movies and how the pervasive representations of literacy have an effect on our cultural conceptions of reading and writing, from issues of identity to institutional practices.

An examination of popular culture representations in film must be understood, according to Giroux (1997), “through its connections to other public spheres, such as schools, religious institutions, talk, radio, popular culture, and other electronic media” (p. 272). Giroux goes on to say that the study of popular culture and film raises fundamental questions about the democratization of culture. Giroux states that “this is a question regarding ownership, power, and control, and points to the issue of who has access to the means of cultural representation and who does not, and what the possibilities for democracy are when an enormous amount of inequality structures media culture” (p. 273).

Not only does the cultural representation of literacy raise questions on media culture, but it also raises questions on the opinions of the representations themselves. Hall (1997) claims that the true meaning of images will depend on what people make of them. There is no fixed meaning until an object or idea is represented in image and as the representations change, so does the meaning.

As to the importance of the representations of literacy to educators, Elbaz (1991) explains it effectively:

Story is the very stuff of teaching, the landscape within which we live as teachers and researchers, and within which the work of teachers can be seen as making sense. This is not merely a claim about the aesthetic or emotional sense of fit of the notion of story without intuitive understanding of teaching, but an epistemological claim that teachers’ knowledge in its own terms is ordered by story and can best be understood this way (Elbaz, 1991).

As the values of society evolve and change, these images of school and of educators are useful focal points to aid in the process of adapting and adjusting.

David Considine (1985) states:

The depiction of school on the screen, like the depiction of the family, serves as an image of society as a whole...in depicting school life Hollywood, consciously or unconsciously, touched upon concerns, fears, attitudes, and preoccupations that went well beyond the boundaries of the schoolyard and

spilled out into the wider society beyond. The changing image of the school...can therefore be read as a reflection, albeit a distorted reflection, of changes not only within the American school system but within the nation itself. (p. 114).

Popular school films are providing a representation of students, educators, and the education that takes place within the schools. Giroux (1994) says that it is important to challenge these cinematic representations in a way that provides us a way to analyze the different cultural, socioeconomic, and political contexts of the films. Cohen (1999) believes that films about schooling and popular culture are a visual report on the world of education in that the film occupies the same spaces as written texts about the same subjects.

Representation, according to Stuart Hall, is the way in which meaning is given to things depicted in images, which stand for what is being talked about (Hall, 1997). In this respect, this study will use representation to signify events that depict literacy.

Statement of the Problem

Much of what we know, what we learn, and what we understand about our world comes through our immersion in the popular culture. David Trend, an expert in cultural literacy, believes that if culture is the ensemble of the various stories we tell about others and often about ourselves, it is vital to realize the impossibility of those stories being neutral in their situation. The stories we tell about ourselves as a society in the popular culture are always constructed, delivered, and received in specific historic encounters (Trend, 1995).

We need to seriously examine the relationship between popular culture and pedagogy. We need to understand whether the ways in which we value what we teach are ultimately reflected in the popular culture; or if popular culture affects what we value and the way we teach. Toward this end, Brunner (1994) used popular film and professional written text for the purposes of questioning and understanding the notions about teaching that other teachers have held.

Movies can be read in ways that influence perceptions of what American schools are really like. The question of cultural literacy is hardly that simple, for determinations of what should be read and by who are bitterly disputed. As producers of cultural works, artists and writers have an obvious stake in these debates, especially considering the frequency with

which cultural workers enter the teaching profession themselves. To the extent that literacy determines one's role in society, one's relationship with language can function as both oppression and empowerment.

Research Question

This study addresses the following primary questions as well as two sets of subsidiary questions regarding representations of literacy in popular school film.

Primary Questions

The present study is guided by two research questions:

1. How is literacy represented in serious school film?
2. What is the ideal of literacy pedagogy advanced in school film?

Subsidiary Questions

The present study is guided by two sets of subsidiary questions. The first set of subsidiary questions pertains to the representations of literacy in school film:

- What are the components of literacy in serious school film?
- What importance does the film place on literacy?
- How is literacy expressed?

The second set of subsidiary questions pertains to the roles of the stakeholders in the representations of literacy pedagogy in school film:

- What is the role of the teacher as literacy pedagogy is advanced?
- What is the role of the student as literacy pedagogy is advanced?
- What is the role of the school as literacy pedagogy is advanced?

Purpose of the Study

Because researchers need to understand how popular culture affects pedagogy, the study focused on the semiotic analysis of the representations of literacy in popular school film since 1930. In addition, the representations found in pinnacle moments within the films were analyzed to determine their potential impact on the understanding of what literacy means to the popular culture. The purpose of this study, then, was to look at how literacy

pedagogy is ultimately affected by the representations of itself in popular school film. The study had the following goals.

1. To identify representations of literacy within popular school film since the 1930's,
2. To analyze semiotically how literacy is represented within popular school film since the 1930's,
3. To determine if there are themes or patterns that emerge from the semiotic analysis of popular school film since the 1930's,
4. To determine how the themes or patterns that emerge from the semiotic analysis of literacy representations affects the pedagogy,
5. To look at how the themes or patterns that emerge from the semiotic analysis of literacy representations affects or is reflected in the popular culture and society, particularly in educational policy.

Methodology

This study examined the representations of literacy in popular school film through a semiotic analysis. Films for this study were selected based on a series of criteria used to narrow the focus of a published list of popular school films since the 1930's. A small group of inter-raters, consisting of literacy experts, was convened to view the films that met the requirements of the criteria in order to validate the selection of one scene from each movie that epitomizes its view on literacy (Appendix E). Once the scene had been selected from each film, a semiotic analysis of the scene was completed using the criteria illustrated in the filmography (Appendix B). Once the scene was analyzed semiotically, the findings were coded for emerging themes leading ultimately to the construction of a grounded theory. A more comprehensive explanation of the methodology can be found in Chapter 3.

Definition of Terms

Literacy: For the purposes of this study, literacy will be defined as a level of sophistication in which one could interpret sign systems and to differentiate the difference between those sign systems and reality. This definition of literacy can be expanded to include communication within any medium, within and outside of text. To be literate is not

only to know, but also to be able to use that knowledge, to make meaning of it and use it to understand the world differently.

Popular school film: For the purposes of this study, popular school film will be defined as a film that in some way—even incidentally—is about an educator or a student (Trier, 2000).

Serious school film: A popular school film with a serious message regarding education, particularly curriculum or pedagogy.

Semiotics: For the purposes of this study, semiotics will be defined as the study of signs and signifying practices. Semiotics is often employed in the analysis of texts in any medium verbal or non-verbal.

Representations: This study employs Hall's (1997) definition of representation. That is, representations invoke the importance of encoding and decoding texts according to specific signifying practices and how the meaning and the identity of the text are produced through this process. Representations are tied to language, for they operate as symbols, as signs that we interpret in order to derive meaning from them and contribute to the construction of our identities (Hall, 1997, p. 5). These meanings are fluid in that they are dependent upon the social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the meaning-maker.

Popular culture: For the purposes of this study, popular culture will be defined as the cultural elements in any given society that are perpetuated through that society's daily interactions, needs and desires and cultural 'moments' that make up the everyday lives of the mainstream. By recognizing the power of popular culture, knowledge making becomes richer.

Significance of the Study

This study examined the ways in which literacy is represented in popular culture through popular school films. This study investigated what the movies are teaching us about how literacy is represented in popular culture and ultimately, how the meaning of literacy is understood by and influenced by consumers of popular culture.

If our popular culture is indeed a reflection of our society and our society is a reflection of our popular culture, then shouldn't the messages being sent through popular culture be examined?

Giroux (1994) speaks of the benefits regarding connections between popular culture and critical pedagogy. He asserts “central to the notion of critical pedagogy is the need to rewrite the dynamics of cultural and pedagogical production as part of a broader vision that extends the principles and practices of human dignity, liberty, and social justice” (Giroux, 1994, p. 63). The pedagogy of representation and demystifying representations encourage us to explore ways in which meaning is produced and how this affects the construction of meaning and identity (Giroux, 1994).

Giles and Middleton explain that discussions about culture have been plagued by an inability for theorists to agree on a common definition, for it has remained a fluid term. They explain:

Culture continues to suggest a host of overlapping meanings: being cultured in a sophisticated and knowledgeable fashion; a collective noun to describe works of recognized artistic and intellectual endeavor hierarchically adjudged to have attained a particular level of value; a range of practical orientations in relatively circumscribed social spheres and a common particular way of life (Giles and Middleton, 1999, p, vii).

Hollywood has more power over cultural influence than any community upon a society. For example, representations of literacy in school film contribute to public discourse on what literacy is and what it means to be a literate member of society. Joseph Reed argues that how we see ourselves, what we think of us, what we think our world is like, how we think it works, all come from the movies (and now from television as well) (Reed, 1989).

Representations of literacy in school films affect how the public sees literacy and even how they view literacy in relation to themselves and their places in society as literate individuals. Popular school film carries a message and potentially carries these messages with more power and more effectively than messages in written text. Film reveals messages that we may not see and even confronts us with things that we choose not to see.

Representations of literacy in school films are often experiments in ‘what if?’—extending the speculation of what happens when society does or does not do things correctly. We define what a good teacher is and what a bad teacher is through school film. It’s easy to go back and see how policy and pedagogy has changed but we haven’t gone back to the popular culture to see how literacy is represented. We need to do so. If popular culture is

indeed effective at influencing what ‘we’ do, we need to chart it, measure it, and understand it. If popular culture has led us into making unfortunate choices, perhaps we can counter them in the public sphere or turn the tables on the unfortunate choices; instead of culture manipulating us, why not us manipulating culture?

As the values of society evolve and change these images of schools and of literacy are useful focal points to aid in the process of adapting and adjusting. This study therefore contributes to the professional literature by merging the findings of studies already published on literacy, popular culture, school film, and semiotic representations. Much research has been done individually in each of these areas, but nothing that approaches the layering of these areas upon the effects they have directly on popular culture, public policy, and pedagogical practice. In order to obtain an accurate view of our culture’s current understanding of literacy instruction in the classroom, a more thorough look is warranted.

It is not enough to analyze how Hollywood depicts stories about schooling. We must also ask how Hollywood chooses which school stories to tell. School films contribute to our understanding of the language and symbols of popular culture and what vision of literacy has been advocated or rejected in an important segment of our culture.

Limitations of the Study

As an exploratory study based on techniques of semiotic analysis, this investigation could not hope to provide definitive answers as the potential impact of representations of literacy in popular school films would have on a variety of audiences. Rather, the researcher used techniques borrowed from the social sciences and humanities to explore the research questions and to provide an initial analysis that served as a foundation for additional examinations grounded in social sciences. Several specific limitations are detailed below.

Because of the large number of popular school films produced since the 1930’s, it was necessary to use a series of criteria to achieve a diverse, yet workable study corpus. For the purpose of this study, no more than three films from each decade since the 1930’s were analyzed. The film sample was selected using primary and secondary criteria. Only films that took place in K-12 schools were used as to limit the scope of the study and to eliminate the films that took place in higher education.

While the researcher made efforts to have the initial pilot study analysis validated by independent observation, and those procedures continued to be part of the design and implementation of this study, the semiotic analysis is essentially solely of the researcher, with the results being subjective with the possibility of researcher bias.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the overall issues including a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, definition of terms, and the organization of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature that established a theoretical framework for the study. Areas of importance include but are not limited to:

- Literacy
- School films
- Semiotics
- Movies selected for the study

Chapter 3 includes research questions and a discussion of the methodology of the research design, pilot study, and study corpus filmography selection.

Chapter 4 includes the semiotic analyses of the study corpus of films.

Chapter 5 includes a description of the actual findings as revealed through the textual study. A summary of the themes, patterns, and grounded theory are included.

Chapter 6 includes an overall analysis of the data, seeking to identify the patterns of the representations of literacy in school film, how the representations have affected pedagogy and educational policy in our country.

Chapter 6 also provides a summary of the data based on the research questions, implications for pedagogy, curriculum, teacher training, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2 - Review of Related Literature

In this chapter, the researcher will review the literature that has guided the conceptualization and development of this study. While the ideas from the theoretical and research literature that directly applies to the findings of the study were revisited, the intent of this chapter is to review the important studies and pertinent theoretical perspectives that most directly contributed to the thinking of the researcher during the design and completion of the study.

In particular, much literature exists in scholarly studies and in the popular press related specifically to literacy and new literacies, semiotics, the history of research on popular culture, and the history of popular school films. Sources drawn upon for the purposes of this study included studies and dissertations, books, journal articles, periodicals, and primary sources, including the movies themselves. This chapter reviews the relevant studies and dissertations, movie synopses and other articles that contribute to the merging of these scholarly areas in a valuable way to the study.

History of Research in Popular Culture and Media

Beginning in the 1930's, a great deal of scholarly attention was given to Hollywood movie production companies. Hollywood was at a height of success it had not yet experienced in the modern age of film. Yet, many cultural theorists believed that culture was in a crisis in the 1930's. According to Storey (1996, p 27):

According to Leavis and the Leavisites, the 20th century is marked by an increasing cultural decline. It was a culture of standardization and leveling down. Against this the citizen must be trained to discriminate and to resist...For those not addicted to popular fiction, there is always the danger of the cinema...Its increasing popularity makes it a very dangerous source of pleasure indeed: the films involve surrender, under conditions of hypnotic receptivity, to the cheapest emotional appeals, appeals the more insidious because they are associated with a compellingly vivid illusion of actual life.

In the 1950's, the consumers of popular culture gained much more attention, suggesting that ordinary people had become much more critical of the popular culture. It was during this time in our country's history that the 'uses and gratification theory' emerged as a premise that audiences were not passive in their viewing of popular culture, but rather active in the interpretation and use of media.

This view of the interaction with popular culture as communicative continued forth, still largely grounded in examining the relationship between the sender, the receiver, and the message. The importance of the audience actively interpreting media texts in terms of media as popular culture would not be fully developed until decades later.

It wasn't until the 1960's and 1970's, particularly coinciding with the establishment of the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1964, that textual studies of mass media became main stream. Stuart Hall (1964, 1970) led this influential group of researchers who investigated popular culture movements from the perspective that "the use intended by the provider and the use actually made by the audience of the particular style never wholly coincide, and frequently conflict" (p. 270). Hall was at the forefront of a new, strong approach to audience in cultural studies in that they examined the notion that the audience is not necessarily an innocent exploited by the media, but that the audience could be using the media to express an attitude, rebelliousness, or acts of social nonconformity.

According to Storey (1996) there have been key moments in the relationship between popular culture and research and many of those moments occurred in the 1970's. It was during the 1970's that "there developed a clear divide within cultural studies between the study of texts and the study of lived cultures" (p. 54). The trend toward research on everyday culture continued, with a focus towards detailed ethnographies and the immersion of the researcher within the culture.

At the end of the 1970's, Paul Willis published *Profane Culture*, an earth-shattering ethnography that detailed how subculture groups have a hand in the construction of their own vibrant cultures and are not at the mercy of popular culture to dominate them through "capitalist media and commercial provision" (Willis, 1978, p. 1). Also during this time, the study of films was mostly done as a study of structuralism and post-structuralism.

In the 1980's, Morle's *The Nationwide Audience* built on the work of Stuart Hall in that he studied how the class membership of individual audience members help explain the

ways in which they decode the media images they see. Similarly, Buckingham (1987) researched how viewers of media negotiate meaning with a text, attributing this negotiation to class.

The decades of research of popular culture had been foundational in the study of how spectatorship became “a process of negotiating the dominant meanings of Hollywood cinema, rather than one of being passively positioned by it” (Stacey, 1994, p.12). With media and popular culture becoming accepted as an academic source of research and knowledge, the research on and the research on the use of how an audience receives messages given by popular culture began to flourish.

History of Research on School Film

In the last fifty years, portrayals of schools on film have been an area of research that has garnered much attention in educational and social science research. Beginning again in the 1930’s, while popular culture and Hollywood movie studios began to flourish, Kehoe (1938) researched the portrayal of colleges in popular films. It wasn’t until Lafferty (1941) that significant research was done on the portrayal of schools on film, particularly images of teachers and their interactions with students on film.

Lafferty, in *School and Society* (1945), suggests that films were consistently presenting teachers as stock characters with no redeeming value or opportunities. Lafferty’s attack on the film industry’s portrayal of teachers has been met with criticism by current researchers such as Tan (1999) and Crume (1988), who argue that researchers weren’t asking the audiences about their interpretations of the representations of teachers on film.

Not until the 1950’s, when Gurko (1953) published *Heroes, Highbrows and the Popular Mind*, did researchers begin to examine images of schools on film with teachers and the persistence of negative images. Gurko’s text was a springboard for many critical critiques of the teachers being portrayed on screen. Foff (1958) believes that in order to take “a first step in working toward a solution to this problem of the teacher image is to know its nature and form” (p. 125). Foff goes on to say that “Teachers and educators need to know the images offered by the media for their own professional development...knowledge of perceptions is more important to the reformer of education than to the conformer” (p. 118).

Schwartz (1963) began to expand the focus on teacher images on film to teacher-student relationships, administrator portrayals, and school and community relationships. Schwartz was among the first to recognize the theme of the teacher as an outsider, an area of research that continues to be important to current day research.

In spite of the growing recognition of research done with teacher movies as a genre, the focus of the research remained on the archetypes and stereotypes of teachers on film. Very little attention had yet been directed as to what the audience reactions to the portrayals had been.

The 1970's had a dry spell in terms of new releases of teacher movies (*Conrack*, 1974 being the exception). As such, there was very little attention given to the area of research of popular school film. Perhaps as a reaction to the drought of the 1970's, the 1980's exploded in terms of popular school films and research on popular school films. The idea of examining images of schools and teachers was still prevalent.

David Considine (1985), in his book *The Cinema of Adolescence*, studied the images of teachers and schools on film. Considine explained, "it is little wonder that the mass media reflects and reinforces our preoccupation with schools" (p. 111). Considine goes on to explain that since we spend "much of our time, after leaving school, reflecting on our experiences there" the experience of school becomes something of a "state of mind" (p. 111).

Much of Considine's work analyzes the depictions of schools and teachers over the years, changes which reflect "much more than changes within the nation's schools or in Hollywood's attitude towards teachers" (p. 44). In depicting school life, filmmakers are not only analyzing the "concerns, fears, attitudes, and preoccupations" that went on in school, but those that "went well beyond the boundaries of the schoolyard and spilled out into the wider society beyond" (p. 114).

The 1980's also saw the publication of Crume's research on the "collective images of high school teachers and specific propositions about teachers, their working environment, and concerns as depicted in American adolescent films" (p. viii). Crume (1988) examined more than forty novels and films about schools and teachers and applied both qualitative and quantitative analysis to each. However, Crume made no effort to study how the audiences were receiving these images.

The last twenty years of research on popular culture and school movies has brought the emergence of many academic dissertations on the subjects of teacher images on film and the portrayal of schools on film. Weinstein's (1998) dissertation, *The practice and ideals of education as portrayed in American films, 1939-1989* hypothesizes "that filmmakers use the school setting and educators to dramatize contemporary problems and sometimes to pose suggestions for solutions to social problems" (p. 1). Weinstein analyzes seventeen popular school film from the 30's through the late 80's that he considers being examples of conflict in American society such as the individual versus the status quo. His textual study claims, "these films, their narratives, and critical analysis of them, can provide an innovative and fruitful way of educating new and experienced teachers" (p. v).

Tan's (1999) dissertation, *The Image of Teachers in Film*, also takes a textual focus to the portrayal of schools and teachers on film. Her study contents that the stereotypical images of teachers on film are there because they exist in society as a result of the way the profession has been perceived in this country. Tan's study of the stereotypes of teachers and schools shows that there has been little change in thinking about the portrayals of them since the 1930's.

Grobman's (2002) dissertation, *Teachers in Film: A Narrative Study of Schoolteachers in Cinema*, examines the narratives of the films and how the narratives have evolved over time. Grobman's research is different than any other done at the time because it differs from "existing research, which typically examines the film depictions as archetypes and restricts its comments to the accuracy with which film mirrors the profession" (p. iv).

Mary Dalton (1995) examines the cultural stance with regard to the relationship between teachers, popular culture expectations, and the presentation of teachers in the movies. She examines a theory of curriculum in the movies by analyzing two dozen popular films released in the US since the 1960's. The article, "The Hollywood Curriculum: Who is the Good Teacher" was turned into her thesis, which was eventually published as the book *The Hollywood Curriculum*.

Beginning with her research on the composites sketch of a "good teacher" and eventually moving to an analysis of movies in order to construct a theory of curriculum in the movies grounded in cultural studies and critical pedagogy, Dalton's greatest contribution to the research on teachers and popular school film could be the research on the portrayal of

women teachers. Hollywood films not only tell women teachers how other people construct them and re-articulate them as characters on a movie screen, but these films also shape the way students and parents respond to teachers, and influence the way women teachers respond to public opinion in the construction of their own lives.

Of all the dissertations published to date, perhaps the most thorough would be that of James Trier. Trier (2000) conducted an action research study in which he analyzed pre-service teachers' reactions to popular school film. By studying the reactions of pre-service teachers to school film, he found ways to advance professional development of pre-service teachers and to clarify their identities as teachers by unmasking the collage of contradictory images and stereotypes that are often found in school film.

Definitions of School Film

James Trier defines school film “a film that in some way—even incidentally—is about an educator or a student”(Trier, 2000). This broad definition allows for the inclusion of many Hollywood films that other researchers would not likely consider a part of the school film genre.

Norman Denzin (1991) explains that his definition for school film is films that are considered classic films or listed as a school film by other researchers or critics. Denzin also gives primary focus to the school films that have been nominated for awards, were top video rentals, or were considered successful moneymakers during the time of their release.

In Joseph Reed's *American Scenarios: The Uses of Film Genre* (1989), he defines “high school” film as a film that focuses on a teacher or a student in or around a high school that takes a teenage point of view rather than an adult one. Reed's definition excludes many of the great school films that take place in elementary, middle, and higher education. Rather than concentrate on the many movies that meet Reed's own definition, he focuses primarily on the works written in the last twenty years. Reed believes that High School film's real solidification is *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. It is *Fast Times* that fits the epitome of the high school genre to Reed, sporadic in the plot structure and the spirit that all survive on “rock and relentless energy.”

Paul Farber and Gunilla Holm provide their definition of school film in *Schooling in the Light of Popular Culture* (1994). In the chapter “Adolescent Freedom and the Cinematic

High School,” they say that school films included scenes in secondary schools, offer a central protagonist as a teacher or principal, and feature adolescents both in school scenes that are intent on doing something or becoming something in the context of the film.” In Farber and Holm’s chapter “A Brotherhood of Heroes”, they also say that the films often portray or construct the teacher or principal as a hero, a cliché all too often portrayed in movies.

Literacy

What does it mean to be literate? Literacy has been defined in many different ways, depending on the point in history in which the term is being defined and how the definers envision the role of literacy in society.

O’Brien and Bauer (2005) highlight the two paradigms of literacy: a traditional conceptualization of literacy that they refer to as the “Institution of Old Learning (IOL)” and the more contemporary view of literacy, New Literacy Studies (NLS). The definitions of literacy throughout this study encompass many of the definitions of literacy beginning with the understandings of literacy in the IOL into the current understanding of literacy in NLS.

Definitions of Traditional Literacies

As Knoblauch (1990) observes, “literacy is one of those mischievous concepts, like virtuousness and craftsmanship, that appear to denote capacities but that actually convey value judgments” (p. 74). At the very basic core of the definition, the *American Heritage Dictionary* of the English language defines literacy as the condition or quality of being literate, especially the ability to read and write, and the condition or quality of being knowledgeable in a particular subject or field: cultural literacy. This definition highlights two prevalent definitions of literacy as something one attains in skill in a particular field as well as the ability to read and write. Literacy has generally been understood as the ability to read and/or write. The term literacy itself is a fairly recent development in that until thirty years ago, schools referred to reading and writing as skills separate from one another (Heath, 1991; De Castell & Luke, 1988; Clifford, 1989; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003).

The ability to write and to recognize one’s name in print was a measurement of a literate person well before the invention of the printing press. Prominent citizens, traditionally clergyman, wealthy men, and government officials were the only citizens allowed to receive reading instruction. For many Western civilizations, literacy is viewed as

a key to economic growth and for the ability to be a competitive participant in society (Heath, 1991).

Robert Pattison (1984) defined literacy as the ability to make critical judgments about texts. In order to have a cognitive understanding, to read, decode, and comprehend, Pattison believes that a critical understanding of the text is needed, such as to whom the text is targeted and the agenda (if any) of the author. Critical literacy appeared in the 1970's as a movement against the traditional view of literacy and was developed to reveal the diverse roles of literacy and to emphasize the social character of literacy.

Advances in technologies are transforming the definition of literacy. Kress (2003) believes that technology plays an important role in how information is processed. For centuries, print-based texts have been the prominent form of communication. Print-based texts will not cease to exist, but a growing number of people are learning to position themselves in the world in terms of visual images as opposed to words printed on a page. Kress (2003) explains the shift from the textual to the visual through an analysis of a textbook.

The most recent literacy and technology position statement from the International Reading Association (IRA, 2000) claims that new technologies are “regularly redefining the nature of literacy...Therefore literacy educators have a responsibility to effectively integrate these technologies into the literacy curriculum in order to prepare students for the literacy future they deserve” (IRA, 2002, 1st paragraph). The International Reading Association also points out that the traditional definitions of literacy, long believed to be from print and other print media, are now insufficient in their definition. Language as the sole mode of literacy has its limits in preparing students and teachers for this new era. New theories of literacy are needed to understand how our current society requires us to communicate through a variety of semiotic signs, modes, and media other than books and written language.

A Definition of New Literacies

Today, literacy is not a rigid or uniform concept but rather a construct of different purposes and forms. Leu and Kinzer (2003) observe that it is difficult to use traditional theories of literacy in order to explain and understand the new literacies because of the development of the traditional definition of literacy being based on printed text. The New

London Group (1996) describes the establishment of the new literacies as being built upon the traditional foundation of the basic definition of literacy, with an ever-changing understanding depending on the formats and semiotic systems (Leu & Kinzer, 2003).

NLS, especially those involving the use of the Internet are much more dynamic than traditional print based literacies. Leu and Kinzer (2003) explain:

The new literacies of the Internet require their own theoretical framework in order to adequately understand them and the role they should play in a literacy curriculum . . . [and should] include the knowledge, skills, strategies, and insights necessary to successfully exploit the rapidly changing information and communication technologies continuously emerging in our world for personal growth, pleasure, and work. (p. 23)

Gee refers to as the “social turn” in “New Literacy Studies” (Gee, 2000). In new literacies, Gee (1999) uses the concept of Discourse. Gee refers to Discourse as the group within which people find themselves and the set of beliefs and terms that make sense of the world according to a certain orientation. Gee’s concept of Discourse recognizes the socially situated nature of literacy and that literacy involves more than a set of static skills. Using this concept then, there is not a one-size-fits-all model for what literacy means because different discourse communities have different literacy expectations.

Multimodal and Multiliteracies

Multiple and multimodal, literacies are rarely found in isolation. Usually working with several ways of making meaning simultaneously, literacy can be understood as any meaning making system (Kress, 2003; Jewitt, Kress, Ogborn & Tsatsarelis, 2001; Danesi 2004). Perhaps better referred to as ‘multiple ways of knowing’, literacies work together to actively support the learning and understanding of others (Berghoff, Egawa, Harste, & Hoonan, 2000). It is rare that we ever use any literacy independently.

The New London Group (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) coined the term multiliteracies in order to better address the shift from a primary language-based model for literacy to one that includes language as one meaning-making mode among multiple modalities. Kress (1997) emphasizes that individuals are “not language users, but language makers” in that people use whatever materials are available to communicate messages to other people. Seeing literacy

as more than paper and pencil emphasizes that literacy has a communicative goal and that the means used to communicate are chosen for specific reasons. New London Group Members (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, Snyder 2002, Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000) illustrate the wide range of practical applications that approaches to multiliteracies can take.

Reconceptualizations of literacy have also explored the practicality of applying the concept of literacy to meaning-making practices beyond print, such as film (Cole & Keyssar, 1985). Such literacy theorists argue that not only is it appropriate to talk about domain-specific literacies, but that literacy definitions that rely solely on reading and writing are insufficient to describe and support theories of learning and pedagogy in the age of information. Gee (2003) explains:

Once we see this multiplicity of literacies, we realize that when we think about reading and writing, we have to think beyond print. Reading and writing in any domain, whether it is law, rap songs, academic essays, superhero comics, or whatever, are not just ways of decoding print, they are also caught up with and in social practices (Gee, 2003, p. 14).

Schooled Literacies: In and Out

NLS are also founded on social and cultural perspectives or discourse patterns. (Gee, 2003; Smagorinsky, 2000). Literacies within social and cultural situations brings forward new avenues of discussion and research in regards to the literacies that take place outside of the typical school setting.

David G. O'Brien works from within a classroom to describe the disjuncture between the out-of-school literacies that students use and their in-school literacies. O'Brien (1998) refers to literacy as "schooled literacy" in that the skills students learn in school, reading and writing specifically, are for the learning of various contents. O'Brien goes on to define school-based literacy as "a tool for learning content" (p. 28). This could involve any traditional school activity such as answering basic questions to measure comprehension, writing five-paragraph essays, and completing a variety of reading worksheets. He explains that students want to explore genres that are not typically allowed in school.

Phelps (1998) counters the idea of literacy being only "schooled literacy" in that the school-based literacy fails to represent the true complexity and variability of a person's

literacy practices. Literacy growth and development, observes Neilesen (1998), is limited by what the schools see as acceptable forms of text. When the focus of literacy remains what it has been over the past several hundred years, it becomes too narrowly delineated. Luke (1998) points out that this misplaced literacy focus might be harmful in that it may prepare students for opportunities that no longer exists and lacks preparation for a world in which literacy has a broader definition. Luke (1998) argues that until a change happens in how school-based literacy is understood and defined, society will be unable to move past the idea that the basic reading and writing definition of literacy will ensure success in a world that demands much more in order to be literate.

Donna Alvermann (2001) emphasizes that adolescents use literacy for purposes well beyond schooled literacies. As she explains:

Many adolescents of the Net Generation find their own reasons for becoming literate—reasons that go beyond reading to acquire school knowledge of academic texts. This is not to say that academic literacy is unimportant; rather, it is to emphasize the need to address the implications of youth’s multiple literacies for classroom instruction. (p. 2).

Heath (1983) describes instances where students’ school literacy achievement could be increased when other literacy modes were involved. More than a decade prior to the New London Group’s (2000) term of multiliteracies, Heath laid an important foundation to the term by demonstrating the importance of using multiple modes of meaning to help individuals succeed in tasks.

Literacy and the Social

The general movement away from behaviorist models of literacy (Foucault, 1972; Freire, 1968; Fairclough, 1995) has led to a socially situated conception of literacy. Literacy has also been equated with social opportunities, the ability to excel in economic growth, and the right to be considered intellectual. An individual who is literate therefore has the innate probability of being successful and those who are not literate either find themselves without social, economic, and intellectual opportunities or have to work even harder to be successful in them. Luke (2000) believes that a person’s literacy is their ticket to “institutional access and inclusion” (p. 449). Literacy involves, then, much more than the ability to read a variety

of texts, but the ability to have a well-paved road to success in society. Luke (1994) says that we rarely pause to inquire what reading and writing are, much less “how reading and writing are shaped by and shape our social and economic paths” (p. 3).

Bridging the expanded definition of literacy to the social, Street (1995) believes that literacy could be understood as a global term that encompasses a wide range of social practices that involve any type of text in one way or another. Gee (2000) furthers the connectedness of literacy to establish that literacy is an interaction between the mind, the world, and the culture of the individual or the society in which the individual is grounded.

Summary

Reinking and Bridwell-Bowles (1996) show that “technology has frequently played a dominant role in defining what reading and writing skills have been considered important, as well as how and to whom they were taught” (p. 310). As technologies continue to be developed that challenge our ideas of communication, than the goal of literacy must change. Riel, 2000, says:

Literacy goals 100 years ago for many students were to be able to read and write names, copy and read texts, and generate lists of merchandise. Literacy goals today require mastery over many different genres of writing, persuasive, expressive, expository, procedural, and expect students to be able to interpret, compare, contrast, and analyze complex texts.

Therefore, in light of the new literacies, many researchers (Gee 1999, 2003; Alvermann 2001; Luke 2000) also include the skills of speaking, listening, analyzing, thinking, creating, and communicating through a variety of media, for various audiences and purposes, as an important addition to the definition of literacy.

Semiotics

Literacy is also grounded in semiotics, understanding that text can be a variety of sign systems, a level of sophistication in which one could interpret sign systems and to differentiate the difference between those sign systems and reality. Semioticians study the ways in which sign systems work. Signs are used systematically as codes to represent and communicate meaning. Every person is “programmed by Nature, so to speak, to recognize and use signs and, in a short period of time, to acquire effortlessly the system of signs. . .of

the culture in which he or she is being reared” (Danesi, 2002, p. 32). If we are to study literacy in it’s newest transformation, we must understand how we construct and deconstruct the signs and symbols of our lives. Kress (1997) says that we are constantly creating new signs out of the signs we already know as well as interacting with others.

Literacy, particularly new literacies or multiliteracies, is rooted in the semiotic theories of De Saussure and Peirce. Ferdinand De Saussure is generally recognized as having initiated semiotic theory, and ironically he saw language as the basis for all meaning making (since multiliteracies is not strictly language-based).

For De Saussure, the connection between a word, or signifier, and its meaning, or signified, is arbitrary (1915). He compared language to a piece of paper, one side being the mental concept (signified) and the other side being the linguistic form that expresses that mental concept (signifier). He argued that we couldn’t interpret the world around us without creating signifiers for all the signifieds we encounter. There is no absolute, ideal signifier floating out in the world to attach to a signified. Instead, language creates a meaning connection that is not naturally present. Everything is mediated through language.

C.S. Peirce disagreed with De Saussure’s exclusive focus on language and his portrayal of language as arbitrary and instead offered a three-part model to explain how signs’ meanings connect with physical and cultural factors rather than solely linguistic ones. As Siegel (1995) explains, “a sign does not simply stand for an object, it tells something about the meaning of that relationship, and this requires a third component” (p. 459). There is always some sort of interpretation involved in meaning making via an entire semiotic system (Siegel, 1995). Peirce’s model (1931) consists of a sign, or representamen, an object, and an interpretant. A sign is created to represent a given object, and an interpretant is the meaning that is created to make sense of the sign. Unlike De Saussure’s linguistic semiotic model, Peirce’s model accounts for multiple modes in addition to language and calls attention to the role of individual interpretation in the meaning-making process:

A sign (the representamen) is something that stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object,

not in all respects, but in reference to some sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen. (Peirce p. 1032).

Building from Peirce's three-part model, Marjorie Siegel (1995) argues that when an interpretant moves from one sign system to another through transmediation, "the borders of meaning are 'opened up' even further" (p. 460). Changing sign systems allows access to different knowledge. The process of shifting sign systems requires the creation of new interpretants to help create new meanings, and this creation helps students better understand the previous sign system they were working in as well as the new sign system they are moving into.

Whether working with De Saussure's dyadic interpretation of signs [using the terms signifier and signified] or Peirce's triadic interpretation and conceptualization [representamen, interpretant, and object], the study of signs is, at its foundation, a study in the way symbols create meaning. According to Chandler (2003), meaning is made when we "take the form of words, images, sounds, odors, flavors, acts or objects...when we invest them with meaning" (Chandler, 2003).

Roland Barthes (1967), in *Elements of Semiology*, inverts De Saussure's semiology model by declaring that linguistics is not a part of the science of signs; it is semiology, which is part of linguistics. Barthes' theory is a reflection of the primacy that De Saussure already gives to language. Language precedes all forms of signification, providing a plan for the study of signifying units of discourse. One of the distinguishing features of Barthes' work is that he opened the possibility of reading a multimodal text using linguistic signs as an anchor for directing possible interpretations of the text.

Barthes also explains, in his essay *Image, Music, Text* (1977), that multimodal text is multilayered with different levels of messages. Although it is not easy to explain what messages a non-linguistic sign conveys, he regards linguistic signs, or language, as a clue to all signs related to it. Linguistic messages can guide and direct non-linguistic messages.

Jakobson (1968) wrote that "Language is a purely semiotic system...The study of signs, however, must take into consideration also applied semiotic structures, as for instance, architecture, dress, or cuisine...any edifice is simultaneously some sort of refuge and a certain kind of message. Similarly, any garment responds to definitely utilitarian requirements and at the same time exhibits various semiotic properties (p. 703).

Umberto Eco's (1976) theory of semiotics is concerned with the socio-cultural phenomenon of communication. His theories assume that all communication is culturally conventional and that visual communication can only take place on the basis of the codes and conventions that are based within culture. Eco believes that culture has the ability or capability to "recognize and criticize itself" and therefore allows or even stimulates the emergence of alternate cultures (p. 124).

Semiotic analysis does not view a text detached from a context. Instead, it sees a text as a whole, finding all the aspects related to the text including where and how the text was produced, the context in which it was produced, and how the message is sent. Visual semiotic analysis, then, relates image to context and focuses on the relationships of the components. Visual semiotic analysis, then, is concerned with the reading and interpretation of a text in relation to the context of the message. Many researchers (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Kanksher & Knobel, 2003; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2003) use semiotic analysis as a method of critical discourse analysis.

Because semiotics is the study of signs of all kinds, it involves the study of language, art, music, drama, dance, and any sign system involved with communication. All academic disciplines are formulated with complex icons, codes, indexes, and symbols. Semiotics offers a new explanation of how learning occurs and how this theory is different from all of the traditional theories of learning.

Soviet semiotician Lotman (1990) has made cultural transfers central to his understanding of national cultural formations. For Lotman, cultural transfers play a significant role in the formation of cultures. They are central to culture and cultural development generally. A culture cannot turn itself into a sending culture without being at some point a receiving culture. He distinguishes processes of cultural transfer and provides a way of linking these as the successive stages involved in the unfolding story of strangeness and is valued more than those of the home culture.

For Lotman, national cultures need to pass through stages. Cultures cannot become transmitting cultures without passing through earlier stages. In the earlier stage, the texts coming in from the outside keep their 'strangeness' such that they are "read in the foreign language both in the sense of natural language and in the semiotic sense". They hold a high position in the scale of values and are considered to be true beautiful and of divine origin. In

later stages of Lotman's schema, imported texts and home culture begin to restructure each other, becoming interwoven in their meaning making.

Lotman's schema provides support for a widely held position within film theory to put more flexible and open-ended conceptions of cultural exchange at the heart of its study. These conceptions are predicated on culture that sees it as always already hybrid, products of border-crossings and other features. In connection to the current study, Valsiner and Gertz support Lotman's schema in that "our lives are plays." (Valsiner & Gertz, 2007, p. 199). They continue:

We are born to be actors on the stage of life, and we act in its dramas, comedies, and tragedies as our abilities allow. Although, at times, our lives may feel inexorably scripted, in reality, we play many roles ...semiotics attempts to uncover all we can about meaning, understanding, and communication. (Valsiner & Gertz, 2007, p. 199).

Study Corpus of Popular School Films

School Films of the 1930's

Goodbye, Mr. Chips (1939), Directed by Sam Wood

Robert Donat plays Mr. Chipping in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*. Charles Edward Chipping, known affectionately to friends and pupils as "Chips," is everyone's idealized teacher. He's a master at Brookfield, a private boys' boarding school in the heart of England. Mr. Chips is kind, soft-spoken, caring but firm and he remains that way his entire career. He wins the respect of his students through his patience and good humor.

As he watches times change and old traditions disappear, he continues to use the methods and values he holds most dear. When the administrator asks Mr. Chips to retire, thinking him hopelessly to be out-of-touch, he refuses and teaches until his dying day.

School Films of the 1940's

The Corn is Green (1945), Directed by Irving Rapper

Miss Lilly Moffat, played by Bette Davis, returns to a small Welsh mining town to live and sees a desperate need for a school. Miss Moffat uses her own money and talents to open

the doors to as many children from the community as possible, pulling many of the young workers from the mines during the day.

One student in particular, Morgan Evans, stands out as a scholar among his classmates and earns special attention from Miss Moffat. Dubbed the “teacher’s pet”, Morgan initially resists the special treatment, but eventually agrees to try to test in on a scholarship to Oxford University. After getting into Oxford, Morgan returns to the school to find that he had fathered a child with a young girl. Rather than risk the chance that Morgan would drop out of Oxford, Miss Moffat agrees to adopt the child so that Morgan will continue on with his education at Oxford, his salvation from a life of mining.

School Films of the 1950’s

Blackboard Jungle (1955), Directed by Richard Brooks

Richard Dadier (Glenn Ford) is the idealistic, dedicated teacher of Blackboard Jungle, who finds himself in the middle of a difficult teaching situation. On the one hand, the level of violence and disarray at the school leaves learning on the back burner; while on the other hand, the faculty and staff of the school seemed unmotivated to make any changes.

Mr. Dadier has a difficult time, mentally and physically, as he is abused and put through many trying circumstances. Yet, in the end, Mr. Dadier’s dedication to the students and to his teaching wins out and he gets through to the students in his class. This powerful drama deals with the many problems faced by tough schools.

School Films of the 1960’s

To Sir, With Love (1967), Directed by James Clavell

Engineer Mark Thackeray, played by Sidney Poitier, decides to take on a job as a teacher in London’s rough East End. Mostly teaching the children of low-income workers, the class immediately makes life difficult for him, determined to destroy his success.

Inexperienced and insecure, Mr. Thackeray realizes that he cannot teach someone that doesn’t want to learn. He recognizes that the only way to get these kids’ attention is by getting them interested, hopefully teaching them some valuable lessons for their future lives in the course of it.

Up the Down Staircase (1967), Directed by Robert Mulligan

Miss Barrett, played by Sandy Dennis, is a spirited and ambitious young teacher determined to make a difference in a tough inner city school. Miss Barrett has her share of challenges; her classes are overcrowded, a window is broken, there's no chalk, books arrive late and the administration is concerned mainly with forms and rules.

How Miss Barrett handles the chaos in her first semester makes up the film: a promising student drops out, another sleeps through class, a girl with a crush on a male teacher gets suicidal, and a bright but troublesome student misunderstands Sylvia's reaching out. A discussion of Dickens, parents' night, and a mock trial are important events.

School Films of the 1970's

Conrack (1974), Directed by Martin Ritt

Conrack is a true story of Pat Conroy, a teacher assigned in 1969 to a school on Yamacrow Island, South Carolina. Exploring the real meaning of education, Mr. Conroy, played by Jon Voight, arrives to his classroom to meet a group of black children, ranging from fifth to eighth grade, who cannot pronounce his name or spell their own. Sadly, none of the students understand that they live in the United States.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Conroy faces two tremendous hurdles in the principal and the traditional superintendent who eventually fires him for insubordination. Mr. Conroy leaves the island, but leaves behind a lasting impression with the students in his class, who play Beethoven for him as a boat takes him away for the last time.

School Films of the 1980's

Teachers (1984), Directed by Arthur Hiller

Nick Nolte stars as Alex Jurel, a teacher at John Fitzgerald Kennedy High School, who was once an idealistic teacher but has been recently jaded by the ineffective leadership and progress of the school and profession. When a recent graduate of the high school sues the school because it graduated him illiterate, Mr. Jurel finds himself in conflict with the hard-nosed school superintendent Dr. Burke.

The drama heats up even more when Mr. Jurel falls in love with one of his former students, an attorney for a graduate who is suing the school for the lack of education students

receive at the school. Mr. Jurel struggles throughout the movie between staying loyal to the school and doing the right thing.

Stand and Deliver (1988), Directed by Ramon Menendez

Jaime Escalante, played by Edward James Olmos, is a no-nonsense mathematic teacher in a tough East LA high school. Handed a classroom full of students deemed hopeless, Mr. Escalante is determined to turn his young charges' lives around. Drawing from his own cultural heritage, he forms a bond with his largely Hispanic student body.

The students gradually come to realize that the only way they'll escape their own poverty-stricken barrio is to succeed intellectually. As a result, the class' academic achievements soar dramatically -- too dramatically for the Educational Testing Service, which is convinced that the class' outstanding test scores are the results of cheating.

Dead Poets' Society (1989), Directed by Peter Weir

Mr. Keating, played by Robin Williams, is a young English teacher who returns to teach at Welton Academy. Being a former student, he knows the finer details of the stuffy school; yet, he unconventionally challenges his students to "seize the day" in every aspect of their lives.

Mr. Keating is inspirational to many of the students, but none more than Neil, a student with a high-class pedigree headed for a career as a doctor, but with a dream to be an actor. Mr. Keating helps Neil follow his dream of being an actor, supporting him in his role as Puck in a local play. When it becomes clear that Neil had deceived his father and defied his refusal to allow him to participate, a series of events unfolds that leaves Mr. Keating becoming the movie's scapegoat.

School Films of the 1990's

Dangerous Minds (1995), Directed by John N. Smith

Lou Anne Johnson, played by Michele Pfeiffer, is an inner-city school English teacher in California. Ms. Johnson's classroom of black and Hispanic students, all from low-

income homes, create a chaotic learning situation; but, she wins the students over with her experiences as a Marine and karate expertise. Ms. Johnson also sets up a reward system in order to motivate her class to read.

Winning over her students becomes an even more difficult task as she works under an uncooperative principal, a few troublesome parents, and a life of violence for her students who walk the streets in their free time. Ms. Johnson quickly understands that the key to the students' success is to show them that she cares about who they are and where they are from.

Mr. Holland's Opus (1995), Directed by Stephen Hereck

Glenn Holland, played by Richard Dreyfuss, takes a job teaching at J.F.K. High School. After spending several years on the road as a professional pianist and composer. Mr. Holland has dreams to spend a few years teaching in order to afford to return to his real passion of composing music. Teaching eventually becomes his family's livelihood and not just a way to earn extra money.

As a teacher of the arts, Mr. Holland's career spans over thirty years, dealing with a variety of challenges including bored students, uncooperative administrators, and a lack of personal creativity. Only when Mr. Holland realizes that expression of his personal passion and knowledge of music is what his class needs to become engaged in the learning process.

187 (1997), Directed by Kevin Williams

Trevor Garfield, played by Samuel L. Jackson, is a teacher in a New York City high school. After a student almost kills him, Mr. Garfield relocates to Los Angeles, but the trouble starts again when he becomes a substitute to a class containing a gang member. Mr. Garfield is forced to play by the rules of the street in a pyrrhic contest between victim and victimizer.

School Films in the 21st century

Chalk (2006), Directed by Mike Akel

Mr. Stroope (Chris Mass), Mr. Lowrey (Troy Schremmer), and Coach Webb (Janice Schremmer) show what the day-to-day life of a teacher is like through the format of a pseudo-documentary. Mr. Stroope is convinced that his time has come to be given the

golden title of "Teacher of the Year," Mr. Lowrey's struggles to find his footing during his first year, and Coach Webb continues to challenge the status quo. The story highlights Mr. Lowrey's struggle to teach due to lack of social skills and experience as he debates whether or not teaching is really the career for him.

The Ron Clark Story (2006), Directed by Randa Haines

Ron Clark, played by Matthew Perry, tells the true story of a teacher from upstate New York who moves to Manhattan specifically to teach struggling students. Using essential rules and innovative strategies, Clark manages to turn several lives around and raises students' test scores to outstanding levels, even higher than the advanced groups in the city. His star pupils include a young girl forced to both attend school and care for her siblings and a graffiti-prone boy who discovers his talent with encouragement from Mr. Clark.

Freedom Writers (2007), Directed by Richard LaGrevnese

Erin Gruwell, played by Hilary Swank, is ready to take on the world as she steps inside Wilson High School for her first day of teaching. A racially diverse group of juvenile delinquents, gang members, and underprivileged students from poor neighborhoods share their hatred for each other. They soon figure out the game that they are simply being warehoused in the educational system until they are old enough to drop out.

Mrs. Gruwell tries to engage them on a daily basis; but a racially motivated gang shooting becomes the most unlikely teaching aid. Mrs. Gruwell begins to connect the students with *The Diary of Anne Frank* and opens their eyes to the experiences of those suffering intolerance throughout the world.

Conclusion

Some research and analysis has been done on the representation of literacy in popular film, but not in popular school film, and how this representation of literacy affects how popular culture perceives literacy to be in the classrooms. This study sought to expand the research base through a semiotic analysis of the representations of literacy depicted within popular school film.

CHAPTER 3 - Methodology

How do we situate a study of semiotics within educational research? On one hand, the study resembles qualitative research in that the researcher was allowed considerable latitude in analyzing the data. On the other hand, semiotics is usually grounded in cultural studies, anthropology, and literary criticism. Therefore, this study was situated precisely on the boundary between the social sciences and the humanities.

This study employed semiotics, more specifically, semiotic analysis to find emerging themes of representations of literacy in popular school films in order to qualitatively code the emerging themes to develop a grounded theory through grounded theory methodologies in order to explain the findings.

As previously mentioned, the research questions that guided the current study were:

- How is literacy represented in serious school film?
- What is the ideal of literacy pedagogy advanced in school film?

The subsidiary questions that guided the study were:

- What are the components of literacy in serious school film?
- What importance does the film place on literacy?
- How is literacy expressed?
- What is the role of the teacher as literacy pedagogy is advanced?
- What is the role of the student as literacy pedagogy is advanced?
- What is the role of the school as literacy pedagogy is advanced?

Research Design

In the study, the researcher shifted from the following pilot study to the films identified in the study corpus. This greatly increased the number of films studied as well as broadened the timeline for representations of literacy in film throughout the past eighty years. To address these questions, a methodology consisting of five major stages was used.

In Stage 1, the initial selections of the scenes from the movie filmography were selected for semiotic analysis. In Stage 2, the scenes selected from each film were analyzed according to the predetermined semiotic categories. In Stage 3, the semiotic analyses of the scenes were cross-referenced to uncover the themes and patterns underlying the representation of literacy in popular school movies. In Stage 4, the emerging themes were outlined by decade to uncover trends based upon historical education events. And finally, Stage 5 was the development of a grounded model to explain how literacy represented in serious school film and what the ideal of literacy pedagogy is advanced in school film.

Study Corpus Selection

The selection of the study corpus began with an initial published list of 100 school films. Nederhouser (1999) investigated a variety of film publication sources, most predominantly the Internet Movie Data Base website, to compile a list of any film since the beginning of moving pictures centered predominantly around teachers, schools, or teaching situations (Appendix A).

Secondly, films depicting a teacher as the main character were chosen, eliminating many popular school films following a student as the central character, such as *The Breakfast Club*, *Finding Forrester*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, all important films, but not for the purposes of this study (Appendix B). Additional films were added that have been released since the publication of Nederhouser's original filmography (Appendix C)

Third, films categorized as serious school films were selected, in efforts to eliminate the majority of stereotypical parodies of schools that are prevalent in school film. This eliminated a great many of the films from the initial filmography.

Next, films that contained several representations of literacy were selected. This also eliminated a number of films from the filmography.

And finally, films that were available for purchase or rental in the United States were selected from the narrowed list in order to be the study corpus. (Appendix D)

Inter-rater Participation

For the selection of scenes from the study corpus, the researcher assembled a group of fifteen inter-raters, regional literacy experts with varied backgrounds of classroom experience.

The inter-rater group met at a central location over the period of two months to collaboratively view the films and select, often by debate, the pivotal scene within each film that best represented the film's definition of literacy (Appendix E). The inter-rater group was comprised of teacher-consultants of the Flint Hills Writing Project, a part of the National Writing Project, who among them also were National Board certified teachers, Kansas Horizon Award winners [awarded annually to the most promising first-year educators in the state], semi-finalists and finalists for the Kansas Teacher of the Year award, as well as participants and national presenters at many literacy conferences.

Pilot study

Because the study represented a departure from the typical kinds of methodologies employed in the College of Education at Kansas State University, the researcher decided a detailed pilot study was essential to illustrate exactly what it was the researcher intended to do in the present study. It is also worth mentioning that, as what amounts to a textual analysis study, Institutional Review Board approval was not an issue in the completion of the pilot study. The researcher elected to conduct the pilot study through a semiotic analysis of the scene from *Teachers* described in Chapter 1. Although *Teachers* may not be the first film one thinks of when recalling a school film, the scene is particularly appropriate because it illustrates all of the key elements the researcher wished to examine in this study. First, *Teachers* is set in a K-12 school. Second, the main character is a teacher (in this case, a high school social studies teacher). Third, the film meets the study's definition of popular school film, based on Trier's (2000) definition as a film about a teacher or a student that takes place in a school. Fourth, the content of the scene concerns literacy pedagogy and the larger societal representations of literacy.

In order to conduct this pilot study, the researcher made operational a set of appropriate procedures for conducting a semiotic analysis given the research questions. In other words, the researcher needed to clearly establish what analysis was intended.

The literature regarding semiotic analysis is complex and not particularly well suited to research in education. In order to structure a framework for the semiotic analysis, the researcher created a matrix, Table 1, to structure the study. The matrix specifies two main areas of concentration, the representations of literacy from the movie scene and the literacy pedagogy that is demonstrated in each scene. The next step was to consider the specific semiotic representations that would be analyzed.

One element of semiotic research that seemed especially relevant is the notion of representation. Chandler (2006) defines representations as:

The first (denotative) order (or level) of signification is seen as primarily representational and relatively self-contained. The second (connotative) order of signification reflects 'expressive' values, which are attached to a sign. In the third (mythological or ideological) order of signification the sign reflects major culturally-variable concepts underpinning a particular worldview - such as masculinity, femininity, freedom, individualism, objectivism, Englishness and so on. (Chandler, 2006)

The matrix was divided into the three levels of representation (denotation, connotation, myth) that would be used for each category described below.

Within the broader categories of Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy, the researcher looked for semiotic representations including dialogue representations, cinematic techniques, and semiotic codes. More specifically, the researcher looked for evidence of Components of Literacy, Importance of Literacy, How Literacy is Expressed as well as the Role of the Teacher, Role of the Student, and the Role of the School.

The matrix is again broken down further to delineate from the dialogue of the scene, the cinematic techniques of the scene, and the semiotic codes of the scene. The cinematic techniques used for analysis include a focus on lighting, camera angles, and camera shots.

Chandler (2006) defines the semiotic codes:

Social codes: [In a broader sense all semiotic codes are 'social codes'] bodily codes (bodily contact, proximity, physical orientation, appearance, facial expression, gaze, head nods, gestures and posture); commodity codes (fashions, clothing, cars); behavioural codes (protocols, rituals, role-playing, games). (Chandler 2006).

Table 1 *Pilot Study Semiotic Analysis*

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

The researcher did not intend to use the matrix above as a grid for coding, as would be the case in other forms of qualitative research. Rather, it was intended that the matrix be used as a guide to direct the analysis of the scene. Some of the individual boxes were more appropriate than others while others might be discussed through analysis of previous items. As the researcher worked through the first attempt at conducting this analysis, boxes of the matrix were highlighted to indicate areas of the matrix that were particularly fruitful in guiding the researcher’s thinking.

Pilot Study-Teachers (1984)

After experimenting with several ways of presenting dialogue from the film, the researcher elected to present it in play script format, with explanatory notes included in bracketed italics.

Mr. Jurel: [*asking Eddie's mother*]: Don't you care about your son's education?

Eddie's mother: Isn't that your job, Mr. Jurel?

[*Eddie's mother and her attorney leave*]

Mr. Jurel: [*calling Eddie into the counselor's office*] Eddie!

[*Jurel hands Eddie a few magazines off of the table*]

Mr. Jurel: Read that.

Eddie: Do what?

Mr. Jurel: Just open it up someplace and start reading.

[*Eddie hesitantly takes the magazine, opens it up, and begins looking at the pages and moving his lips*]

Mr. Jurel: Out loud.

Eddie: [*staring at the magazine, putting the magazine down*] I don't like this magazine.

Mr. Jurel: What kind of magazine do you like, Eddie?

Eddie: Ah, come on, just lay off...I don't need this.

Mr. Jurel: What you need, Eddie, is another remedial reading class, again. You're not foolin anybody.

Eddie: I passed that class! You can't make me take it again. I read fine, so don't you worry about it, okay? Just lay off!

Mr. Jurel: Alright. But you just got kicked out of your social studies class. So, I'll give you have a choice. You take my class. Or you can take study hall.

Eddie: I'll take study hall.

Mr. Jurel: Yeah, my class, third period, I'll see you there tomorrow. That's all.

[*Eddie leaves the counselor's office, slamming the door*]

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The dialogue denotations in the brief interaction between Mr. Jurel and Eddie's mother shows that Mr. Jurel is attempting to have Eddie's parents be more involved in Eddie's education and not as involved in the custody issues that have predicated the attendance of the divorce attorney to the conference.

The dialogue denotations between Mr. Jurel and Eddie shows that Mr. Jurel is wanting to find out if Eddie can read or not. When Eddie refuses to read aloud by not reading the magazine and putting it on the table, Mr. Jurel can deduce that Eddie cannot read.

When Mr. Jurel realizes that Eddie has passed remedial reading and he cannot make Eddie take it again, he decides that putting him in his own class where he can help him will be better than study hall. Mr. Jurel gives Eddie a choice of attending his own social studies class during third period or study hall. Even though Eddie chooses study hall, Mr. Jurel tells him that he will start coming to the social studies class.

The analysis of the connotations of the dialogue with Eddie's mother is highlighted when she accusingly asks, "Isn't that your job, Mr. Jurel?" Eddie's mother is lashing out at Mr. Jurel for feeling angry that her son isn't being successful in class. The dialogue exchange is symbolic of the blame game that parents and teachers play with each other, feeling each is at fault for the student's inability to be successful.

Mr. Jurel's conversation with Eddie is highlighting what Mr. Jurel feels is a necessary skill in order to be successful in any aspect of school and life, and that is the ability to read. Mr. Jurel picks up a magazine off the table and asks Eddie to read it, showing that any person at his age level or above should be able to do that skill without incident. When Eddie pretends to read it silently, he is indeed showing how he has made it through school and possibly how he passed his remedial reading class even though he cannot read.

Eddie says that he doesn't like the magazine and that is why he won't read it aloud. Eddie is saying that he is able to be literate when it is something that he likes to do. Otherwise, he will choose to not participate.

Mr. Jurel, in confronting Eddie's inability to read, is calling Eddie's bluff, pointing out that he needs additional remedial reading help. Mr. Jurel is confrontational with Eddie and playing tough with him, partly because Eddie is a rough character in some ways, but mostly because Mr. Jurel feels that Eddie probably needs some authoritative role model in his life who is going to not only do what's best for him, but won't put up with the games that Eddie has been playing.

The myths at play in this scene are that the school has the sole responsibility to educate the child. Neither Eddie's mother nor the attorney was concerned about Eddie's academic progress. Eddie's mother was accusatory to Mr. Jurel's plea that they talk about Eddie's lack of progress.

Also, the myth exists that if a student passes a class, they are proficient in the class. It is obvious from the scene that Eddie cannot read, despite his passing of the remedial reading class. This brings forth many questions such as "What happens in a high school classroom?" "What teachers are assigned to the struggling students?" More importantly, this scene brings to light the idea of "What does it mean to be literate, anyway?"

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue denotations between Mr. Jurel and Eddie's mother shows that Eddie's mother is not concerned about importance of literacy. She believes that duty should fall into the hands of the school and Mr. Jurel.

The dialogue between Mr. Jurel and Eddie shows that Eddie does not hold literacy as a valuable skill. Mr. Jurel believes literacy is so important that he is willing to take Eddie into his own classroom to make sure he will become literate.

Symbolic within the entire dialogue of the scene is the idea that literacy means different things to different people. Eddie's mother does not seem concerned that her son may graduate without the ability to read. This symbolizes the uninvolved parents of students, or those that are so caught up within their own lives that they don't pay attention to the education of their children.

Also symbolic within the scene is Jurel's insistence that Eddie not take the easy road to study hall, and instead challenge him to find something interesting in Mr. Jurel's social studies class to become a motivator to learn to read. Teachers often offer differentiated ways to reach students who are struggling.

The dialogue in this scene perpetuates the myth that there are many parents too uninvolved in their children's lives and too many schools who allow students to be passed along without the ability to master proficiently basic literacy skills.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue of the scene between Mr. Jurel and Eddie as the ability to read a magazine and to read aloud for someone else. There is not any mention of whether or not Eddie is capable of writing well or doing anything else related to literacy well.

Eddie's mention of not liking the magazine also expresses literacy in a way that one must like what they are reading in order to want to read it or to be capable of reading it.

The myth that is perpetuated in this scene is that a measure of literacy is the ability to read and nothing else.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Mr. Jurel is leading the conference with Eddie's mother and her attorney. Mr. Jurel does not currently have Eddie in class but has been asked to meet with the parent because the counselor is absent. The dialogue shows that the role of Mr. Jurel is to try to facilitate support from the parent for Eddie's academic success.

Mr. Jurel then meets with Eddie. Mr. Jurel tries to work through the problem of Eddie not being able to read.

The connotation of the dialogue of the teacher is that he is frustrated at being asked to do something that is not in his job description, unhappy at the parent's lack of support, frustrated at the inability of the curriculum and teachers to teach Eddie how to read, and angry at Eddie's unwillingness to want to learn.

Several myths are perpetuated in the dialogue of the teacher. First, it is shown that ultimately the teacher is the person who is responsible for the literacy or illiteracy of the student. Mr. Jurel is left with the decision on what to do about Eddie's situation and decides to take him into his class in order to watch him more closely. Secondly, Mr. Jurel's dialogue perpetuates that the only way to reach a tough kid is to be tough back.

Eddie's dialogue with Mr. Jurel explains that he has passed remedial reading and that he doesn't need to take it again. The conversation also shows that he wants Mr. Jurel to

leave him alone and to not make an issue of it. Eddie's dialogue represents his frustration with a combination of situations: the divorce of his parents, being kicked out of another class, and being held accountable by Mr. Jurel.

Eddie's dialogue with Mr. Jurel shows Eddie as the typical high school troublemaker who has trouble with the academic side of school. He represents every student who has been able to fake his or her way through school and not be able to read. The dialogue that Eddie has symbolizes the myth that the troublemaking kids are the ones that aren't literate.

The school has removed itself from the dialogue in this particular scene and its lack of participation, or non-participation, in itself sends the message that they do not care about Eddie. The lack of participation on behalf of the school perpetuates the myth that the schools are not concerned with students as individuals.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene takes place in a well-lit room. A conference table is set in the middle of the room, with Mr. Jurel on the end of the table, and Eddie's mother and her lawyer on the side. The camera angles do not do anything unusual during this part of the scene. There angle of the camera is a straight angle shot, giving equal power to Mr. Jurel and Eddie's mother. There is not a use of sounds effects or special effects in the scene.

During the second part of the scene, Mr. Jurel and Eddie are seen in a variety of close-up shots in order to show the facial expressions of the characters. There are also a variety of reaction shots to show how Mr. Jurel and Eddie are reacting to the conversation.

Importance of Literacy

During the transition phase of the scene, the camera uses a United States Army Reserve pamphlet shelf as its central focus. This is the only post-graduate paraphernalia in the entire counselor's office.

When the scene becomes heated during the verbal exchange, the camera zooms in even closer to emphasize the emotion and anger felt by Eddie and the authoritative stance of Mr. Jurel. The reaction shots are utilized to symbolize the frustration of the situation by both

of the characters involved. Eddie's exasperated looks are caught on camera to show that he realizes he has been unable to fake his ability to read with Mr. Jurel.

The myths at play in this scene show the high school does not have high hopes for its graduates, suggesting that this high school has more students who pursue careers like the military reserves after graduation than those that pursue college.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

With a combination of straight angle shots and close-ups, the cinematic techniques are used to show the role of Mr. Jurel as the person holding the key to Eddie's literacy. It is clear who is in control of the discussion, with Mr. Jurel's final stare on overpowering posture. The cinematic techniques also show the role of Eddie as a person who has learned to play the game of school.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

The semiotic codes analyzed are the body codes, commodity codes, and behavioral codes. These are not qualitative research codes. They are semiotic codes. Thus, I am not "coding" this data; my analysis will become data that will be coded, in the qualitative tradition later.

Body Codes

Mr. Jurel uses his body language to show his frustration that Eddie's mother doesn't show enough concern about Eddie's education and failing grades. He jumps out of his seat, pounds the table, yet remains respectfully in the same position in the room. His facial expression is tense.

Mr. Jurel walks to the door and points for Eddie to come into the room. Mr. Jurel sits closer in proximity to Eddie. Mr. Jurel continues to have close proximity to Eddie for the remainder of the scene. His facial expression becomes stern. He raises his voice at Eddie, but never outwardly loses his temper. He jumps up to meet Eddie's demanding attitude and quickly overpowers Eddie with his height.

Eddie is slouched in the chair. Eddie's facial expression is a mix of surprise and fear as he is asked to read to Mr. Jurel, as if it is the first time he has ever been asked to read for

someone aloud. His facial features then turn to show a defiant attitude. He jumps out of the seat.

Mr. Jurel's body language is symbolic of the frustration that teachers feel when they are being unsupported by the parents of a student who is struggling. Jurel's body language becomes increasingly dominant of Eddie's, showing that perhaps Eddie has been slipping through the cracks at J.F.K High School, but Jurel is no longer going to allow him to do that. He's going to be close enough to Eddie now that there will be no place for Eddie to go to hide from his illiteracy.

Eddie's body language shows that he does not hold any value in the importance of being literate in order to be successful in his life. However, he does seem somewhat embarrassed and may have reacted negatively because he knows, deep down, that he really wants to know how to read. Eddie's body language symbolizes the frustration and embarrassment he feels for not being able to read.

The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of Mr. Jurel show that he feels the pressure of the responsibility of making sure that Eddie does not continue to be allowed to finish school without the ability to read.

Mr. Jurel's actions represent his frustration of the school's history of social promotion and the chance that Eddie and many others like him have been faking the ability to read. There are many things wrong with the school and Mr. Jurel seems to be reaching a breaking point where that is concerned.

The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of Eddie show that he feels trapped. He is embarrassed by his lack of illiteracy and yet, isn't motivated to do anything about it. His "I don't care" attitude is mirrored by his mother's "I don't care" attitude about his academics.

The gestures and facial expressions of Eddie symbolize the generation of students. The lack of being intrinsically motivated to be a better student and learner is consistently seen in the movies of the 80's. The gestures and facial expressions of Eddie symbolize the generation of students. The lack of being intrinsically motivated to be a better student and learner is consistently seen in the movies of the 80's.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Jurel is dressed in a long sleeve dress shirt, collar open, and hair somewhat long.

Eddie is dressed in layers, both with a denim jacket and a leather vest, collars pointed up.

Mr. Jurel's clothes and hairstyle are symbolic of the laid-back teacher who usually has a good connection with the students and isn't afraid to go against the status quo as long as it is in the best interest of students. Eddie's clothing is symbolic of the trouble-maker student, too cool for school, and too cool to read.

Mr. Jurel looks somewhat professional, though compared to the dress of the attorney in the scene, his is not as professionally dressed. In comparing the clothing of Mr. Jurel to that of the attorney, it is likely that the comparison is meant to show Mr. Jurel will never be as successful that teachers are not as professional or as important as attorneys.

The debate as to whether teachers should be considered professionals, just as doctors, lawyers, and business people, seems to be perpetuated as a myth in this scene. Eddie is dressed like a trouble-making student, leather-vest and all. Yet, he doesn't particularly look like a mean-spirited student. He has an innocent looking face. Eddie's clothing, although stylish at the time, represents a spirit of rebelliousness.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Jurel and Eddie follow traditional teacher/student protocol until Eddie becomes frustrated at the request to read aloud. He then takes on a defiant tone, jumps out his seat, and asks Mr. Jurel to 'lay off.' Mr. Jurel reacts to Eddie's reaction by also jumping out of his seat and taking an authoritative stance and a position of power as the taller person in the room. Eddie's behavior in the meeting symbolizes a student's ability to fake through school, only until an intuitive teacher, like Mr. Jurel, picks up on it.

The myths of the codes of the scene is to not only show the frustration of the characters, but show the frustration with students who are allowed to pass through school without ever learning to read. Mr. Jurel's insistent tone shows that he is serious about Eddie learning to read and to be successful in school.

Mr. Jurel goes through a combination of emotions in the meetings with Eddie and Eddie's mother. He shows frustration, anger, understanding, and determination. Mr. Jurel shows frustration, anger, understanding, and determination in order to symbolize for the viewer how important teaching is/has been to Mr. Jurel.

Eddie goes through a combination of emotions in the meeting with Mr. Jurel. He shows frustration, anger, understanding, and ultimately, defeat. Eddie's frustration and anger represents how many people felt about the educational system in the 80's.

Conclusion

This pilot step assisted in refining the instrument and the categories for semiotic analysis. It was also designed to help establish the researchers' trustworthiness in determining appropriate categories for the semiotic analysis.

As the study is proposed, the next step was to engage in the more traditional qualitative research technique of coding. The semiotic analysis conducted according to the matrix was also used as a source of data to examine for emerging themes.

At the time of the pilot study, it was too early to realistically engage in an analysis based upon a single film. However, the data above might illustrate themes such as public schools as incompetent; students need more opportunities to show their literacy proficiency, and that it isn't cool to be a good reader.

The final step in the research was to analyze the identified themes and to form a grounded theory, developing a model to explain the ways in which literacy pedagogy is represented in school film.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology used in the study. Film selection and semiotic coding were addressed. The pilot study was also included and analyzed. The next chapters provide the semiotic analyses of the study corpus, the discussion of the results, and the summary of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4 - Semiotic Analyses

“You can’t judge the importance of things by the sounds they make”: A Semiotic Analysis of *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*

Table 2 *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

[Bombs explode and sirens wail. A policeman on bicycle rides by while blowing a warning whistle. People on the streets run to cover. A group of schoolboys is looking out of the window of the school in hopes to see some of the battle taking place. Bombs explode and the buildings nearby shake]

Student #1: Look! There it is! There!

Student #2: Look! Over there!

Student #3: It's the clock, you fool!

Student #4: The guns! They must have spied it.

Teacher: Here! Out of this you kids! Down to the lower school!

[He gathers the boys out of the window and guides them downstairs]

[Downstairs in the classroom, many of the boys are trying to look out the windows]

Mr. Chips: Put those blinds down.

[Sounds of bombs blasting]

[Boys begin sitting in their wooden desks]

Mr. Chips: Get to your places.

[Bombs blasting]

Mr. Chips: Here, now, at this particular moment in history, *[bomb blast]* it may seem to you that the, uh, *[bomb blast]* the affairs of Julius Caesar in Gaul two thousand years ago *[bomb blast]* are somewhat uh *[bomb blast]* of somewhat secondary importance. *[smiling]*

[Students laugh with nervous laughter]

[Bomb blast]

Mr. Chips: But, believe me, you can't judge the importance of things by the *[bomb blast]* by the noise they make *[students laugh at the irony]*

[Bomb blasts get closer, students grab their desks]

Mr. Chips: Is there anyone who would like to volunteer to construe?

[Many hands go up. Bombs blast]

Mr. Chips: Peter?

Peter: Yes, sir!

Mr. Chips: [*Bomb blast*] Turn to page forty and begin at the bottom line, would you?

[*The shrill of an incoming bomb startles the boys. The walls shake violently and the students jump under their desks. The lights swing from the ceilings.*]

[*Mr. Chips looks to the sky in disgust. Peter looks up from his desk.*]

[*Peter stands up. The sound of bombs exploding continues.*]

Peter: [*In Latin*] This was kind of fighting [*In Latin*] in which the Germans busied themselves. [*Bombs explode*]

[*Students laugh*]

Mr. Chips: You see, these dead languages do come to life sometimes, don't they?

[*Students laugh*]

Figure 1-© *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The component of literacy recognized during the dialogue of the scene is the oral reading of the Latin text. With the many outside distractions of bombs blasting and walls shaking, Mr. Chips tries to focus the students onto the text, making jokes when appropriate in order to set their minds at ease. The students are reading of Julius Caesar and his journey in to Gaul, an ironic twist to the German fighting taking place in the village where the school is located.

Mr. Chips points out that dead languages, such as Latin, has a relevance to the present day lives of the boys, as evidenced by the fighting taking place in the war.

The connotation of the components of literacy in the dialogue is that the ability for the students to read and interpret a Latin text is what society valued of the educated students at the time. The appreciation for reading a text aloud and the necessity for discussions and analysis of the historical text is a powerful way for Mr. Chips to take the students' minds off of the fighting taking place at their doorstep while at the same time using the fighting as a springboard for a discussion about the relevance of the things they read about in history.

Importance of Literacy

Mr. Chips and his students demonstrate their value in literacy by continuing on with the Latin class and lesson despite being in the middle of a war. Mr. Chips helps the students understand the importance of being able to read and interpret the Latin text because it has a direct relevance to the world situation. History is repeating itself.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue of the scene as an interpretation of a historical text, a connection of text to real life situations, the ability to read fluently from a Latin text. Literacy is also expressed as the ability to learn from historical events in the context of current events that are directly impacting their lives. The expressions of literacy in the scene symbolize a much bigger picture of literacy than what a traditional view of literacy might have been at the time.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Mr. Chips is playing two significant roles in this scene. Through the dialogue, he is leading the class in a literacy activity, using a real-life situation and tying it to the traditional Latin text. He is also playing the role of a father-figure, trying to help the students understand what is going on in the world around them as well as comfort their fears in the scary situation. The students percolate between being attentive to Mr. Chips and being distracted by the shaking walls and swinging lights in their basement classroom. Many of the students volunteer to read aloud when prompted, with one student being selected to read the Latin text aloud and translate the Latin text into English. The school, being a private institution where the students live, plays an important role as the protector of the students.

The connotation of the dialogue in the scene represents that the role of teacher in this scene and the role of the school in the scene are very different from what a typical teacher and school role would be. The students in the classroom are obedient in their eagerness to volunteer to participate and to learn during a frightening time.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene takes place in the basement of the school in England during a battle of World War II. The camera shots focus on two main events in the classroom. The first is the interactions that Mr. Chips is having during the class and the second being the battle that is taking place in the town outside. The cinematic techniques focus in briefly on the oral reading of the Latin text. The film is in black and white as was common in 1939.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

The cinematic techniques are used to clarify the roles of the students, the school, and the role that Mr. Chips plays in the learning of the classroom. The students play the role of dutiful and obedient charges, most of the time. The cameras focus in on the students sitting behind their desks and reading along with Peter's oral reading. When the bombs continue to explode, the camera employs wide-angle shots of the classroom to show that several of the students duck underneath their desks or try to look under the shades to the battle outside.

The cinematic techniques also highlight the importance of Mr. Chips leadership during the scene. The camera focuses in on Mr. Chips as he uses humor to diffuse the tense situation. And finally, the role of the school is symbolized by the wide-angle shots of the classroom, representing a safe haven for the students and learning as the fighting continues in the outside world.

Figure 2-© *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Chips uses his body language to set the students at ease during the battle. He stands in front of the classroom or behind his desk and podium, but his body language remains confident, pleasant and cheerful despite the bombs exploding outside or the walls shaking around them.

The students use a variety of different body interactions. When paying attention to Mr. Chips or their classmate reading, most students sit attentively at their desks following along in their books. However, as the battle escalates, students try to look out of the windows, down the hallways, and eventually duck for cover under their desks. The facial expressions of the students go through a wide range of emotions, from scared to confident. As the battle gets closer to the school, the more concerned the students' expressions become.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Chips is dressed in a suit and tie, as are all of the students in the classroom. His stiff, starched suit symbolizes a stiff and starched man, which is quite an oxymoron where Mr. Chips is concerned. He is neither stiff, nor starched in his approach to teaching the boys. The students, in their traditional dress, polished and dignified, are a stark contrast to the old, trembling walls that shake with dust as the bombs explode. Their clothing and hairstyles are symbolic of an upper-class society that values very much the traditional literacies and the traditional values of education.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Chips and the students follow a traditional teacher/student protocol during the scene. Mr. Chips is responded to with obedience when he makes requests and with genuine laughter when he makes a joke. The rambunctiousness of the boys does not seem to deter Mr. Chips in the least. He continues forward with his requests and takes immediate control over the classroom. The myths of the codes of the scene show that despite everything, students feel safe and comfortable in a routine of structure, within certain limitations.

“I must keep at least one day ahead of him”: A Semiotic Analysis of *The Corn is Green*

Table 2 *The Corn is Green* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | |

Dialogue

[Miss Ronberry plays a note on the harmonica. Class is filled with people, children and adults. Teacher begins to conduct them]

Miss Ronberry: One, two, three...

Class: *[singing song, some from memory, others from songbook]*

[Miss Moffat rides bike across bridge and parks it in front of the house. Miss Watty is out cleaning linens in a tub]

Ms. Watty: You are quite a clinker, ma’am. Always sneaking off to the village on your bike.

Miss Moffat: My Greek books arrived, Watty.

Ms. Watty: Greek? You mean to say you can jumble the Greek, ma'am?

Miss Moffat: You flatter me. I'll have to do a bit of studying. If I am to teach Morgan Evans Greek, I must keep at least one day ahead of him.

[Scene changes back to the classroom finishing the singing of their song.]

Miss Ronberry: That was quite better. Full of splendid feeling and nice and precise as well.

Student: Please Miss Ronberry, can we have some more?

Miss Ronberry: Not today, school dismissed.

[Students leave, some with their parents. Miss Moffat enters. Miss Ronberry notices an elderly student still seated and approaches him]

Miss Ronberry: Oh! Is there something you would like to know, Mr. Tom?

Mr. Tom: Where is Shakespeare?

Miss Ronberry: Mr. Tom, Shakespeare was a great writer.

Mr. Tom: Dear me. . . and me thinking the man was a place.

[Mr. Tom stands to leave. Miss Moffat smiles and walks out of the room]

Figure 3-©*The Corn is Green*



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The dialogue denotes a variety of components of literacy. First, the classroom is filled with a cross-generational population of students, from retired grandfathers, to mothers, to traditional elementary students. Together, the class sings hymns together, directed by their teacher, Miss Ronberry. Another element of literacy in the scene reveals itself through the discussion Miss Moffitt has with Miss Watty. Miss Moffitt has gone into town to pick up the Greek textbooks that she has ordered for her favorite and brightest student, Morgan. And the final component of literacy in the scene takes place in the final moments of the scene, when an elderly student asks his teacher “Where’s Shakespeare?” The life-long learner continues to question in order to better understand the things they are reading and discussing in class.

The connotation of the components of literacy in the dialogue supports that there are varying degrees of being literate. For Miss Moffitt, being literate equates to Morgan Evans learning Greek. For the elderly gentleman asking “Where’s Shakespeare,” literacy equates to a journey of life-long learning and finding answers to questions that still intrigue and challenge his beliefs and understandings of the world.

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue shows that literacy is important part of the lives of everyone in the scene. Miss Moffitt, as headmistress of the school, is responsible for opening up her home for the townspeople to have a place to gather and learn. Her caring is greatest for Morgan as she continues to challenge him and to prepare him for the opportunity to attend Oxford by teaching him Greek. Important enough for the teacher to teach herself things she doesn’t know as well in order to help another student. The dialogue also emphasizes the importance of literacy in the eagerness of the students to sing the song once more instead of leaving the classroom at the end of the day.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue of the scene through song. A cross-generational class sings a song together, with some of the older students modeling and prompting younger students to participate. Literacy is also expressed as the ability to study and read foreign languages as evidenced by Miss Moffitt's enrichment of Morgan's curriculum, separate from the curriculum of the other students. Literacy is also expressed in the dialogue and as the willingness to question things one doesn't understand.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Miss Ronberry is leading a teacher-centered classroom, directing the class in a hymn. Miss Moffitt is the founder and headmistress of the school as well as a facilitator of learning with Morgan. The teachers' roles are clearly defined in the scene by the dialogue that takes place in the classroom. The students are obedient and focused on Miss Ronberry at all times. In this scene, the school only really takes form once the students arrive, as the school is really the personal home of Miss Moffitt. The dialogue connotes the hierarchy of the teacher/student relationship and the roles that each plays in the quest for learning.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene takes place in the home of Miss Moffitt, where the classes are held each day. The cinematic techniques used in this scene highlight many of the students sitting in the class. Close-ups of several of the students show varying degrees of engagement in the song, with most being very excited to sing together. The techniques highlight their smiling faces and attentiveness to Miss Ronberry.

The camera focuses in on Miss Moffitt on two occasions. First, the camera focuses in on her arrival on bicycle from her trip into town to pick up additional resources for her students. Her face is calm and confident. The camera then focuses in on her reaction to the conversation between Miss Ronberry and the elderly student who is confused about the whereabouts of Shakespeare. She grins and is slightly amused at the interaction, but more importantly, she is portrayed as proud that she has been able to give the townspeople to discover learning.

Importance of Literacy

The importance of literacy is emphasized with the use of cinematic techniques that focus on the interactions of the students during the scene. The majority of the students in the classroom are children, but the camera specifically zooms in on three adults in the class who are participating and collaborating next to the children. The techniques used in the scene show there are adults in the community who did not receive a formal education as a youth.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

With a combination of wide-angle shots of the classroom and close-up shots of the students' faces, the cinematic techniques are used to show the importance that the students play in creating the learning environment. The camera shows many details surrounding the students to emphasize that it is a home and not a typical school classroom. Without the students in the classroom, the classroom is just a room of Miss Moffitt's home.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Miss Moffitt is a traditional lady. She walks with confidence and authority and yet, her eyes sparkle with compassion. It is clear that she is in charge of the school but she stays outside of the house, observing from a doorway and allows Miss Ronberry to lead the classes. Most of the students are obedient and engaged in the classroom activity. They sit at their desks at attention, focusing on Miss Ronberry and the lesson. The students interact together with genuine caring, although two students come into class tardy and shove each other, while another sticks out her tongue at another. These typical student interactions symbolize that many of the students in the classroom are still children.

The body language of most of the students and of the teachers show that they all value the importance of being literate in order to be fulfilled and have success in life. Only a few students are shown through gestures and facial expression to not value the activity, symbolizing that they do not see the value in school at all.

Commodity Codes

All of the adults and students in the scene are dressed in their nicest clothing, as juxtaposed with the brief interaction with Miss Watty, Miss Moffitt's maid, who is in her work clothing, scrubbing the laundry clean outside with a washbasin and washboard. Long sleeve blouses with high collars, dresses, suits and blazers with ties, and women's hats are indicative of a wardrobe usually reserved for occasions such as church. Each person's appearance is immaculate, representing their respect for school and the efforts of Miss Ronberry and Miss Moffitt to give them an education.

The classroom is a room in Miss Moffitt's house. The room is supplied with shelves of books and maps of the world as well as tables, chairs, and desks for the students to use. Many of the students have hymnals open on their desktops and are focusing in on Miss Ronberry at the front of the room.

Behavioral Codes

The teachers and students follow the traditional teacher/student protocol. Miss Ronberry is polite and encouraging in her leadership in the classroom. Miss Moffitt does not interact with the class during the scene other than to observe. The students are polite in their questioning and in their actions, many behaving as though they are filled with utter joy to be singing a song together in class. Only one student seems bored and sticks her tongue out at her neighbor.

The behavior of all of the characters in the scene symbolizes the joyfulness of learning. The students behave as though they are thrilled to have the opportunity to be at school and the teachers are excited to have the opportunity to provide them with an education. The myths at play in the scene are that learning is always joyful and never difficult or challenging.

Figure 4-©*The Corn is Green*



“To reach out for something”: Semiotic Analysis of *Blackboard Jungle*

Table 3 *Blackboard Jungle* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

[Teacher is playing a cartoon film for the class of Jack and the Beanstalk. Students react with close attention and laughter, when appropriate. A crowd has gathered outside of the classroom door to watch the film inside as well]

Cartoon Film Narrator: Jack ran down the beanstalk. The giant was close behind him.

[A fellow teacher peeks in at what the crowd gathered outside the door is watching]

Cartoon Film Narrator: So Jack got rich and when he grew up, he married a princess and they lived happily ever after.

[The students cheer. The teacher turns on the lights and opens up the window shades]

Student #1: Teach! How about the main feature?

Student #2: Yeah, Humphrey Bogart!

Mr. Dadier: Whatdya think of the story?

West: It was lousy...there were no dames.

Mr. Dadier: Miller, what did you think?

Miller: Well, That Jack, he's a pretty cool cat, alright.

West: I don't like fairy stories, ya know?

Mr. Dadier: Mr. Bronson?

Bronson: I don't know. I kinda feel sorry for the giant.

Mr. Dadier: Oh? Why's that?

Miller: Well, this Jack, he ain't, he ain't no hero...he's a pretty dumb hick.

Yeah, look, his old lady sends him out to sell a cow. Well, Jack the jerk meets up with a con man and he lets him have the cow for a couple of crazy beans.

Student #2: Yeah, that wasn't so smart.

Student #3: Yeah, and then he climbed that ole' beanstalk until he disappeared into another land.

Student #4: Without his space helmet, man?

[Everyone laughs]

Student #5: Yeah, how did that Giant get up there without any beanstalk?

West: This is a fairy story, he just flew.

Miller: I got this Giant pegged for a thief.

Mr. Dadier: Oh? The Giant is supposed to have killed Jack's father and stole his money.

Student #6: How did Jack know that?

Mr. Dadier: Now suppose Jack thought that the Giant stole from him. Did that give Jack the right to steal the hen that laid the Golden Egg?

Miller: Nah. He's gotta have proof.

Mr. Dadier: Suppose he had the proof. What then?

Student #7: Jack, he should have called the cops.

Student #8: Yeah, and the cop would've kept the loot for himself too.

Student #7: Could be.

Student #9: Not the FBI!

[Several students laugh, while others clap, cheer, or whistle]

Miller: That magic harp. Hm? If the giant would've been so bad, the harp would have wanted to be snatched.

Student #6: Could be....

Mr. Dadier: Now why do you suppose that magic harp liked that giant so much?

Student #10: I know, because the giant, he liked music.

[Students laugh]

Student #2: Jack was a real heist man. He got away with burglary three times.

Student #7: I liked the part where he knocked off the giant.

TK: Who cares...the whole thing here is a phony.

Mr. Dadier: Wilson, do you think Jack should've killed the Giant?

Wilson: Yeah! Yeah sure, he was chasing him.

Miller: If somebody stole from you, wouldn't you chase'em?

[Wilson looks at Miller]

Miller: The way I got it figured, this Jack is a square. First off, he don't care if his old lady starves to death.

Student #12: What's the buck, man, didn't he sell the cow for a hand full of beans?

Student #5: And then he turned burglar.

Student #7: And then he committed murder

Miller: And for all of this, he gets a reward.

Student #4: He's rich.

Student #5: And he marries a princess.

West: You wanna know why? Because he took what he wanted. Because crime always pays.

Mr. Dadier: It was a crime, wasn't it?

Student #6: So what?

Ellis: Yeah..it was only some stinkin Giant anyway.

Mr. Dadier: Why don't you like the Giant, Ellis?

TK: Because he's a Giant.

Mr. Dadier: You must be a Dodger fan, then...

[Students laugh]

Mr. Dadier: No kidding, fellas, you don't like the Giant because he's different than anybody else.

TK: That's right.

Mr. Dadier: But is that right? Is it right to dislike someone just because they are different? There are a lot of us, right here in this classroom, that are different than anybody else.

Student #2: If the story is so cockeyed, then what's the whole point of it?

Mr. Dadier: Now we are getting somewhere. Now, all of your lives, your gonna hear stories...about what some guy tells ya, what you see in books, in magazines, on television and radio. What you read in the newspapers. But if you could just examine the story, look for the real meaning, and most of all, fellas, if you could just, just learn to think for yourself...

West: Here it comes, fellas, here comes the commercial.

[Class laughs, bell rings]

[Miller walks up behind TK]

Miller: That Giant....if he done wrong....at least I think he shoulda had a trial.

Student #5: Hey teach? How bout some more stories like that?

Student #4: How about some on football?

Student #5: Yeah, teach, maybe I'll turn up to be a critic on the movies.

Student #4: How'd ya' like that Jack and the Beanstalk? Turned out to be a thief like everybody else.

Student #6: I liked the story.

[Two teachers enter the room]

Teacher #1: So, you finally got through to 'em?

Mr. Dadier: I think so. Yes, for once, for the first time.

Teacher #1: What's the answer? Visual education?

Mr. Dadier: Partly. If you just get them stimulated.

Teacher #2: Sure, they'll go for movies, but will that teach them to read?

Mr. Dadier: But if you can get them to use their imagination, to reach out for something,

Teacher #2: Certainly not knowledge?

Mr. Dadier: No, but if you can get them to use their knowledge, get their minds out of comic books.

Teacher #2: Minds? A mind would indicate a brain!

Teacher #1: Before he proves Darwin is right, I've got a class. Oh, and if you still need a Santa Claus for your Christmas show,

Mr. Dadier: Yeah, I do!

Teacher #1: You got one.

Figure 5-©Blackboard Jungle



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

At the beginning of the class, there is no conversation, just the sound of the movie clip and the students' laughter and reactions to the film. Mr. Dadier and the students take turns talking after the Jack and the Beanstalk film clip ends.

Mr. Dadier prompts the students to participate in a discussion about the film, calling on specific students, and allowing students to interact throughout the conversation with one another. The students debate back and forth, some of them somewhat passionately, about the meaning of the clip and connecting it to their personal lives. All students are allowed to talk and share their views, although Miller really stands out in his connection to the film clip and his analysis of the situation.

The analysis of the connotations of the dialogue show that literacy is partially the interaction and thoughtful conversation between two or more parties. Mr. Dadier helps guide the students through creating a dialogue about Jack and the Beanstalk, and ultimately a dialogue about equity and tolerance. Even if the parties disagree on the topic, the sharing of perspectives and the ability to put thoughts into words is important.

The importance of scaffolding is highlighted in this scene. Building a bridge from what the students know or are interested in to what the curriculum or material to be taught is critical to student motivation and engagement and an important component of literacy.

Importance of Literacy

Mr. Dadier brings in a visual text of a fairy tale story to bridge to their conversation and understanding of equality and tolerance. Mr. Dadier had difficulty having the students connect to the class. He was looking for a way to break through to the students and help them connect to the class. Mr. Dadier discusses the importance of being a critical consumer of media. He explains that what students read in newspapers and magazines may not always be the truth. To be a critical consumer, in his opinion, is for students to learn to think for themselves. In doing so, Mr. Dadier trying to help this class understand that the choices they make affect others.

The students begin to grasp the importance of being able to have a discussion, especially when there are differing points of view. The students come from a variety of backgrounds that impact their understanding and viewpoint of the film clip. Yet, each listens to the viewpoints of the others.

How Literacy is Expressed

Mr. Dadier facilitated a discussion of the film clip between the students. Mr. Dadier also used a visual text to connect to their personal lives and to the topics of the discussions they have in class. The visual text provided a springboard for a conversation about stealing that have nothing to do with and are deeper than just the story of Jack and the Beanstalk.

The connotation of the dialogue in regards to the expression of literacy is that literacy is deeper than the surface meaning of a text. Using a text as a springboard to a more critical discussion of it's application to life is an expression of critical literacy and the importance of using media literacy to connect to traditional literacies.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

The role of the teacher, Mr. Dadier, is important in the scene because of his ability to take the lead in a discussion and to also take a backseat to the students' lead in discussing their views of the film clip and how the clip relates to their world. He redirects the students when needed and calls on students who have not been participating or have not been able to put in their thoughts because other students have dominated the conversation. Mr. Dadier is visibly excited when the students take the lead in the conversation, showing that the conversation is going where he hoped it would go.

The role of the students is important to the scene. They are attentive during the clip because they enjoy it. Once the discussion starts, they are involved in it, either by responding and asking questions or by listening intently to the comments of others. They respond to questions posed by Mr. Dadier and to the questions posed by one another. Eventually, they talk to each other more than the teacher.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The cinematic techniques used that highlight the components of literacy in the film are the wide-angle shots that encompass the many members of the class. Although the lighting is dark, especially during the viewing of the Jack and the Beanstalk film, the faces of the students and their reactions to the film are still visible. The camera uses mostly headshots to emphasize their participation in the discussion.

Using a film like Jack and the Beanstalk in a high school classroom is highly unusual, as emphasized by the group of boys gathered in the hallway at the classroom door. Students who wouldn't typically care about what is going on inside were now trying very hard to see what was going on inside the room. The laughter and enjoyment of the students as they watched the film clip shows that there can be an element of fun and whimsy tied to critical discussions of texts.

The other important component of literacy in the scene is the focus of the cameras on the discussion the students have after the film clip. Being able to make a text-to-self and text-to-world connection is important in one's literary identity.

Importance of Literacy

During the film clip, the room is very dark. The students are engaged in the film clip and immediately start discussing it once it is over. The room symbolically becomes lighter as the students become enlightened by the connection they have to the film clip and how the film clip can have a connection to the topics they have been discussing in class.

The cinematic techniques used in the scene show that visual media is held in high regard by Mr. Dadier. Not only does the film clip have an important relevance to the classroom topic, but it also serves as a stimulus for the motivation and engagement that the students have been lacking.

How Literacy is Expressed

The camera shots and lighting emphasize that expressions of literacy in this scene are social in nature, but come from individual experiences. Through a variety of character close-ups and wide-angle shots of the classroom, the discussion of the Jack and the Beanstalk film clip highlight the different ways in which the characters connected with the clip.

The students in the classroom have not had the opportunity to express their views or opinions in this manner before, so the discussion is a breakthrough in their literacy development, which had become very static.

Role of the Teacher/Student/School

The role that Mr. Dadier plays as a facilitator of a student-centered discussion is highlighted by the fact that the focus of the camera shots is on the students and their conversations.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Dadier walks around the perimeter of the room versus walking up and down the aisles between the desks. When Mr. Dadier is facilitating the discussion, he steps forward, but then also steps back once the students take the lead in the discussion.

The students are sitting in their desks during the scene. They interact with each other verbally and use their hands at times to emphasize what they are saying. When the bell rings, the students get up to leave the classroom.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Dadier is dressed very professionally in a suit and tie, as are the other teachers in the school. The students are also dressed nicely, most of them in button down shirts or jackets. Some of the students are not dressed as nicely and are wearing sweatshirts. Miller,

Mr. Dadier's clothing is symbolic of a teacher who takes his job seriously. He's a professional and appreciates that he is in the position of being a role model for the young men in his class.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Dadier and the students follow traditional teacher/student protocol throughout the scene. The students take ownership of the discussion and create a student-centered classroom environment. Mr. Dadier knows when to step forward from the perimeter of the classroom and when to step back. The students lean forward to interact with one another.

The students' engagement in the classroom discussion symbolizes that a student will become more motivated to participate if their interest is stimulated. Also symbolic is that although Mr. Dadier allowed the students to lead the discussion, they eventually came to the point that he was attempting to make. The moral of the lesson came about naturally in the course of the discussion.

Figure 6-©*Blackboard Jungle*



“We are just going to talk, you and I”: A Semiotic Analysis of *To Sir, With Love*

Table 4 *To Sir, With Love* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

[Mr. Thackeray walks out of the classroom and slams the door. He storms into the teachers lounge]

Ms. Dare: Whatever’s the matter?

Mr. Thackeray: Man, oh, man! *[slaps hands together]* I lost my temper. The one thing I swore I would never, never do. God, did I lose my temper!

Ms. Dare: What happened?

Mr. Thackeray: I never would have thought it. After all the bull I've taken in my life, in a few short weeks those kids have got me so steamed up. . . so easily so quickly. I never would have thought.

Ms. Dare: But you're trying to hard.

Mr. Thackeray: Those kids are devils, incarnate, huh? I've tried everything. Everything! But nothing I've tried. Kids. [*points at Ms. Dare*]

Mr. Thackeray: Kids!

Ms. Dare: Huh?

Mr. Thackeray: [*snaps fingers*] That's it!

Mr. Thackeray: Kids.

[*Mr. Thackeray slaps hands together, leaves the teachers lounge, and arrives back in the classroom*]

[*Mr. Thackeray stares at the students, picks up the textbooks from the desk, and throws them in the trashcan*]

Mr. Thackeray: Those are out. They are useless to you. I suddenly realized that you are not children, you will be adults in a few weeks, with all the responsibilities that implies. So, from now on, you will be treated as such by me and by each other. As adults . . . responsible adults. [*Mr. Thackeray walks among the student desks*]

Mr. Thackeray: Next, we are going to be reasonable with each other. We are just going to talk, you and I. You are going to listen without interruption, and when I am finished, one of you may have your say without interruption.

Mr. Thackeray: Next..

[*Miss Blanchard walks into the classroom, mumbling about why she's late*]

Mr. Thackeray: Example, there are two ways to enter a room. One is like an adult, a lady with dignity. The other is like a brat. Miss Blanchard has just shown us the second way. Perhaps you would like to demonstrate the first.

[*Miss Blanchard glares at Mr. Thackeray, looks around the room, gets up, walks to the door, and comes back in to the classroom quietly*]

Miss Blanchard: I'm sorry I'm late.

[Miss Blanchard sits down at her desk. The other students whisper in amazement]

Mr. Thackeray: Next, we are all going to observe certain courtesies in this classroom. You will call me Sir or Mr. Mr. Thackeray. The young ladies will be addressed as Miss, the boys by their surnames.

Potter: Why should we call them Miss? We know em'!

Mr. Thackeray: I beg your pardon?

Potter: I said 'Why should we call them Miss' sir? We know them.

Mr. Thackeray: Is there any one of these young ladies that you feel does not deserve to be addressed as Miss?

[Potter glances across the room, embarrassed]

Potter: No, sir.

Mr. Thackeray: Good. Next, general department. *[walks to the back of the room]* First, the young ladies. They will prove that they are worthy and appreciative of the courtesies we are going to show them. Soon, boyfriends and marriage will concern you. No man likes a slut for long. Only the worst type will marry one. *[walks to the other side of the classroom]* And the competition for men on the outside is rough. Next, men. I have seen garbage collectors who are cleaner. Toughness is a quality of the mind like bravery, honesty, and ambition. If you want to wear your hair long, clean it. Else, you will soon get lice and smell. Soon, your principle interest will be girls. You will be much more attractive to them with clean clothes, clean shoes, hands, face, teeth, etc. *[walks to the front of the room]*

Mr. Thackeray: Now, any, any questions?

[Miss Pegg raises her hand]

Mr. Thackeray: Miss Pegg.

Pegg: What about Mr. Weston, sir? His shoes are never tied and his hair is never brushed. And his ears a mess, isn't it.

[Students agree, nod]

Mr. Thackeray: Mr. Weston is not your teacher. We won't discuss him. I'm the one to criticize if I fail to maintain the standards I ask of you.

Denham: That's not fair.

Mr. Thackeray: Sir. Or Mr. Thackeray. Didn't you understand?

[Walking up to Denham]

Denham: That's not fair. . . . sir.

Mr. Thackeray: I agree. But that's just an example of the many things you'll have to put up with when you are an adult. You'll just have to take it.

Mr. Thackeray: Next, we are going to talk about various...

[Mr. Weston walks into the classroom]

Mr. Weston: Good morning. I just wanted to see how you were getting on.

Mr. Thackeray: Fine. Thank you sir.

Mr. Weston: Good. Thank you.

[Students laugh]

[Mr. Thackeray takes a string from the ceiling, pulls it down. Walks over to a student who has on sunglasses and removes them]

Student: *[raises hand and is called on]* What are we going to talk about, sir?

Mr. Thackeray: About life, survival, love, death, sex, marriage, rebellion, anything you want.

Figure 7-©To Sir, With Love



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The components of literacy shown in the dialogue of the scene are best described by a quote from Mr. Thackeray himself. Mr. Thackeray, being disgusted that he lost his temper with his class for being unresponsive to his teaching, announces to the class that the books they had been using will no longer be needed:

“They are useless to you. I suddenly realized that you are not children, you will be adults in a few weeks, with all the responsibilities that implies. So, from now on, you will be treated as such by me and by each other. As adults . . . responsible adults.”

The components of literacy in the classroom before the scene had been the traditional curriculum that Mr. Thackeray was teaching out of the textbooks. After his epiphany, the major component of literacy in the classroom will be class discussions about “About life, survival, love, death, sex, marriage, rebellion, anything you want.”

The components of literacy represented in the dialogue represent a ‘coming of age’ of the classroom and of the curriculum that the school required of the students. Mr. Thackeray recognized that the curriculum he had been teaching lacked applicability to their present lives and to their futures.

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue represents the importance of literacy as being a person who can critically analyze and discuss any topic related to their lives in a polite manner. Mr. Thackeray realizes in a critical moment that the skills his students will need after they graduate cannot be found in the reading of the textbooks and the lecturing he had been doing. He realizes the most important way to develop the literacies of his students would be to respect the fact that the students will need a different set of skills in order to be successful in their futures. Mr. Thackeray also announces that he will insist that the ladies in the room be referred to as ‘Miss’ and that the men in the room will be referred to by their surnames, quite a departure from the status quo in the school. By showing the students the respect of an adult, in turn he gains the respect of the students and a respect for what he is trying to teach them about life.

This scene also represents the dichotomy between the curriculum taught in school and the skills one needs to be successful outside of school. Mr. Thackeray takes a great risk in forgoing the assigned curriculum to focus on the life skills and soft skills that they would require.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue of the scene as the ability to act like an adult and the freedom to discuss openly the critical questions the students have about life. For example, when Ms. Blanchard arrives late to the class, she enters the door mumbling loudly, making excuses for her tardiness. Mr. Thackeray makes an example of Ms. Blanchard, telling the class that they must enter the classroom as adults and not as “spoiled brats”.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

The dialogue points to Mr. Thackeray and the major transition he makes in his role of teacher during the scene. He begins the scene by bursting into the teacher’s lounge and

explaining to Ms. Dare that he had finally lost his temper with the students. They had finally pushed him to limit with their behaviors and attitudes. It is in the teacher's lounge that Mr. Thackeray has an 'aha moment' and realizes that the students in his classroom are more than just students. They are young adults on the verge of adulthood who want to be treated as such. It is in that moment that Mr. Thackeray realizes his role of a teacher had to change from a teacher-led classroom to a student-centered one, where the students could seek out information and answers to questions that are important to them. Mr. Thackeray realized that he had to become more of a facilitator than the dictator the behaviors of the students were forcing him to be.

The role of the students in the dialogue is not as clear, though the brief interactions woven within Mr. Thackeray's speech indicate that the students are intrigued by the new opportunity to learn in a different way. Although some of the students are reluctant to treat each other like adults, particularly Denham who believes the request to address each other as Sir or Miss is unfair, the majority of the students are mesmerized by Mr. Thackeray's revelation.

The school plays a role in the school as represented by the Principal who rushes in to inquire if everything is going well in the classroom. The principal is taken aback by the students' undivided attention to Mr. Thackeray and quickly leaves the classroom. The school is symbolic of an institution that is not meeting the real needs of the students.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene takes place in two locations, the teacher's lounge for a brief part of the scene, and the classroom, where the rest of the scene takes place. The cinematic techniques used in the scene emphasize the dramatic turning point that is taking place for the class. The camera focuses in on the faces of the students when they are speaking. Mr. Thackeray is allowed many close-ups to emphasize the dramatic change in character and demeanor that Mr. Thackeray undergoes in order to initiate the change of course on the classroom.

Importance of Literacy

The importance of literacy emphasized by the cinematic techniques can best be described as the focus on Mr. Thackeray as he collects the textbooks stacked upon his desk and throws them into the trash can. The camera shot also catches the students' reaction to the sound of the books falling into the trashcan and they are immediately mesmerized by it, giving their undivided attention to Mr. Thackeray. The symbolism of this action reinforces the 'aha moment' and change of course that Mr. Thackeray has had.

When the scene becomes heated during the verbal exchange of Mr. Thackeray and Denham, the camera also focuses on Denham's face, showing his disgust as he refers to Mr. Thackeray as 'sir'. Denham, a student who would likely benefit the most from the change in curriculum, is the most hesitant to accept it.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

With a combination of straight angle shots and close-ups, the cinematic techniques are used to show the role of Mr. Thackeray changing from a teacher trying desperately to have his students connect with the class to a facilitator and leader of a journey to prepare the students to have successful lives as adults. The role of the students is highlighted by several wide-angle shots of the classroom. The students who are 'attendees', only physically present, become active learners, giving their attention to Mr. Thackeray both physically and mentally.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Thackeray uses his body language to show his frustration at his students at the beginning of the scene. He storms out of the classroom and into the teachers' lounge, visibly angered by the students' lack of behavior and effort. When he returns to the classroom, he paces around the room, walks to his desk to gather up the textbooks, and throws them in the class. Immediately afterward, he begins pacing the room more quickly, keeping the attention of the students as he explains the new curriculum of the classroom. He walks with confidence as he always did, but an energetic confidence that shows he is committed to making sure the students in his classroom take an active role in their learning. Mr.

Thackeray's facial expressions range from sternness to seriousness and yet, his eyes evoke a caring and concern for the students.

The students in the classroom begin the class by slumping in their desk, with most sitting sideways or backwards to interact with others. Once Mr. Thackeray returns to the classroom and shares with them their new curriculum of "talking", most of the students begin facing Mr. Thackeray from their desks, turning their bodies to face him as he speaks. A few of the young men remain hesitant, especially Denham, who remains slouched in his chair for most of the class period. The students' body language symbolizes their 'coming of age' as well, beginning the class as uninvolved attendees and turning into engaged participants.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Thackeray is impeccably dressed in the scene, with suit and tie pressed smooth. The students are dressed in a variety of clothing, as most students usually do. What is most important to note about their clothing, in comparison to previous scenes, is that they wear the same thing to school each and every day. This would suggest that their families are only able to provide one outfit for them to wear to school.

Mr. Thackeray points out to the students that they must begin having more respect for themselves. When discussing that each will be most interested in the opposite sex very soon, it will be very important for each of them to pay specific attention to their physical appearance. He is particularly specific with the males of the room, encouraging them to wash their hair if they are going to want to wear it long, so they want "get lice and smell".

Miss Pegg asks Mr. Thackeray about another teacher who does not shine his shoes or wash his hair as Mr. Thackeray has asked of his students. Mr. Thackeray responds not to worry about what others do. He points out that he is their teacher and he will uphold the standards that he has asked of his students.

Mr. Thackeray's speech on their appearance is symbolic of his desire for them to be successful adults. He encourages them to care enough about their appearance so that others will have respect from them in the world outside of school. But more importantly, Mr. Thackeray is cognizant of the role he plays as a role model for the students and an example to emulate.

Behavioral Codes

Even though Mr. Thackeray is leading a discussion of how the rules and curriculum of the classroom are going to change to focus more on the students' questions, he is still going to be the adult in charge in the classroom. The students, who have previously been uninterested in the class, have begun to pay attention and to focus on Mr. Thackeray's speech. Although they are still young adults, they bar has been set for them as adults. Attempting to live up to Mr. Thackeray's expectations, their behavior goes through a dramatic transformation. Instead of continuing to go through the motions of school, their behavior shows that they want to be involved in the lessons and discussions that Mr. Thackeray has planned for them.

Figure 8-©*To Sir, With Love*



“It’s the sound of thinking”: A Semiotic Analysis of *Up the Down Staircase*

Table 5 *Up the Down Staircase* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

Miss Barrett: Alright, class. . .class, in your seats, please. [*hands out forms*]

Let’s fill out these book receipts as quickly as possible so we can get on to a story. It has been a favorite of hundreds of thousands of people for years.

[*Dr. B walks in the door*]

Miss Barrett: Good morning Dr. Bester.

Dr. B: Mind if I observe for a while, Miss Barrett?

Miss Barrett: Not at all. But, I'm sorry, Dr. Bester, the extra chairs I requisitioned for in September still haven't arrived. Uh, Roy, would you give Dr. Bester your chair and stand in the back of the room?

Dr. B: Uh, I'll stand in the back of the room, Miss Barrett.

Miss Barrett: Thank you. Who would like to help me distribute the books? Where is Alice Blake? Where is Alice?

Student #1: [*stands up*] I don't know, Miss Barrett.

Miss Barrett: Well, it's not like Alice to cut. [*slaps hands together*] Alright, girls, will you help me please?

[*Several girls stand up to help Miss Barrett hand out the books*]

Miss Barrett: [*writing on the board*] *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. 1812 to 1870. We are not going to begin by talking about this book. We are going to begin by reading it. Page one. [*points to Jerry*] Jerry, Jerry will you read the first paragraph aloud please. [*Miss Barrett walks to the side of the room to stand*]

Jerry: [*standing up*] 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. It was the epic of belief. It was the epic of futility. It was the season of light. It was the season of darkness. It was the spring of hope. It was the winter of despair. We had everything before us, we had nothing before us. We are all going directly to heaven. We were all going the other way.

Miss Barrett: Thank you, Jerry. That's enough for now. Okay, class, what strikes you immediately?

Student #2: The different things.

Student #3: The yes and nos.

Jerry: The opposites.

Miss Barrett: Yes. Dickens was saying something very simple by the use of contrast or opposites. Uh, we call this [*writing on the board*] antithesis. Instead of saying 'it was a crazy, mixed up period', he says 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times', but, the most interesting part of the paragraph is still to come. [*pointing to student*] Would you read the next part, please?

Student #4: [*stands*] In short, the period was so far like the present period.

Miss Barrett: Stop, that's enough, thank you. Uh, Dickens wrote that more one hundred years ago referring to a time almost two hundred years ago. It was so far like the present period. Now, what I want to know is, can we still say that today? Uh, is it still the best of times, the worst of times?

Lenny: It's only the worst.

Miss Barrett: Why is it only the worst, Lenny?

Lenny: 'cause that's what it is.

Miss Barrett: Well, perhaps it would help us if you could tell us what you mean by the word 'worst'?

Lenny: poor

Miss Barrett: But, aren't we in the midst of prosperity? Isn't it also the best of times?

Student #4: There's still the rats and no toilets.

Miss Barrett: Aren't there also new housing developments, with playgrounds and parks?

Student #5: Parks are murder pits.

Miss Barrett: Is Yellowstone National Park a murder pit?

Student #6: We saw a movie in assembly.

Student #7: Narcotics makes it worse.

[*Students raising their hands, wanting to participate*]

Miss Barrett: It's still the season of light and darkness.

Student #8: Miss Barrett, darks don't got no chance.

Miss Barrett: What about the Civil Rights Movement and integration?

Student #9: Oh, how stupid can you get?

Student #8: Yeah, they passed the law.

Student #10: Bussing students from miles away.

Student #11: Yeah, they can't keep juggling us like different colored marbles.

Student #4: And go home to rats and no toilets.

[*All students start yelling out their examples*]

Miss Barrett: Uh, we have time for one last comment. Alright, Harry.

Harry: The General Organization for which I am a President of is proud to consider that other races have just as much of a right to be human voters....

[Harry is interrupted by shouts of students and sits down]

Miss Barrett: Alright class. . . shhhhh, please. What we've been saying is that there are certain similarities between our period and Dickens period and the period of *A Tale of Two Cities*. As we continue to read on, let's be aware of the similarities and difference *[students begin raising hands]* cause that will help us understand how this book can continue to be interesting and exciting even though it was written over one hundred years ago. Alright, alright, Lou, what do you want to say?

Lou: With bombs going off and our morals going down

[bell rings and students start shouting]

Miss Barrett: Alright, class. . . alright *[smiling at the interaction and passion of the students discussion]*

[Mr. McKay enters the room]

Mr. McKay: Miss Barrett, what is the meaning of this noise? Did Dr. Bester hear you and how loud your class was today? I can hear them all the way down in the corridor above the drilling.

Miss Barrett: It's the sound of thinking, Mr. McKay. This class cannot wait to read *A Tale of Two Cities*. And Lou Martin made a joke with a point . . . a serious point. . . and Eddie Williams spoke out for the first time in class.

[Intercom calls for Mr. McKay]

Figure 9-©Up the Down Staircase



***Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy
and Literacy Pedagogy***

Components of Literacy

The components of literacy described in the dialogue center around the novel *Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. Miss Barrett asks students to read aloud, to discuss the introductory paragraph of the text, and to connect Dickens' "best of times, worst of times" to their current situations. Miss Barrett helps the students find a reason to read the novel, despite it being written over two hundred years ago.

The most prevalent component of literacy in the scene is the discussion of the introductory paragraph of the novel. The students, in response to Miss Barrett's questions, point out many of the things that are 'the worst of times' in their lives. From no working toilets and rats at school to the continued discrimination of blacks despite the Civil Rights Movement.

The components of literacy in the dialogue symbolize a traditional text with a history of a traditional curriculum being implemented with a diverse and reluctant classroom. The traditional canon of texts continues to be criticized for its inability to connect with this generation. Miss Barrett makes a critical decision to make sure that the students connect with the text first before reading it.

Importance of Literacy

The importance of literacy represented in the dialogue show that many of the students in the classroom value the learning that is taking place. Miss Barrett wants desperately to show students how the text can help them make better sense of the world in which they live. The very idea that the students can not only use texts as an escape from their current troubles, but can use literacy as a way to leave behind the rough lives they face reinforce the scene's view of the importance of literacy.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue of the scene as the ability to read aloud fluently and the ability to have a discussion about a text. Many of the students in the scene had been reluctant to participate in previous classes, as noted by Miss Barrett's interaction with Mr. McKay when the class ends. Mr. McKay is angry with Miss Barrett and her class for the volume of noise coming from it. Miss Barrett responds to his hostile entrance into the class by pointing out that for the first time, one of the students told a joke with a point, and another student spoke up in class for the first time. The noise, she says, is the "sound of thinking." The expressions of literacy in the dialogue are symbolic of the dichotomy between a teacher centered classroom and a student centered classroom. Educators from the old school of thought do not understand the social aspects necessary for literacy learning to take place. If the classroom is loud, according to Mr. McKay, then surely no learning can possibly be happening.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Miss Barrett is leading the classroom in the handing out, reading, and discussion of the novel *Tale of Two Cities*. Miss Barrett is struggling to find her niche in the classroom as evidenced by her difficulty in getting control of the classroom at the beginning of the class period. Yet,

although the class is rambunctious, she continues to talk until the class settles down to pay attention. After introducing the text and asking a few students to read various parts, Miss Barrett becomes a bystander in a discussion controlled by the students in the classroom. Only at the end of class when class is dismissed is she able to retain control of it.

The students in the classroom are representative of a typical high school classroom in an inner-city school. The group is diverse and mature in physical appearance. The students are polite to Miss Barrett when she calls on them, but as a whole are less than cooperative during the discussion and at the beginning of class. The students are genuinely interested in the discussion, however, and participate passionately once they are allowed to connect the text to their own lives and their views of antithesis in their world.

Dr. Bester and Mr. McKay represent the role of the school in the dialogue. Dr. Bester does not speak at length during the scene. Instead, he stands in the back of the classroom to observe Miss Barrett and the lesson she is teaching the class. Mr. McKay, on the other hand, does not observe the class or lesson but feels it necessary to chide Miss Barrett for the level of volume coming from her classroom. Mr. McKay does not appreciate that the noise is from student discussion or that any learning could be taking place with the amount of interaction that the students are having.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The components of literacy emphasized by the use of cinematic techniques include the camera's focus on particular aspects of the scene, including the close-up shot of the novel, the close-up of Miss Barrett writing the name of the novel and the literary term, antithesis, on the board, and the many close-up shots of student expressions and reactions during the class discussion. Because the lighting of the classroom itself is somewhat dark, the students' discussion and the close-ups of their expressions seem very bright. Using the wide variety of close-up shots of the components of literacy symbolize the importance that this scene has in comparison to other scenes.

The wide-angle shots of the classroom symbolize the social aspects of the conversation that the students are having about the novel. The camera focuses in on the reactions from Miss

Barrett and Dr. Bester at times, but more often than not, the camera is focusing in on the discussion and the responses of the students to the discussion.

Importance of Literacy

The focus of the cameras on the discussion of the novel highlights the importance that literacy plays in the scene and in the classroom. The real-world connections that the students are making to the text emphasize the importance that literature plays in helping one understand how the world works. The discussion is helping students to understand that despite the bad things they see in their neighborhoods, there are also good things to be excited about. Helping the students to understand how to use the good things to change the bad things is what's most important about the discussion they are having.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

The cinematic techniques used in the scene are necessary to emphasize the importance of the student participation in the discussion of the novel. Miss Barrett's role as a bystander in the discussion is emphasized by the quick movement of close-ups between student speakers in the conversations. Miss Barrett is visibly pleased at the passion and enthusiasm of the students' ownership of the discussion and excited to let Mr. McKay know that for the first time, she has found a way for her students to become engaged in learning in her classroom.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Initially, Miss Barrett's body language is stiff, symbolizing her nervousness in introducing the canonical text to her students. After Dr. Bester walks in, her body language begins to change as the lesson continues, growing more confident as the students become more involved in the discussion about the text and their connections to it. She is most confident in her body language when Mr. McKay confronts her on her students' behavior, making sure to counteract his accusatory tone.

The students in the scene are typical of most high school classrooms. The majority of students are mostly engaged in the class activities from the start, while others are somewhat slow or reluctant to participate. As the discussion begins to connect to their lives, prompted

by Miss Barrett's question of "Can we say this is true today, the best of times, the worst of times", the students become visibly engaged in the discussion.

Miss Barrett's body language is symbolic of a first-year teacher who is desperate to find a way to connect with the students and eager to find a way to connect the traditional curriculum to the contemporary students in her classroom.

The students' body language shows the uncertainty the students are feeling as to how they fit in to society. They have strong opinions about the discrimination that is taking place in their communities and the injustices of inequalities in all facets of their lives, from living conditions to the broader view of discrimination in the world.

Commodity Codes

Miss Barrett is dressed in a blouse and black smock with pockets, setting herself apart from the dress of the students in her classroom. Even though the students come from challenging socioeconomic conditions, they are all dressed nicely, showing a respect for school and the learning that is taking place there.

The classroom is lacking many of the resources that Miss Barrett needs. The classroom is completely full, with barely enough room for Miss Barrett to walk around the perimeter of the room. Although she is able to give every student a textbook, many of the students do not have desks to sit in for the class. Instead, they are seated in chairs at the back of the room, with the textbooks on their laps. Miss Barrett deliberately points this out to Dr. Bester, when she asks one of the students to stand for the entire hour so that Dr. Bester can have a seat. Dr. Bester declines the offer to sit in the student's seat, offering to stand in the back of the room for the class period.

Figure 10-©*Up the Down Staircase*



Behavioral Codes

Miss Barrett and her students follow a traditional teacher/student protocol throughout the scene, although the class becomes more of a student-centered classroom during the discussion of the novel. Miss Barrett's nervous behavior at the beginning of the class grows more confident as the students grown more confident in their ability to discuss the text and connect the texts with their lives.

Miss Barrett is defensive of her students' behavior and counteracts Mr. McKay's argumentative stance with examples of how the class was successful, despite the noise level that might seem inappropriate to him.

The students' behaviors range from non-complacency at the beginning of the scene to passionate engagement at the end of the class period. Not only are the students engaged in the discussion mentally, but they are physically expressing themselves through arm movements and facial expressions. The students aren't afraid to speak their minds.

The body codes in the scene are symbolic of the transition that can take place when one asks students to find a personal connection to a text.

“The country has failed them”: A Semiotic Analysis of *Conrack*

Table 6 *Conrack* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

[Conroy walks out of the courtroom after being fired from his job. The scene jumps to Conroy is driving around the town in a van with a speaker system attached]

Mr. Conroy: Ladies and gentleman...I don't mean to take you away from your daily routine. I know you got stores to open, clothes to wash, marketing to do, and other chores. But, I just lost my job and I wanna talk. My name is Pat Conroy. I was paid \$510 a month to teach kids that live a little off this coast how to read and write. I also try to teach them to embrace life openly, to reflect on its mysteries, and to reject its cruelties. The school board of this fair city thinks that

if they root out troublemakers like me, the system will hold up and perpetuate itself. They think as long as Blacks and Whites are kept apart, with the Whites getting scholarships and the Blacks pickin' cotton or tomatoes, with the Whites going to college, and the Blacks eating Moonpies and drinkin Coca-Cola, that they can weather any storm and survive any threat. Well, they are wrong. Their day is ending. They are captains of a doomed army, retreating in the snow. They are old men and they can't accept a new son rising out of strange waters. Ladies and gentleman, the world is very different now. It's true this town still has its diehards and nigger-haters, but they grow older and crankier with each passing day. When Bueford digs another 400 holes in their plentiful graveyards, deposits there the rouged and elderly corpses, and covers them with the sand and low country soil, then the Old South will be silenced and not heard from again. *[An older white-haired gentleman walks up to the driver window of the van with his white poodle. Conroy turns to speak to him]*

Mr. Conroy: As for my kids, I don't think I changed the quality of their lives significantly or alter the fact they have no share in the country that claimed them. . . the country that has failed them. All I know is I found much beauty in my time with them.

Figure 11-©Conrack



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

This scene does not provide a dialogue between two individuals, but rather a speech given by Mr. Conroy to the townspeople. Mr. Conroy talks about being hired to teach the kids that live off of the coast how to read and write. He also mentions that he tried to teach them the ‘big picture’ of learning by showing them how to “embrace life openly, to reflect on its mysteries, and to reject its cruelties.” The speech symbolizes that there is much more to becoming literature than being taught to read and write. Being literate also means being able to be a critical and reflective thinker.

Importance of Literacy

There are two different views of the importance of literacy in the scene. The first view is the view of the school board, as described through the speech given by Mr. Conroy.

According to Mr. Conroy, the school board believes that the system of keeping Blacks and Whites apart and to keep the area segregated should be continued. In doing so, they provide the White students many more opportunities regarding literacy instruction. Literacy, in the school board's view, is only important if you are White. Mr. Conroy believes that literacy, in all its definitions, is important for all people. He believes the world is very different than the world the school board would have the community believe.

The speech Mr. Conroy gives condemning the local school board's views is representative of the views that many communities felt about educating Blacks during the 1960's and 1970's. Communities that were historically segregated were hesitant to educate the Black students in their communities. The school boards emphasized that the Black students needed to have the skills to go to work for the more educated White people in the town. Giving Black students an education was giving Black students a voice and a way to critically think about the injustices of the system of racial disparity under which they lived.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the speech as the ability to not only read and write, but to be able to think critically and to embrace life. Mr. Conroy believes that the traditional skills of reading and writing are not enough to help his students become successful in a town determined to discriminate against them. Again, the racial disparity in the town harbors the inequities of the education that the Black students receive.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Mr. Conroy believes he is the last hope for his students. The students do not have an active role to play in the scene, although they represent the victims of the history of racism in the town. The school board plays the role of the "system of discrimination" that allows for the continued segregation and inequities in the town to continue. The speech symbolizes the students as helpless and the school as uninterested in the lives or future well-being of their students.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Importance of Literacy

The camera angles and shots focus primarily on Mr. Conroy's face as he is driving around the community. His expressions of frustration and emotion convey not only the passion he has for teaching, but the passion he feels for the students. Focusing in on Mr. Conroy and his speech is important because Mr. Conroy represents the students. He is their voice, speaking for them, because they have been victimized by a system of discrimination in not being allowed to experience a school environment of literacy or critical thinking. The school board and the school have done less than the minimum for the children in his class.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

Mr. Conroy is playing the role of the students' voices. Even though he is the person speaking, he is speaking for the students. The camera focuses in on his face during the majority of the scene, showing his facial expressions that represent the anger and confusion over the school board's decision to fire him.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Conroy drives around the town in his van after being fired from his job as a teacher. Using a loud speaker attached to the van, he gives the speech while driving, pausing only to turn around and drive back up the main street another direction. Mr. Conroy's positioning behind the wheel of the van is one of determination in getting his message out to the townspeople.

Mr. Conroy's body language is symbolic of the frustration that he is feeling after being fired by the school board for giving his students an education that all students deserve, regardless of their skin color. The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of Mr. Conroy show that he feels the a great responsibility in letting the town community know of the injustices of the school board's actions, the school board that represents the town.

When a man approaches the window of Mr. Conroy's van to listen to his message, it is symbolic of those in the town who have also grown weary of the discrimination of Blacks in the community. The message is that there is hope in the future for the town and for the future students of the town.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Conroy does not make very much money as stated in his speech. He is driving around town in an old, beat up van, quite a contrast to the white picket fences and porch swings in the background.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Conroy is not acting in a traditional teacher role during the scene. His behavior symbolizes a person willing to do something different and out of the ordinary in order to right the injustices of racial disparity in the schools.

Figure 12-©Conrack



“What you need, Eddie, is another remedial reading class”: A Semiotic Analysis of Teachers

Table 7 Teachers Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

Mr. Jurel: [*asking Eddie’s mother*]: Don’t you care about your son’s education?

Eddie’s mother: Isn’t that your job, Mr. Jurel?

[*Eddie’s mother and her attorney leave*]

Mr. Jurel: [*calling Eddie into the counselor’s office*] Eddie!

[*Jurel hands Eddie a few magazines off of the table*]

Mr. Jurel: Read that.

Eddie: Do what?

Mr. Jurel: Just open it up someplace and start reading.

[Eddie hesitantly takes the magazine, opens it up, and begins looking at the pages and moving his lips]

Mr. Jurel: Out loud.

Eddie: *[staring at the magazine, putting the magazine down]* I don't like this magazine.

Mr. Jurel: What kind of magazine do you like, Eddie?

Eddie: Ah, come on, just lay off...I don't need this.

Mr. Jurel: What you need, Eddie, is another remedial reading class, again. You're not foolin anybody.

Eddie: I passed that class! You can't make me take it again. I read fine, so don't you worry about it, okay? Just lay off!

Mr. Jurel: Alright. But you just got kicked out of your social studies class. So, I'll give you have a choice. You take my class. Or you can take study hall.

Eddie: I'll take study hall.

Mr. Jurel: Yeah, my class, third period, I'll see you there tomorrow. That's all.
[Eddie leaves the counselor's office, slamming the door]

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The dialogue denotations in the brief interaction between Mr. Jurel and Eddie's mother shows that Mr. Jurel is attempting to have Eddie's parents be more involved in Eddie's education and not as involved in the custody issues that have predicated the attendance of the divorce attorney to the conference.

The dialogue denotations between Mr. Jurel and Eddie shows that Mr. Jurel is wanting to find out if Eddie can read or not. When Eddie refuses to read aloud by not reading the magazine and putting it on the table, Mr. Jurel can deduce that Eddie cannot read.

When Mr. Jurel realizes that Eddie has passed remedial reading and he cannot make Eddie take it again, he decides that putting him in his own class where he can help him will

be better than study hall. Mr. Jurel gives Eddie a choice of attending his own social studies class during third period or study hall. Even though Eddie chooses study hall, Mr. Jurel tells him that he will start coming to the social studies class.

The analysis of the connotations of the dialogue with Eddie's mother is highlighted when she accusingly asks "Isn't that your job, Mr. Jurel?" Eddie's mother is lashing out at Mr. Jurel for feeling angry that her son isn't being successful in class. The dialogue exchange is symbolic of the blame game that parents and teachers play with each other, feeling each is at fault for the student's inability to be successful.

Mr. Jurel's conversation with Eddie is highlighting what Mr. Jurel feels is a necessary skill in order to be successful in any aspect of school and life, and that is the ability to read. Mr. Jurel picks up a magazine off the table and asks Eddie to read it, showing that any person at his age level or above should be able to do that skill without incident. When Eddie pretends to read it silently, he is indeed showing how he has made it through school and possibly how he passed his remedial reading class even though he cannot read.

Eddie says that he doesn't like the magazine and that is why he won't read it aloud. Eddie is saying that he is able to be literate when it is something that he likes to do. Otherwise, he will choose to not participate.

Mr. Jurel, in confronting Eddie's inability to read, is calling Eddie's bluff, pointing out that he needs additional remedial reading help. Mr. Jurel is confrontational with Eddie and playing tough with him, partly because Eddie is a rough character in some ways, but mostly because Mr. Jurel feels that Eddie probably needs some authoritative role model in his life who is going to not only do what's best for him, but won't put up with the games that Eddie has been playing.

The myths at play in this scene are that the school has the sole responsibility to educate the child. Neither Eddie's mother nor the attorney was concerned about Eddie's academic progress. Eddie's mother was accusatory to Mr. Jurel's plea that they talk about Eddie's lack of progress.

Also, the myth exists that if a student passes a class, they are proficient in the class. It is obvious from the scene that Eddie cannot read, despite his passing of the remedial reading class. This brings forth many questions such as "What happens in a high school

classroom?” “What teachers are assigned to the struggling students?” More importantly, this scene brings to light the idea of “What does it mean to be literate, anyway?”

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue denotations between Mr. Jurel and Eddie’s mother shows that Eddie’s mother is not concerned about importance of literacy. She believes that duty should fall into the hands of the school and Mr. Jurel.

The dialogue between Mr. Jurel and Eddie shows that Eddie does not hold literacy as a valuable skill. Mr. Jurel believes literacy is so important that he is willing to take Eddie into his own classroom to make sure he will become literate.

Symbolic within the entire dialogue of the scene is the idea that literacy means different things to different people. Eddie’s mother does not seem concerned that her son may graduate without the ability to read. This symbolizes the uninvolved parents of students, or those that are so caught up within their own lives that they don’t pay attention to the education of their children.

Also symbolic within the scene is Jurel’s insistence that Eddie not take the easy road to study hall, and instead challenge him to find something interesting in Mr. Jurel’s social studies class to become a motivator to learn to read. Teachers often offer differentiated ways to reach students who are struggling.

The dialogue in this scene perpetuates the myth that there are many parents too uninvolved in their children’s lives and too many schools who allow students to be passed along without the ability to master proficiently basic literacy skills.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue of the scene between Mr. Jurel and Eddie as the ability to read a magazine and to read aloud for someone else. There is not any mention of whether or not Eddie is capable of writing well or doing anything else related to literacy well.

Eddie’s mention of not liking the magazine also expresses literacy in a way that one must like what they are reading in order to want to read it or to be capable of reading it. The myth that is perpetuated in this scene is that a measure of literacy is the ability to read and nothing else.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Mr. Jurel is leading the conference with Eddie's mother and her attorney. Mr. Jurel does not currently have Eddie in class but has been asked to meet with the parent because the counselor is absent. The dialogue shows that the role of Mr. Jurel is to try to facilitate support from the parent for Eddie's academic success. Mr. Jurel then meets with Eddie. Mr. Jurel tries to work through the problem of Eddie not being able to read.

The connotation of the dialogue of the teacher is that he is frustrated at being asked to do something that is not in his job description, unhappy at the parent's lack of support, frustrated at the inability of the curriculum and teachers to teach Eddie how to read, and angry at Eddie's unwillingness to want to learn.

Several myths are perpetuated in the dialogue of the teacher. First, it is shown that ultimately the teacher is the person who is responsible for the literacy or illiteracy of the student. Mr. Jurel is left with the decision on what to do about Eddie's situation and decides to take him into his class in order to watch him more closely. Secondly, Mr. Jurel's dialogue perpetuates that the only way to reach a tough kid is to be tough back.

Eddie's dialogue with Mr. Jurel explains that he has passed remedial reading and that he doesn't need to take it again. The conversation also shows that he wants Mr. Jurel to leave him alone and to not make an issue of it. Eddie's dialogue represents his frustration with a combination of situations: the divorce of his parents, being kicked out of another class, and being held accountable by Mr. Jurel.

Eddie's dialogue with Mr. Jurel shows Eddie as the typical high school troublemaker who has trouble with the academic side of school. He represents every student who has been able to fake his or her way through school and not be able to read. The dialogue that Eddie has symbolizes the myth that the troublemaking kids are the ones that aren't literate.

The school has removed itself from the dialogue in this particular scene and its lack of participation, or non-participation, in itself sends the message that they do not care about Eddie. The lack of participation on behalf of the school perpetuates the myth that the schools are not concerned with students as individuals.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene takes place in a well-lit room. A conference table is set in the middle of the room, with Mr. Jurel on the end of the table, and Eddie's mother and her lawyer on the side. The camera angles do not do anything unusual during this part of the scene.

The angle of the camera is a straight angle shot, giving equal power to Mr. Jurel and Eddie's mother. There is not a use of sounds effects or special effects in the scene.

During the second part of the scene, Mr. Jurel and Eddie are seen in a variety of close-up shots in order to show the facial expressions of the characters. There are also a variety of reaction shots to show how Mr. Jurel and Eddie are reacting to the conversation.

Importance of Literacy

During the transition phase of the scene, the camera uses a United States Army Reserve pamphlet shelf as its central focus. This is the only post-graduate paraphernalia in the entire counselor's office.

When the scene becomes heated during the verbal exchange, the camera zooms in even closer to emphasize the emotion and anger felt by Eddie and the authoritative stance of Mr. Jurel. The reaction shots are utilized to symbolize the frustration of the situation by both of the characters involved. Eddie's exasperated looks are caught on camera to show that he realizes he has been unable to fake his ability to read with Mr. Jurel.

The myths at play in this scene show the high school does not have high hopes for its graduates, suggesting that this high school has more students who pursue careers like the military reserves after graduation than those that pursue college.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

With a combination of straight angle shots and close-ups, the cinematic techniques are used to show the role of Mr. Jurel as the person holding the key to Eddie's literacy. It is clear who is in control of the discussion, with Mr. Jurel's final stare on overpowering posture. The cinematic techniques also show the role of Eddie as a person who has learned to play the game of school.

Figure 13-©Teachers



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Jurel uses his body language to show his frustration that Eddie's mother doesn't show enough concern about Eddie's education and failing grades. He jumps out of his seat, pounds the table, yet remains respectfully in the same position in the room. His facial expression is tense.

Mr. Jurel walks to the door and points for Eddie to come into the room. Mr. Jurel sits closer in proximity to Eddie. Mr. Jurel continues to have close proximity to Eddie for

the remainder of the scene. His facial expression becomes stern. He raises his voice at Eddie, but never outwardly loses his temper. He jumps up to meet Eddie's demanding attitude and quickly overpowers Eddie with his height.

Eddie is slouched in the chair. Eddie's facial expression is a mix of surprise and fear as he is asked to read to Mr. Jurel, as if it is the first time he has ever been asked to read for someone aloud. His facial features then turn to show a defiant attitude. He jumps out of the seat.

Mr. Jurel's body language is symbolic of the frustration that teachers feel when they are being unsupported by the parents of a student who is struggling. Jurel's body language becomes increasingly dominant of Eddie's, showing that perhaps Eddie has been slipping through the cracks at J.F.K High School, but Jurel is no longer going to allow him to do that. He's going to be close enough to Eddie now that there will be no place for Eddie to go to hide from his illiteracy.

Eddie's body language shows that he does not hold any value in the importance of being literate in order to be successful in his life. However, he does seem somewhat embarrassed and may have reacted negatively because he knows, deep down, that he really wants to know how to read. Eddie's body language symbolizes the frustration and embarrassment he feels for not being able to read.

The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of Mr. Jurel show that he feels the pressure of the responsibility of making sure that Eddie does not continue to be allowed to finish school without the ability to read.

Mr. Jurel's actions represent his frustration of the school's history of social promotion and the chance that Eddie and many others like him have been faking the ability to read. There are many things wrong with the school and Mr. Jurel seems to be reaching a breaking point where that is concerned.

The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of Eddie show that he feels trapped. He is embarrassed by his lack of illiteracy and yet, isn't motivated to do anything about it. His "I don't care" attitude is mirrored by his mother's "I don't care" attitude about his academics.

The gestures and facial expressions of Eddie symbolize the generation of students. The lack of being intrinsically motivated to be a better student and learner is consistently

seen in the movies of the 80's. The gestures and facial expressions of Eddie symbolize the generation of students. The lack of being intrinsically motivated to be a better student and learner is consistently seen in the movies of the 80's.

Figure 14-©Teachers



Commodity Codes

Mr. Jurel is dressed in a long sleeve dress shirt, collar open, and hair somewhat long. Eddie is dressed in layers, both with a denim jacket and a leather vest, collars pointed up.

Mr. Jurel's clothes and hairstyle are symbolic of the laid-back teacher who usually has a good connection with the students and isn't afraid to go against the status quo as long as it is in the best interest of students. Eddie's clothing is symbolic of the trouble-maker student, too cool for school, and too cool to read.

Mr. Jurel looks somewhat professional, though compared to the dress of the attorney in the scene, his is not as professionally dressed. In comparing the clothing of Mr. Jurel to that of the attorney, it is likely that the comparison is meant to show Mr. Jurel will never be as successful that teachers are not as professional or as important as attorneys.

The debate as to whether teachers should be considered professionals, just as doctors, lawyers, and business people, seems to be perpetuated as a myth in this scene. Eddie is dressed like a trouble-making student, leather-vest and all. Yet, he doesn't particularly look like a mean-spirited student. He has an innocent looking face. Eddie's clothing, although stylish at the time, represents a spirit of rebelliousness.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Jurel and Eddie follow traditional teacher/student protocol until Eddie becomes frustrated at the request to read aloud. He then takes on a defiant tone, jumps out his seat, and asks Mr. Jurel to lay off. Mr. Jurel reacts to Eddie's reaction by also jumping out of his seat and taking an authoritative stance and a position of power as the taller person in the room.

Eddie's behavior in the meeting symbolizes a student's ability to fake through school, only until an intuitive teacher, like Mr. Jurel, picks up on it.

The myths of the codes of the scene is to not only show the frustration of the characters, but show the frustration with students who are allowed to pass through school without ever learning to read. Mr. Jurel's insistent tone shows that he is serious about Eddie learning to read and to be successful in school.

Mr. Jurel goes through a combination of emotions in the meetings with Eddie and Eddie's mother. He shows frustration, anger, understanding, and determination. Mr. Jurel shows frustration, anger, understanding, and determination in order to symbolize for the viewer how important teaching is/has been to Mr. Jurel.

Eddie goes through a combination of emotions in the meeting with Mr. Jurel. He shows frustration, anger, understanding, and ultimately, defeat. Eddie's frustration and anger represents how many people felt about the educational system in the 1980's.

**“It’s not that they are stupid, it’s just that they don’t know anything”: A
Semiotic Analysis of *Stand and Deliver***

Table 8 *Stand and Deliver* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | |

Dialogue [with my explanatory notes included in bracketed italics]

[*Class is chanting and pounding on their desks, led by their teacher*]

Mr. Escalante: Everybody look at the board. Will someone please read for me what’s on the board? Anybody.

Everyone: Juan has five times as many girlfriends as Pedro. Carlos has one girlfriend less than Pedro. If the total number of girlfriends between them is twenty, how many does each gigolo have?

[Two administrators walk into the room and sit down. Students start shouting, holding up cross signs as if the administrators are evil]

Mr. Escalante: Okay, okay, okay *[calls on student raising hand]* How many girlfriends does each gigolo have? Anybody? You think you have it Einstein? You think you gonna do it?

Tito: Juan is x , Carlos is y , Pedro is x plus y . Is Pedro bisexual or what?

Mr. E: I have a terrible feeling about you.

[Tito mouths a kiss to Mr. Escalante]

Student #2: *[grabs Mr. Escalante's hand]* Five x equals Juan's girlfriends?

Mr. Escalante: Your good now, but you are going to end up barefoot, pregnant, and in the kitchen.

Student #3: Can you get negative girlfriends?

Mr. Escalante: No, just negative boyfriends. Please forgive them for they know not what they do.

Angel: Carlos has $x-5$ girlfriends, can know?

Mr. Escalante: Can know is right, can know.

[Another student raises her hand]

Mr. Escalante: The answer to my prayers.

Student #4: May I go to the restroom please?

Mr. Escalante: In ten minutes. Hold it.

Mr. Escalante: Senora Maya, hit it.

Maya: It's a trick problem, Mr. Escalante. You can't solve it unless you know how many girlfriends they have in common. Right?

Mr. Escalante: *[looking towards the administrators]* It's not that they are stupid, it's just that they don't know anything.

Maya: I'm wrong?

Ana: X equals Pedro's girlfriends. Five x equals Juan's girlfriends. X minus one equals Carlos's girlfriends. X plus five x plus x minus one equals twenty, so x equals three.

[Class applauds, Ana sits down in desk]

Mr. Escalante: Good to see you.

Student #3: This stuff makes no sense unless you show us how it works in the real world.

Mr. Escalante: *[to the administrators in the room]* Do you think it would be possible to get a couple of gigolos for a practical demonstration? No, no, no, just kidding.

[Scene switches to a reflection of a school bus on the windows of a building. The class has taken a field trip to the Burroughs lab. The students are dressed in blue smocks, walking around taking pictures of each other and looking at all of the computers]

Student #4: What kind of math is this?

Lab technician: This particular one that is up right now is Calculus.

Mr. Escalante: You'll get it in college.

Lab technician: Well, my daughter uses this program in her high school.

[Mr. Escalante looks at the lab tech and the scene ends]

Figure 15-©Stand and Deliver



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The components of literacy shown in the dialogue of the scene are the problem solving and discussion of a word problem Mr. Escalante has written on the board. Mr. Escalante asks the students to read the problem, which they do in unison. The students then take turns trying to solve the problem, with Mr. Escalante being supportive in a humorous way when the students come up with a wrong answer.

The literacy components of problem solving and discussion in the scene are symbolic in that they represent that the definition of literacy is changing. No longer is reading and writing an activity done within an English classroom. Being able to read words impacts one's ability to be able to read a story problem in order to set up an equation in Algebra and Science. The ability to solve problems and discuss the answers with others adds the dimension of social interaction to the literacy components.

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue emphasizes that the importance of literacy is being able to apply the tools of being literate to the real world. One student replies to Mr. Escalante after a student solves a problem that "this stuff makes no sense unless you show us how it works in the real world."

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue of the scene as the ability to solve a complex word problem and to be able to make a connection between the story problem and the need of the skill in the real world.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Mr. Escalante is leading his classroom much like any math teacher would. He poses questions to be answered and answers questions posed by his students. Something that sets him apart is his camaraderie with the students. Looking at the dialogue apart from the film, the comments he makes in response to student answers are inappropriate:

“Your good now, but you are going to end up barefoot, pregnant, and in the kitchen.”
and

“It’s not that they are stupid, it’s just that they don’t know anything.”

These statements are not likely the responses you are likely to hear from a teacher, even more puzzling knowing that the administrators were in the room when he said them. However, when watching the dialogue in context with film clip, it is obvious that the students enjoy Mr. Escalante’s sense of humor.

The students all work very hard for Mr. Escalante. Many volunteer to try to solve the story problem and are supportive of those who answer it correctly. The student who doesn’t understand makes a point to ask Mr. Escalante to try to connect the problem to the real world in order for it to make sense to them.

The role of the school is represented in the observation conducted by the administrators at the back of the room. When the two administrators walk in to the classroom, they are greeted with heckling from the students. They watch over the lesson with attentive eyes, but do not participate in the dialogue of the scene verbally.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The cinematic techniques used in the scene to highlight the components of literacy include a variety of wide-angle shots of the classrooms and reactionary shots of facial expressions during the lesson. The scene takes place in two different locations. The majority of the scene takes place in the classroom of the school. The second is the field trip location at the technology business. Each location is shown in a wide shot and then narrowed down to the specific interactions Mr. Escalante is having with his students, being bridged with a brief shot of a school bus taking the students to their “real world” experience.

Importance of Literacy

The importance of literacy is emphasized by the use of close-up shots of the students working the word problem that Mr. Escalante wrote on the board. Each student is working

diligently to try to solve the problem. Many of the students take a risk by attempting to give their solution to the question aloud in class.

Another aspect of the scene that emphasizes the importance of literacy is the brief interaction between Mr. Escalante and the computer technician at Burroughs. The camera focuses in on the computer technician running a computer program that simulates a Calculus problem. Focusing in on Mr. Escalante, the camera shows his facial expression and reaction to learning that the computer technician's daughter takes Calculus at her high school. Mr. Escalante's reaction is very important to capture, because it evokes a complex response to the idea that many schools in the area have opportunities that the students in Mr. Escalante's classes have been denied.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

With a combination of straight angle shots and close-ups, the cinematic techniques are used to show that Mr. Escalante has the opportunity to provide his students with the skills they need to become savvy problem solvers through a unique connection he has with his students. The students in the scene want to do well and are motivated by Mr. Escalante's methods and interactions with them.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Escalante walks freely around the classroom, interacting personally with each student. He leads the students in a rhythmic cheer at the beginning of class, much like a pep rally to inspire the team to win the game. His posture is somewhat slanted and could be the result of a disability or handicap, although there are many other times where he is able to stand upright normally. Mr. Escalante seems quite approachable as a person, evident in the pet names the students use for him and vice-versa. Mr. Escalante's body language is symbolic of a teacher who is trying desperately to connect with the students in a humorous and caring way.

The students are engaged and motivated by Mr. Escalante's strategies, although there are several in the class who still have difficulty understanding how the student arrived at the

correct answer. Even though the students are social with one another, it does not take away or distract others from learning in the classroom.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Escalante is dressed in a long sleeve dress shirt and pants, covered by a long sleeve cardigan sweater. The students are dressed in a variety of clothing popular at the time. Mr. Escalante is dressed in contrast to the administrators in the room, who arrive to observe the class in business suits. The students react to the administrators in a negative way.

The classroom provides wooden desks for each student and a chalkboard. It is not clear if the students have a textbook, given that the discussion of the problem was based on the story problem that Mr. Escalante wrote on the board. Each student has paper and pencil, with some using 3 ring binders or notebooks.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Escalante and his students follow a traditional teacher/student protocol, but with a few exceptions. Mr. Escalante does not speak to the students as a teacher would typically speak to their students. Likewise, the students treat Mr. Escalante in a more informal manner, creating a comfortable environment for them in which to take risks in their learning.

Figure 16-©Stand and Deliver



“A Pyrrhic Victory”: Semiotic Analysis of 187

Table 9187 Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

[A teacher and a librarian stand at the back of the library. Mr. Garfield stares out a window waiting for Rita to finish her paper].

Rita: I’m finished

Rita: [*repeating*] Mr. G, I’m finished.

Mr. Garfield: You know, I’m thinking since your essay deals with gangs, I think more than anything else, you could have left in some of those double negatives you like so well.

Rita: So, now you want me to use bad grammar?

Mr. Garfield: Only when it suits your topic.

Rita: I know, I know, we are all products of our environment.

Mr. Garfield: No, I think everyone is responsible for their own actions. [*pointing at the paper*] You see, this is like hip hop. If you take out all of the bad grammar, it loses its impact.

Rita: You like hip hop, Mr. G.

Mr. Garfield: No, I hate it.

Rita: What kind of black man are you?

Mr. Garfield: [*laughing*] This really is a good essay. You put out a lot of work. It shows.

Rita: Thanks. It comes from the heart. You think I could be? A writer?

Mr. Garfield: Ms. Queen tells me she picks two seniors to read their essays every year at graduation.

Rita: She ain't gonna pick mine. Anyways, I don't wanna get up in front of all of those people. I'd make a fool out of myself.

Mr. Garfield: Oh really? Why? Are you afraid it will be some kind of Pyrrhic victory?

Rita: What's that?

Mr. Garfield: Tell you what. Look it up.

Figure 17-©187



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The dialogue denotations in the brief interaction between Mr. Garfield and Rita show that Mr. Garfield is helping Rita with her essay. Mr. Garfield points out some of the characteristics of the writing and gives some suggestions to make the essay better. He also praises Rita for her hard work and tells her the hard work has paid off.

Rita and Mr. Garfield joke with one another; first, Mr. Garfield suggests leaving in the ‘double negatives’ that Rita likes to use in everyday speech. Rita jokes with Mr. Garfield about his dislike of hip hop, wondering what kind of black man doesn’t like hip hop music.

Mr. Garfield suggests that Rita could have a chance at being a graduation speaker, but Rita is hesitant. She quickly points out that she would never get chosen, while asking if Mr. Garfield thought she could be a writer someday.

The analysis of the connotations of the dialogue between Mr. Garfield and Rita show that Rita isn't typically recognized by her other teachers for having the potential to be a good writer. Rita has an obvious lack of confidence in her need to ask Mr. Garfield if he really believes she could someday be a successful writer. Even if she had dreamt about the possibility, it seems as though this is the first time she recognized it could become a reality. Yet, she is hesitant in what being a successful writer will mean in terms of her reputation.

When Rita says "we are all products of our environment", she seems to be partly making excuses for being the way she is [using bad grammar]. She repeats it as if she has heard it often and as if she has no hope of ever being anything other than a product of the environment in which she lives. Mr. Garfield points out that he doesn't believe that statement, emphasizing that personal choice and responsibility are more powerful than the influence of the environment.

The myth at play in the dialogue of this scene centers on Mr. Garfield's question for Rita, "Are you afraid it will be some kind of Pyrrhic victory?" An allusion to King Pyrrus of Epirus, a Pyrrhic victory [a victory achieved at a great cost to the victor] would occur if Rita were to be asked to read her essay at graduation. Not unlike a Catch 22, not only is the subject matter of the speech controversial, but it would also challenge Rita's acceptance with her friends socially to be recognized for being smart or good at something that her friends and family may view as unimportant.

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue denotations between Rita and Mr. Garfield shows that both of them believe that writing is important. Rita is aware of the impact that grammar has on her essay. Mr. Garfield helps Rita understand how the use of bad grammar can be a technique depending on the subject of the essay, much like hip hop.

Rita understands that being a good writer, someday, might be something that she wants to do and asks Mr. Garfield about the possibility. She wants to continue to make writing an important part of her life and future.

The connotation of the dialogue is the very idea that Rita can use literacy as a way to leave behind the rough life she faces, and will face, in her community shows the importance that literacy can play in someone's life. Being a good writer, in Rita's case, is her ticket to success. The dialogue in this scene perpetuates the myth that 'being literate' can mean different things to different communities and situations.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue of the scene between Rita and Mr. Garfield as the ability to write well, for a specific audience, using a variety of methods. Rita's comment that Mr. Garfield is a strange black man because he doesn't like hip hop shows that expressions of literacy can come in many different forms and should not be categorized according to one's race or background. The myth that is perpetuated in this scene is that a measure of literacy is the ability to read and nothing else.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Mr. Garfield and Rita are working together on her essay. Mr. Garfield is giving her advice and praise. Rita asks Mr. Garfield if he believes she could be a good writer. The dialogue does not denote a role of the school. The connotation of the dialogue of Mr. Garfield is that he is trying to motivate Rita to share her talents with others.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene takes place in a dark library, with only the dull light from the window and the yellow light of the desk lamp. Mr. Garfield and Rita sit on one side of a table, with their backs facing several rows of bookshelves. The camera angles are usually straight angle shots and close-up shots.

The close-up shots symbolize the intimacy of the conversation that Mr. Garfield and Rita are having about her writing. The camera focuses in on Rita, glancing over her shoulder periodically to see if they are being watched. Even though the meeting is taking place in public, their conversation is very personal.

During this scene, one of the myths at play is that it isn't cool to be literate. Rita's constant glancing over her shoulder is evidence that she does not want to be seen getting help from a teacher on her work or to be seen using her extra time on school activities.

Importance of Literacy

The focus of the scene of Mr. Garfield and Rita shows that both of them feel as though the writing she has done is important. The library is dark and the books on the shelves are dusty; it is as though the library isn't used for anything other than a place to put the copy machine.

During the scene, the camera zooms in closely to the facial expressions of Rita. She is clearly torn between wanting to do well and to follow her dream of being a good writer or doing what her friends expect of her. The myth of 'literacy isn't cool' is also emphasized by the camera angles and lighting in this scene.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

The cinematic techniques used in this scene highlight that Mr. Garfield and Rita are playing a different role than what is typically expected of teachers in the school. Focusing in on the intimacy of the conversation that they are having about Rita's writing reinforces the myth that being a successful reader or a successful writer is not. It is clear that Rita has the talent to be a successful writer. Mr. Garfield has to help her understand that it is difficult to move forward in your life if you are constantly looking over your shoulder.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Garfield uses his body language to show his concern for Rita's success with her writing. At first, he is somewhat distracted, staring out a library window. Once Rita finishes her paper, he leans in and gives her constructive criticism, while encouraging her to continue writing in her authentic voice. Rita spends much of the time in the scene fidgeting, nervously drinking her soda, or looking over her shoulder to make sure no one is watching her. Although she seems comfortable working with Mr. Garfield, she is uncomfortable with the possibility that someone will see that she is asking for extra help.

Mr. Garfield's body language is symbolic of someone who is very distracted by his past or personal life but who also cares enough about Rita's success to take additional time to meet with her in the library. Rita's body codes are symbolic of an inner-city schoolgirl who is hesitant about being seen as someone who is smart or successful. Rita's body language shows that she values the importance of being a good writer but is struggling with what her environment expects of her.

The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of Mr. Garfield show that he understands the environment from which Rita comes, but also understands that a person is responsible for their own actions and cannot let the negative peer pressure affect their future successes.

The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of Rita show that she feels torn between two worlds. She is embarrassed by her talent as a writer and yet, wants to become an even better writer. His "I don't care" attitude is mirrored by his mother's "I don't care" attitude about his academics.

The gestures and facial expressions of Rita symbolize the inner-city student who has an opportunity to be recognized superior skills, but would rather fit in with the crowd.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Garfield is dressed in a long sleeve shirt and tie. Compared to the teachers in the back of the library, Mr. Garfield is dressed more professionally. Rita is dressed in a short sleeve shirt and big hoop earrings that she plays with when she gets nervous. The library has shelves of dusty books, tables with banker style lamps, and a copier that is broken at the back of the room.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Garfield and Rita follow a traditional teacher/student protocol throughout the entire scene. Mr. Garfield seems somewhat distracted at the beginning and Rita acts paranoid that someone will find her working with Mr. Garfield in the library. Rita begins to look over her shoulder less often as Mr. Garfield begins giving her the positive reinforcements she needs to build her confidence.

Figure 18-©187



“What will your verse be?”: A Semiotic Analysis of *Dead Poets’ Society*

Table 10 *Dead Poets’ Society* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

[Mr. Keating sits at his desk, opening up the textbook]

Mr. Keating: Gentlemen, open your texts to page 21 of the introduction. Mr. Perry, will you read the opening paragraph of the preface entitled “Understanding Poetry”?

[The students open their books to the introduction and follow along as Neil reads aloud]

Neil Perry: “Understanding Poetry, by Dr. Jay Evans Pritchard, Ph.D. To fully understand poetry, we must be fluent in its rhythm, rhyme, and figures of speech, then ask two questions. One, how artfully has the objective of the poem been rendered, and two, how important is that objective? Question one rates the poem’s perfection. Question two rates its importance. [*Mr. Keating stands to write on the chalkboard*]

And once these questions have been answered, determining the poem’s greatness becomes a relatively simple matter. [*Neil glances up, then continues reading*]. If the poem’s score for perfection is plotted on the horizontal of a graph [*Mr. Keating draws a horizontal line on the board and labels it P, students begin taking notes and drawing the chart on their papers*], and its importance plotted on the vertical [*Mr. Keating draws a vertical line on the board and labels it I*], calculating the total area of the poem yields the measure of its greatness. A sonnet by Byron might score high on the vertical, but only average on the horizontal. [*Mr. Keating plots the sonnet on the graph, filling in the total area*]. A Shakespearean sonnet, on the other hand, would score high both vertically and horizontally, yielding a massive total area [*Mr. Keating plots the sonnet on the graph, filling in the total area*], thereby revealing the poem to be truly great. As you proceed through the poetry in this book, practice this rating method. As your ability to rate poetry in this manner grows, so will your enjoyment and understanding of poetry.”

[*Neil finishes the paragraph and looks back to Mr. Keating*]

Mr. Keating: [*Smiles and nods at the students*] Excrement. That’s what I think of Mr. Jay Evans Pritchard. [*Students stare in amazement*] We’re not laying pipe, we’re talking about poetry. How can you describe poetry like American Bandstand? “Well, I like Byron, I give him a 42, but I can’t dance to it.” [*The students laugh and smile*] Now, I want you to rip out that page. [*Students stare at Mr. Keating*]. Go on, rip out the entire page. [*Students begin looking around the room and then back at Mr. Keating*].

You heard me, rip it out. Rip it out! Go on, rip it out! [*Mr. Dalton sets his drawing of female breasts aside and rips out his page. Students laugh*] Thank

you, Mr. Dalton. Gentlemen, I tell you what, do just rip out that page, tear out the entire introduction.

I want it gone. History. Leave nothing of it. [*Students begin ripping out the pages one by one*]. Rip it out! Rip!! Be gone Jay Evans Pritchard, Ph.D. Rip! Shred! Tear! Rip it out! I want to hear nothing but ripping of Mr. Pritchard. [*Some students remain hesitant to rip out the pages*] We will perforate it and put it on a roll. It's not the Bible. You're not going to Hell for this. Make a clean tear, I want nothing left of it. [*Mr. Keating walks into his office to retrieve a metal trash can*]. Rip it out! Rip!!

[*Boys continue ripping out the pages, chanting 'rip it out', making paper wads and throwing them at one another. Mr. McAlester peers in the classroom through the door window and bursts into the room*]

Mr. McAlester: What the Hell is going on here?

Mr. Keating: [*not hearing Mr. McAlester enter*] I don't hear enough Rip!

Mr. McAlester: Mr. Keating.

Mr. Keating: Mr. McAlester

Mr. McAlester: I'm sorry, uh I didn't know you were here.

Mr. Keating: I am.

Mr. McAlester: Ah. So you are. [*pauses in an awkward smile*] Excuse me.

[*Mr. McAlester backs out of the room and shuts the door*]

Mr. Keating: Keep ripping, gentlemen. This is a battle. A war. And the casualties could be your hearts and souls. [*Mr. Dalton throws his pages in the trash can*]. Thank you Mr. Dalton. Armies of academics going forward, measuring poetry. No! We will not have that here. No more Mr. Jay Evans Pritchard. [*Students finish throwing the introduction away*]. Now in my class, you will learn to think for yourselves again. You will learn to savor words and language. No matter what anyone tells you, words and ideas can change the world. [*Mr. Keating walks down the aisle towards Mr. Pitts*]. I see that look in Mr. Pitts eye, he thinks 19th century literature has nothing to do with going to business school or medical school. Right? Maybe. Mr. Hopkins, you may agree with him, thinking "Yes, we should simply study our Mr. Pritchard and learn our

rhyme and meter and go quietly about the business of achieving other ambitions.” I have a little secret for you. Huddle up. Huddle up! [*The students gather around Mr. Keating, who kneels on the floor in the middle of the classroom*]. We don’t read and write poetry because it’s cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. Medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits necessary to sustain life. But poetry. Beauty. Romance. Love. These are what we stay alive for. To quote Whitman “Oh me, Oh life, the questions of these recurring, of the endless trains of the faithless. Of cities filled with the foolish. What good amid these. Oh, me. Oh, life.” Answer that you are here. That life exists. And identity. That the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse. What will your verse be?

Figure 19-©*Dead Poets’ Society*



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

There are many components of literacy represented by the dialogue of the scene. Initially, literacy is represented as the ability to grasp a poem's greatness through an analysis of its importance and its performance. Mr. Keating quickly discredits Dr. Pritchard's quantitative take on the measurement of poetry and symbolically has the students rip out the pages of their textbook that view poetry in such a scientific manner. Mr. Keating introduces poetry to the students again, this time as a "what we stay alive for". Other components of literacy represented in the dialogue are the ability to read aloud from a text and also, the ability to recite poetry from memory, as Mr. Keating recites Walt Whitman at the end of the scene.

The connotations of the components of literacy in the dialogue show that the academia has long had two schools of thought where poetry is concerned. The first school of thought has poetry being studied much like the subjects of science and math, evaluating literature as one would evaluate a story problem in Algebra. The second school of thought, the one that Keating embraces, introduces literature to students as a pathway to understanding the beauty of life, evaluating and interpreting poetry according to one's own passion.

Importance of Literacy

Perhaps one of the easiest ways to discuss the importance of literacy being revealed in the dialogue is to talk about what the dialogue does to emphasize what literacy is not. The dialogue of the scene reiterates that poetry is not something that can be measured by its greatness. Rather, poetry is a thing of passion and beauty. Mr. Keating points out that poetry is not written because it is cute, but that poetry is written and read "because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion".

The importance of literacy described in the dialogue can also be found in Mr. Keating's final words in the huddle of the classroom, "what will your verse be?" Not only will the students' of the classroom become successful doctors, engineers, or attorneys to sustain life, but Mr. Keating also wants them to understand the necessity of having passion in life, which he believes can be found with an appreciation of poetry.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue as the ability to use one's own thoughts and interpretations to judge the worthiness or greatness of a text. Poetry is also expressed as important in the traditional textbook introduction of Dr. Pritchard, but it lacks the important contribution of personal thought and interpretation that Mr. Keating's world of poetry includes.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Mr. Keating's role as the leader of the classroom is emphasized in the dialogue. At the beginning of the scene, the students are very hesitant to follow Mr. Keating's request to rip out the pages of the book, a request that goes against their traditional values. Mr. Keating's rambunctious and motivational style encourages the students to step out of their comfort zone of the traditional college preparatory mentality to embrace a way of thinking far different than they have ever experienced.

The students do not participate as actively in the dialogue during this scene. They participate by reacting to the requests of Mr. Keating and the actions of other students in the classroom. Their lack of involvement in the dialogue is symbolic in that they have never had a voice in their learning before. Mr. Keating is opening up the opportunity for them to participate in the dialogue of their learning.

The role of the school in the dialogue is represented in the brief interaction with Mr. McAlester in the classroom. Mr. McAlester is flabbergasted to see the students ripping out the pages to their textbooks and throwing them around the room. Mr. McAlester bursts into the classroom, only to be met by Mr. Keating encouraging the students to continue. Mr. McAlester's reaction to the activity symbolizes the views of the traditional school disapproving of the new methods used by Mr. Keating.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The components of literacy highlighted by the use of cinematic techniques include the graphing of poem's greatness, which Mr. Keating immediately discredits. The focus shots on the ripping out of textbook pages emphasize that the formulaic learning of poetry will not be taking place. Many close up shots of the boys' faces show their reactions to Mr. Keating's unusual requests to deface the well-respected textbooks and the symbolic throwing away of the pages.

The cinematic techniques used to highlight these literacy components symbolize the importance of the activities taking place. Not only are the boys coming of age in the scene, but so is the curriculum. The curriculum has arrived at an important turning point in its evolution of the school. Taught to think with their minds, the students are faced with the possibility and opportunity to think with their hearts in Mr. Keating's class.

Importance of Literacy

Literacy's importance is emphasized with the cinematic techniques of the film. There are many focus shots on the notebooks of the students and of the textbook that they are using in the class. Many students had taken the notes that Mr. Keating wrote on the board and then scribbled them out after hearing Mr. Keating call them excrement.

The importance of literacy is also emphasized on the focus of the tearing out of the introduction of the textbook, which one might consider an oxymoron if they didn't have the dialogue to go along with the visual.

Finally, the focus on Mr. Keating's speech about the students being able to think for themselves is critical in the ways in which literacy will be expressed in the film. Mr. Keating asks the students what will their verse be, the connotation being that they will be a contributor to life, whether it be through the necessary contributions of a businessman or doctor, or through the contribution of a human being passionate about life. The faces of the

students show an interesting mixture of profound thought and delight, as the light bulb seems to go off in many faces that weren't paying attention on the onset of the scene.

Mr. Keating and Mr. McAlester have a polite verbal exchange that symbolized the great divide between the traditional teachers of the school and the non-traditional teaching of Mr. Keating. When Mr. McAlester says "I didn't know you were here", he is saying he didn't realize that any teaching was taking place in the classroom. Mr. Keating is very quick to point out that learning was indeed taking place, with the camera focusing in on the tossing of papers to continue after Mr. McAlester leaves the room.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

Mr. Keating's role as the leader of the classroom is reinforced through many close-up shots of his facial expressions and speech and the wide-angle shots of the boys' reactions to his leadership. Mr. Keating is the new captain of the ship. The cinematic techniques also show the role of the students' as impressionable, yet confident. Several of the students follow Mr. Keating's lead with blind faith, while others are more reluctant to step outside of the box in which they had always been taught. The school, represented by the interaction with Mr. McAlester, plays the role of the realists, who forgo passion and choose the realistic path to the study of literature.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Keating uses his body language to show his reaction to Dr. Pritchard's take on how one is to measure a poem's greatness. Students are hesitant to rip out the pages. The least inhibited of the students, Mr. Dalton, who is drawing pictures of female breasts instead of taking notes, is the first student to rip the pages out of the book, symbolically entering the world of literature appreciation (not literature dissection as Dr. Pritchard would have them do)

Mr. Hopkins's reaction to hesitantly tearing out the pages of his introduction is symbolic of the students who would rather go about learning in the traditional way, where there is a right answer and a wrong answer, with no shades of grey.

All of the students' in the scene are good students and all want to become more literate, they just disagree about what path to take to get there. While some would rather take the traditional way as designed by Dr. Pritchard in his introduction to poetry section, most of the students are invigorated by Mr. Keating's passionate discussion about how words can truly change the world. The symbolic huddle at the end of the scene represent the class as a team, willing to play a new game in order to fall in love with the beauty of words and to contribute a verse to the story of the world.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Keating is dressed in a suit and tie. The students in the classroom are dressed in the school uniform of school blazers, long sleeve shirts, and ties. The students' hair is cut short. The classroom is well appointed with many desks, books, and portraits of scholars on the walls. Each student has a notebook and paper as well as their textbook. Mr. Keating has an office adjoining the classroom where he stores his supplies.

The students respect their surroundings and materials, which is evident when Mr. Keating asks them to rip out the pages of their books. Most do not believe Mr. Keating is serious, initially, and much after the ripping has started, several still are nervous about defacing a book in such a way.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Keating and his students follow a traditional teacher/student protocol at the beginning of the scene. Once Mr. Keating makes known his feelings of aberration for the way in which poetry is taught from the textbook, Mr. Keating becomes more like a football coach, barking out orders to rip out the pages and asking students to huddle up for a chat about poetry. The students are not sure how to behave once Mr. Keating steps out of the role of the traditional teacher. Several seem quite invigorated by the activity, while others look very uneasy, as they have been asked to step outside their comfort zones of a traditional student.

The behavior of Mr. Keating and the students symbolizes that they are no longer willing to take a passive approach to the learning, especially in the learning of literature and poetry. Because much of the interpretation and power of poetry is from within one's own reading of it, it is important for one to be able to experiment with it.

Figure 20-©*Dead Poets' Society*



“There are no victims in this classroom”: Semiotic Analysis of *Dangerous Minds*

Table 11 *Dangerous Minds* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

Mrs. Johnson: ‘I will not go down underground, somebody tells me that death is coming round.’ Okay, this is another Dylan poem. Now, is that a code or does it just mean what it says.

[*Students don’t respond, Mrs. Johnson looks at them and then back at paper*]

Mrs. Johnson: ‘And I will not carry myself down to die, When I go to my grave, my head will be high.’ My head will be high. What does that mean?

[*Students don’t respond again. Mrs. Johnson shows frustration*]

Mrs. Johnson: Anybody? Nobody? Is there something I should know?

Student #1: Yeah, I'll tell you. You ratted on Raul, Gusmaro, and Emilio.

Angela: Yeah. You got Emilio put into detention.

Student #3: It was none of your business.

Student #4: Yeah, you got Raul and Gusmaro suspended.

Mrs. Johnson: Hey. I didn't rat on anybody.

[Various expletives and comments by students in unison]

Mrs. Johnson: Hey, do you want to talk about this?

Student #5: Whatever floats your boat, teach.

Mrs. Johnson: Well, if ya'll feel that strongly about it, leave the room.

Student #5: What?

Mrs. Johnson: Listen, nobody is forcing you to be here. You have a choice. You can stay or you can leave.

Student #6: Lady, why are you playin this game? We don't have a choice!

Mrs. Johnson: You don't have a choice? You don't have a choice whether or not you are here?

Student #6: Nah! If we leave, we don't get to graduate. If we stay, we have to put up with you.

Mrs. Johnson: Well that's a choice, isn't it? You have a choice. You either don't graduate or you have to put up with me. It may not be a choice you like, but it is a choice.

Student #7: Man, you don't understand nothin'. You don't come from where we live. You're not bussed here.

Mrs. Johnson: Do you have a choice to get on that bus?

Student #7: Man, you come and live in my neighborhood for one week and then YOU tell me if you got a choice.

Mrs. Johnson: There are a lot of people that live in your neighborhood who chose not to get on that bus. What do they choose to do? They choose to go out and sell drugs! They choose to go out and kill people! They choose to do a lot of other things. But they chose not to get on that bus. The people that choose to get on that bus, which are you, are the people that are saying 'I will not carry myself

down to die, when I go to my grave, my head will be high.’ That is a choice.
There are no victims in this classroom.

Student #8: Why do you care anyway? You are just here for the money!

Mrs. Johnson: Because I make a choice to care. And honey, the money ain’t that good.

Student #8: Whatever.

Emilio: Read it again Miss Johnson.

Mrs. Johnson: What?

Emilio: Read those lines you just read again.

Mrs. Johnson: ‘I will not go down underground, cause somebody tells me that death is coming around.’ Does that mean just what it says?

Emilio: No, it don’t mean just what it says. Cause, you wouldn’t go under the ground if someone told you death was comin. But you would go into the ground if you were already dead.

Mrs. Johnson: Do the rest of you agree with that?

Callie: Well, I kinda agree. But, I think it just means, he ain’tgonna help death out. It’s not like he’s going to lay down and wait for it. I think he’s going to choose, no, I think he’s going to make the choice to die hard.

Mrs. Johnson: [*nods*] Uh huh....

Student #9: Yeah, I’d agree with that.

Student #8: Yeah, that sounds good to me.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, but what about the rest of it. ‘When I go to my grave, my head will be high.’ Head will be high. What does that mean?

Student #9:Gonna die with pride.

[*Bell rings*]

Mrs. Johnson: I’ll see you tomorrow.

[*Class leaves. Emilio stays back.*]

Emilio: You went to Raul’s house last night. And Gusmaro’s too. Right?

[*Mrs. Johnson nods*]

Emilio: Yeah, that’s what they told me. [*Tapping folder*]. That’s cool.

[*Emilio stands up and leaves*]

Figure 21-©*Dangerous Minds*



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The dialogue denotations in the scene show Mrs. Johnson beginning the class with a poem that she wants the class to analyze. She continues to prompt the students to respond but most are very reluctant to participate because they are mad at her. Mrs. Johnson continues to analyze each line of the Dylan poem, asking for feedback and responses from the students. The students become angry that Mrs. Johnson doesn't understand that they don't have a choice in whether or not they come to school; yet, Mrs. Johnson believes they do. She continues to draw connections between the poem she is reading and the lives of her students. The students participate only after one of the students has an 'Aha' moment and can clearly see the purpose in reading the poem.

The connotation of the components of literacy in the dialogue suggests that in order to have a good discussion in the classroom about any type of text, there has to be the element of respect. Mrs. Johnson's class did not feel that she appreciated and respected how difficult their lives are outside of school. The class also did not understand Mrs. Johnson's background.

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue also denotes an importance of literacy to the everyday lives of the students. Mrs. Johnson points out that the students have a choice in whether or not they get on the bus to come to school and that it is up to them that they learn something in the class. Their 'victim mentality' is starting to wear down the learning that Mrs. Johnson is trying to foster in the classroom.

The components of literacy, in this case poetry, do not have to be abstractions from the lives of those who study it. The applicability of the poetry to the students' lives was something that had to be highlighted in order for the students to connect with it.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue between Mrs. Johnson and her students as a freedom of expression. All of the participants were able to express their feelings about the current situation and tension in the classroom. Students then began to make connections to the poem through their discussion of the specific figurative language in poem and the meaning of the poem.

By discussing the meaning of the poem, the scene also symbolizes a discussion of the meaning of their lives. The poem summarized the fear and the bravery they hope to have in the face of fear that many of the students face everyday. Literacy, to the students, meant nothing if they couldn't find applicability to their own lives.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Mrs. Johnson leads the discussion from her desk, either standing or sitting. The dialogue shows the roller coaster of emotions that Mrs. Johnson goes through during the scene. She becomes defensive when the students accuse her of being a snitch and getting their friends in trouble for fighting. She becomes emotional when the students try to use a

victim mentality as an excuse for not wanting to learn. She also uses her instincts as a teacher to know how to bring the discussion of the personal conflict back to the text of the poem.

The students are initially hostile to Mrs. Johnson's effort to discuss the poem. The hostility of the students ranged from silent participation to becoming verbally abusive and accusatory of Mrs. Johnson. The discussion proves to be helpful as the students eventually begin to discuss the text and take an active role in their own learning.

The school does not participate in the dialogue of this scene, although much of the anger and hostility the students have regarding their lives is directed at the school and not necessarily directed at Mrs. Johnson. The students feel as though the school has no understanding of their socioeconomic or cultural identities and therefore does not care for them.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene takes place in Mrs. Johnson's classroom. The classroom is partially lighted, with sunlight streaming through the dusty windows. There are several still shots that focus on the discussion between the students and Mrs. Johnson. The camera zooms to several close-ups of students' bored and frustrated faces. The camera also zooms closely to Mrs. Johnson's face, showing her frustration that the students believe she is responsible for their classmates' punishments and showing her anger that the students believe they have no choices to make in their lives. The close-up shots, particularly those that highlight the eyes of the character, show that each person's perspective can greatly change their understanding of a meaning of a text.

Importance of Literacy

The discussion of the poem and the ability for Mrs. Johnson to help her students make connections with the text are at the center of this film. All of the camera angles and lighting used in this scene emphasize the struggle that all of the characters are having to make something like a text, a poem, become something worthwhile to discuss.

Transitioning from the wide-angle views of the classroom to the close-ups of the students symbolizes the importance of reaching students when they are the most unsure about the purpose of school or the purposes of their own lives. The transitioning also symbolizes the importance of individuality in an interpretation of a text.

How Literacy is Expressed

There are several camera shots that come from behind Mrs. Johnson. We see the back of her head and then the rest of the class in the wide-angle shots. The camera gives us an omniscient view many times to help us see the variety of ways that students are reacting to the poem and to the discussion.

The camera also shows the classroom walls. The walls of the classroom are a blank slate, there are no posters, no student work, nothing to give the room character. The room is barren and boring.

The connotations of the cinematic techniques used in this scene are that everything is a blank slate. The classroom has never had this kind of literacy instruction and is therefore “unprepared” in its appearance. The students have never had this type of discussion and connection to text before either, so their minds are only filled with the preconceptions and personal experiences, not the literary connections to text that Mrs. Johnson is trying to foster.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

Mrs. Johnson’s role in the classroom is shown by her position in the classroom and the camera’s wide-angle shots of the class. She doesn’t step out from behind her desk to carry on a conversation with her students.

The role of the student is first portrayed as a bored and passive participant. The camera focuses in on the bored looks of individual students and the sea of blank stares in wide-angle shots.

The school does not play much of a role in the cinematic techniques other than to symbolize the blank slate of the classroom, with a minimum of resources or motivational tools in the classroom.

Mrs. Johnson is using her desk as a barrier between herself and the students. She feels threatened when the accuse her of being a snitch. Instead of stepping out from behind

her desk, the camera continues to focus in on her standing or sitting behind her desk to discuss the situation and the poem.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

The discussion of Mrs. Johnson's body language could be reiterated here, as she did not step out from behind her desk to get closer to the students. Mrs. Johnson is nervous and stiff throughout much of the scene. The anger and frustration that she is feeling is not only reflected in the dialogue of the scene, but in her non-verbal communication.

The students also portray a variety of body codes in the scene. The students take on a variety of non-participatory poses, such as slumping in their desks or sitting on top of their desks. When they become engaged in the argument with Mrs. Johnson about her not knowing where they come from or the types of choices they have in their lives, their body language becomes much more intense, leaning forward in their desks, pointing fingers, and raising their voices. They are hesitant to make eye contact with Mrs. Johnson unless they are speaking about something that they know a lot about, themselves. When discussing the poem, their eyes focus downward, showing a lack of confidence in what they are saying.

Mrs. Johnson's body language is symbolic of the frustration that teachers feel when they feel like they've tried everything they know to try to reach their students. Mrs. Johnson's body language becomes increasingly agitated until the students begin relating their lives to the poem.

The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of Mrs. Johnson show that she feels the pressure of helping the students see a value in the things they are doing in class in order to connect it to their everyday lives.

The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of the students of the class show that they feel trapped in their lives as inner-city students. They believe they are victims without choices. They feel like they have no hope for a better future.

Commodity Codes

Mrs. Johnson is dressed casually in jeans. The students are dressed in a variety of outfits, some trendy for the time period and others are not. Many of the girls wear a lot of makeup and jewelry. None of the students stand out as having a different style. Many of the boys wear hats in the classroom.

Mrs. Johnson is trying to fit in to the classroom's environment by not dressing too professionally. On the first day of school, she wore a dress and was not responded to well. On the second day of school, she dressed down in a leather jacket and jeans to try to find a comfortable compromise in what the students would respect and what she would be willing to wear as their teacher. The classroom is racially diverse and Mrs. Johnson is not. Being young, pretty, and white brings about a symbolic lack of authenticity as far as the students are concerned.

This scene represents a continuous debate as to whether teachers should try to reach students on their level or to set themselves apart as professionals. The myth perpetuated in this scene is that the mold of professional teacher, with its expectation of teacher behavior and teacher dress, must be broken in order to reach inner-city students who struggle to accept and respect outsiders to their culture.

Behavioral Codes

Mrs. Johnson follows traditional teacher/student protocol until the students continue to ignore her attempts to engage them in a discussion about the poem. She goes through a variety of emotions in the scene. She becomes increasingly aggravated and defensive at the accusations that she is a snitch and that the students have no choice or ownership in their learning. Once she helps students understand the connection of the poem to their lives, she easily returns to a facilitator of the discussion by passively sitting behind her desk.

The students behave in a stereotypical fashion, echoing the reluctant and bitter inner-city students who would rather be doing anything other than discussing poetry. They speak to Mrs. Johnson disrespectfully once the first student breaks the ice to call her a snitch. They verbally gang up on Mrs. Johnson, trying to help her understand that the poem she is trying to teach them has nothing to do with them or their lives.

The myths of the codes of the scene show that school is a place of escape from difficult home situations and at the same time, school is like a prison for them as well. Many of the students are just going through the motions of school in order to graduate.

Figure 22-©*Dangerous Minds*



“See if you can hear the connective tissue”: A Semiotic Analysis of *Mr. Holland’s Opus*

Table 12 *Mr. Holland’s Opus* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue [with my explanatory notes included in bracketed italics]

Mr. Holland: Let’s take our seats please. [*students come into the classroom to sit at their desks as the bell rings*]

Mr. Holland: Does anyone here know the difference between the Ionian and the Dorian scale? [*students avoid eye contact with Mr. Holland, fidget*]

Mr. Holland: Anybody.

Mr. Holland: [laughs] I just wanted to confirm the fact that I've made absolutely no impact on you in the last five months.

Mr. Holland: Mr. Sullivan?

Sullivan: Yeah?

Mr. Holland: What kind of music do you LIKE to listen to?

Sullivan: Um...

Mr. Holland: Don't be afraid.

Sullivan: Rock and roll?

Mr. Holland: [to another student] What about you?

Student1: Rock and roll.

Mr. Holland: You?

Student2: [smiling broadly] Classical!

Mr. Holland: Brown noser.

Mr. Holland: Does anyone here like Johann Sebastian Bach?

[Student 2 raises hand]

Mr. Holland: Other than you?

Mr. Holland: I bet all of you, whether you know it or not, already like Johann Sebastian Bach.

[Mr. Holland sits down to *Lover's Concerto*]

Mr. Holland: What's this called?

Class: *Lover's Concerto*

Mr. Holland: Who wrote it?

Student3: The Toys

Mr. Holland: Wrong

Mr. Holland: That was *Minuet in G* and it was written by Johann Sebastian Bach.

[Mr. Holland begins to play *Minuet in G*]

Mr. Holland: Do you hear it?

[Students nod, some take notes]

Mr. Holland: Bum bum bum bum bum.....

Mr. Holland: And he wrote it in 1725. They are both prime examples of the Ionian scale. Now listen, and see if you can hear the connective tissue between what I just played and this.

[Mr. Holland begins playing Rock and Roll].

[*Students laugh and smile. Assistant Principal runs around the corner following the sound. Assistant Principal peeks inside the room. Mr. Holland is standing up at the piano playing Rock and Roll.*]

Figure 23-©Mr. Holland's Opus



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The dialogue describes the interaction that Mr. Holland is having with the students in his music class. The components of literacy in this scene include the ability to critically analyze music and also the ability to connect one type of music to another, finding the

similarities between classical music and rock and roll, the “connective tissue”. Mr. Holland asks the students if they know the difference between the Ionian and Dorian scales of music, with no response from the students. Mr. Holland continues to question his students to determine why his teaching had not been successful so far in the class.

The dialogue in this scene symbolizes the conversations that many teachers have with their students to make sure they have grasped the material the teacher has presented. Mr. Holland genuinely wants his students to have an appreciation for music, so he makes a connection to what the students like to motivate them to connect to the discussion of classical music.

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue emphasizes the importance of literacy as being the ability to have a “connective tissue” between texts. In this case, the texts are the songs that are being discussed in Mr. Holland’s class. Mr. Holland emphasizes that the ability to connect songs [texts] together is important by making a conscious effort to model it for them.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue as the ability to make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to world connections.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

Mr. Holland is leading the class from his piano. He uses a combination of lecture, questioning, and modeling. Only a few students participate verbally in the dialogue, but all become engaged in the activity once Mr. Holland begins playing Rock and Roll music. And although not involved directly in the dialogue, the school plays a role in the scene as well, as the Assistant Principal rushes to the door upon hearing the music and looks into the classroom disapprovingly upon seeing Mr. Holland standing at the piano, pounding on the keys.

The dialogue symbolizes the role of Mr. Holland as a traditional teacher who is trying to break out of the mold in which he believed a teacher should fit in order to meet the needs of his students. The students in Mr. Holland’s classroom do not have much dialogue, which is also symbolic of students who are unmotivated and uninterested in the material

being covered. Once the connection of the Ionian and Dorian scales is made to Bach and ultimately to Rock and Roll, the students then symbolize the transformation that can happen in the environment of learning in the classroom. And finally, the role of the school in the dialogue is symbolic of the reaction that those with traditional values to the integration of popular culture within the curriculum.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The components of literacy highlighted by the cinematic techniques of the scene are the musical texts Mr. Holland uses as examples of the different scales he would like for the students to know. The music, when played, becomes a character in itself. The cameras zoom in on the piano that Mr. Holland is playing, then to the faces of the students for their reactions.

The close-up shots symbolize of the students' faces when Mr. Holland is playing the various songs symbolizes the connections they are making with the music, text-to-text connections, and the connections they are making with the songs themselves, text-to-self connections.

Importance of Literacy

Mr. Holland recognizes the fact that the students have had difficulty recognizing the classical music techniques he has shared in class. Instead of letting the students float by without internalizing the material, Mr. Holland connects the techniques of classical music to the music of the students' generation, Rock and Roll. The cinematic techniques used in this scene are the wide-angle shots to show the class reaction to Mr. Holland's new teaching strategy.

In addition, the camera focuses in on the assistant principal running down the hallway and stopping at Mr. Holland's door. His reaction is symbolic of what his views of literacy are not. His facial expressions at the window of Mr. Holland's door symbolize that the Rock and Roll music he is hearing Mr. Holland play is not an example of the types of music students should be studying in school.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

The variety of close-up shots of Mr. Holland and his students as well as the wide-angle shots of the class reactions to Mr. Holland's examples of Rock and Roll music symbolize that the role of the teacher and the role of the student can fluctuate. Mr. Holland takes the curriculum he is teaching and connects it to what the students know about music. By mentioning the very idea of Rock and Roll, the students have become a more active stakeholder in their learning. The impact of the role of the school in this scene does not become evident until later on in the film. The way the scene ends, with the Assistant Principal standing at the door, indicates that the school will take a more active role in the materials Mr. Holland is covering in class.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Holland's body language ranges from a formal, upright posture to a relaxed and emotive style while playing the piano. There is a difference in Mr. Holland's mannerisms when comparing the teacher stance he takes at the beginning of the scene and compare it to the musician stance he takes behind the piano. Mr. Holland had been trying to teach the class as a teacher. By connecting with the students through Rock and Roll music, Mr. Holland finds that he needs to be teaching the class as a musician.

At the beginning of the scene, the students are all seated at their desks with blank stares, most with bored looks on their faces. As Mr. Holland asks them questions, several respond, but only when Mr. Holland begins to play music that they know do they begin to lean forward, sway with the music, and enjoy being in the class. The Assistant Principal's body language is tense. A look of shock and disgust at the sound of Rock and Roll coming from Mr. Holland's room is evident on his face.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Holland is dressed professionally in a shirt and tie. The students are also dressed in traditional school clothing of the 1960's, with girls in skirts and boys in long sleeve dress shirts. Most notable in the commodity codes of the scene is the classroom itself. There are

many resources available in the classroom, showing a respect and value in the music program at the school. The classroom is very large in size, with room for band equipment, storage cabinets, and a full size stage with red velvet curtains. Marble statues of composers are located in various places in the room.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Holland follows traditional teacher protocol throughout the scene. Only at the end of the scene does he let his guard down to show the students he knows what Rock and Roll is and how to play it. Mr. Holland shows confidence that he has found a way to finally “teach them something”. The students in the scene symbolize every student who has only become connected with the material discussed in class when a teacher makes the conscious effort to show them the way.

Figure 24-©Mr. Holland’s Opus



“The great big picture of American History”: A Semiotic Analysis of *The Ron Clark Story*

Table 13 *The Ron Clark Story* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue

[Students are in their seats. Mr. Clark is standing in front of a big poster. The bell rings]

Mr. Clark: The Revolutionary War. Industrialism. The Civil War. The Civil Rights Movement. I want you all to get the great big picture of American History. That’s why this year, we are going to learn all 42 presidents of the United States in Order.

[Class groans]

Mr. Clark: No, no, no. . . once you know the presidents, it will be easier to remember what and when.

[Scene changes to Mr. Clark grading the president tests at his apartment. The rap music next door is loud. Mr. Clark has a frustrated look on his face and then he gets an idea]

Mr. Clark: Come on!

[Scene changes to Mr. Clark's classroom the next day]

Mr. Clark: None of you passed the test *[handing out the graded tests and removing a student's hat]* and there is going to be punishment.

[The students moan]

[Mr. Clark goes to the front of the room and grabs a stack of papers]

Mr. Clark: I want you to pass these all around.

[The students moan again]

[Mr. Clark walks to the front of the room and uncovers a CD player. He pushes play and a rap song comes on. He puts on the student hat backwards and starts dancing in front of the room. The students looked surprised]

Mr. Clark: *[rapping and doing choreography]* Now let's get down to some presidential learnin'

We'll start with George Washington, straight from Mount Vernon.

First president, and commander-in-chief,

Of the Revolutionary War so we could be free.

John Adams was second, Thomas Jefferson, third,

When we fought for independence, their voices were heard.

When in the course of human events, we took a stance and we've been doing it since.

It's a tribute to the leaders of the USA.

It's the presidents' rap, alright alright, okay okay.

[The students jump up and cheer]

Groups of students: *[practicing the rap]* It's a tribute to the leaders of the U.S.A.

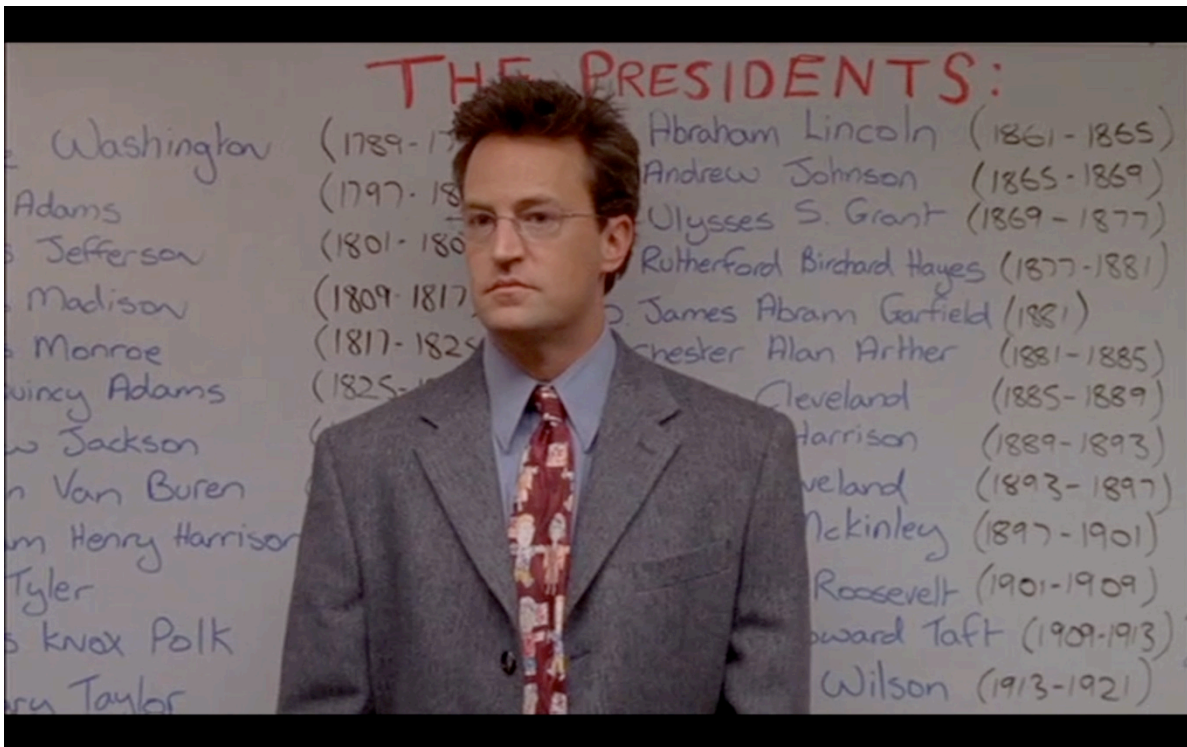
It's the presidents' rap, alright alright, okay okay.

It's a tribute to the leaders of the U.S.A.

It's the presidents' rap, alright alright, okay okay.

[The gifted class from across the hallway gather around the door to listen. Their teacher has them sit down and glances across the hall disapprovingly]

Figure 25-©The Ron Clark Story



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

Mr. Clark begins class in a typical lecture format. He's talking in front of the classroom in a loud, clear voice. Students are sitting quietly in their seats, but groan in unison when they are told they are going to memorize the presidents of the United States in

order. A few days pass and the students take the test on the dialogue. Mr. Clark grades the papers and realizes that no one passed the exam.

The scene changes to the next day, when Mr. Clark presents an activity where students will learn the presidents of the United States in a rap song that he created.

The dialogue that Mr. Clark has with the class at the beginning of the class shows a traditional classroom structure. The groans of the students at the beginning may suggest that anything that appears difficult to the students would be normally cast aside.

One of the myths at play in the dialogue is that students don't respond as well to traditional teacher-led discussions as they do to student-centered activities. The moans and groans of the students to Mr. Clark's revelation that they will memorize the Presidents of the United States is held in stark contrast to the smiles and cheers of Mr. Clark's rap song assignment.

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue denotations between Mr. Clark and the class show that he truly believes the students can do the assignment and that by doing it, they will be able to have more success when discussing history by putting the timeline in context with the leader at the time.

The connotation of the dialogue is that by knowing the basic skills, the things that may seem easy or dull to most students, will give them the foundation they need in order to study and learn more "important" or "fun" things.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is primarily expressed in the form of memorizing a list of all of the Presidents of the United States. Not surprisingly, the students take test and they all fail it. Literacy is expressed in a much different way when Mr. Clark gets the idea to turn the list of presidents into the lyrics of a rap song from his noisy neighbor next door. Students first listen to the teacher rap as he models the expectations and then the students rap together with the teacher. The students then rap alone or with their friends. All of the students know the lyrics by the end of the clip.

The connotation of the expressions of literacy in the scene symbolize that literacy is a process. Students cannot be given an assignment without the scaffolding to support it or the

tools and strategies they need to be successful. But more than that, the students need a grasp or understanding of the purpose in the assignment. There has to be a connection between what the students know and what it is that the teacher wants them to know.

And finally, the myths represented in the expressions of literacy are that students will many times more easily express their understanding of traditional material and traditional literacies in untraditional ways. Also represented in the clip is the idea that teachers need to engage their students in an activity before actual learning will take place.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

At first, Mr. Clark was running a teacher-centered classroom. He spoke in front of the room to the whole class. Students sat without speaking or interacting. Later, his role becomes more passive and he speaks less to the students as the classroom becomes student-centered.

The students are at first passive. They listen intently to Mr. Clark giving instructions. Later, their role becomes more active. They interact through the rap song with each other and the teacher. The school doesn't play much of a part in the actual scene. A classroom of students, the gifted class, tries to see what is going on in the classroom across the hall when they hear the students singing rap music. The other class who peaks out of their classroom is almost like they think learning isn't taking place and they are just having fun next door

The connotations involved in the literacy pedagogy in this scene are that students should have a key part in their own learning. Learning is a social activity clearly demonstrated in this scene and as such, students should be allowed the opportunity to interact in social activities and projects within the curriculum.

Figure 26-©The Ron Clark Story



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene begins and ends in Mr. Clark's classroom. At the beginning, Mr. Clark is framed by the words of the Presidents' poster. There are a variety of close up shots on the posters of the essential rules of the classroom and many close-ups of Mr. Clark. The camera shoots the scene from a variety of angles to show the many different components of literacy within the classroom, including posters with visual and textual reinforcements of essential classroom procedures.

The connotation of the components of literacy included in the scene is that the teacher, in this case Mr. Clark, is an essential component of the literacy instruction in the classroom. Because the successful literacy activity in the scene is a social activity, it shows the importance of having a classroom leader and a classroom environment open to the types of social and interactive lessons demonstrated in the scene.

Importance of Literacy

The cinematic techniques used in this scene to highlight the importance of literacy include the camera zoom and focus onto the essential classroom procedures and rules at the beginning of the classroom. These essential classroom procedures and rules are vital to the ability for a teacher to allow student's to take ownership of their learning in developing student-centered activities.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in a variety of ways in the scene. Initially, it is expressed as the skill of memorizing a list of Presidents of the United States. The camera focuses in on the list of Presidents hanging behind Mr. Clark. When literacy is expressed as a song, the camera focuses in on the CD player and Mr. Clark's performance of the rap song. The cameras also highlight several of the slogans in the classroom, particularly the Dream Big poster in the background.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

In the scene, there are many shots with just Mr. Clark. Students are usually in pairs or trios. Seldom are they alone in a camera shot. Most students are fully participating. The camera does zoom in one student who is not participating but is eventually won over in the end. Mr. Clark is responsible for the introduction of materials, keeping students interested, engaged in the activity, and motivated to want to do the hard stuff.

The classroom is much different from the rest of the school so it isn't really representative of the role of the school in the scene. The classroom is bright. The door has blinds that are open. The walls are full of color (to cover up the graffiti vandalism from weeks before). The classroom seems to have the basic necessities.

The cinematic techniques used in the scene emphasize that students must be active in their learning and work together in order to be progressive.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

Mr. Clark is energetic and on his feet at all times in the classroom. He only shows his frustration in the privacy of his home when grading the tests that the students have failed. Students show respect by paying attention to him when he is lecturing and also lean forward with interest during Mr. Clark's rap song performance. The students sit at the beginning but get up and dance at the end. The students are cooperative with each other and work with each other to do the choreography for the routine. Mr. Clark and a male student hug and dance/sing together at the end of the clip.

When students are learning the rap, Clark dances in front of the singing girls and a male student jumps behind Clark and begins to copy his dance and actions. Then, Clark turns and repeats his actions.

The interactions of the students with Mr. Clark show that the social aspects of learning can strengthen their grasp and understanding of the material. Although literacy instruction can be formal and structured, it can also be creative and physically active.

Commodity Codes

At the beginning of the scene, Mr. Clark is dressed very professionally in a long sleeved shirt, tie, and slacks. When grading the students' President tests, he is at home and dressed more casually, his hair clearly messed up to represent his frustration.

The students are dressed in a variety of trendy clothing, athletic jerseys, bandanas, and hats typical of most inner-city teenagers. The classroom is bright and cheerful, with a variety of posters and motivational slogans on the walls.

Mr. Clark's professional dress are symbolic of a traditional teacher with a traditional teaching style, which really differs with the laid-back style he uses when introducing the rap song, with a baseball cap turned backwards on his head.

Behavioral Codes

Mr. Clark and his students follow traditional teacher/student protocol throughout the scene. The focus of the classroom moves from teacher-centered to student-centered. As the students become more comfortable and confident in the rap song activity, they begin to play around and have fun with Mr. Clark.

The behavior of Mr. Clark and the students symbolizes that in order for learning to happen, teachers and students have to step outside of their comfort zones to understand how other people learn.

“Could you use that in a sentence?”: A Semiotic Analysis of *Chalk*

Table 14 *Chalk* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|--|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | | |

Dialogue [with my explanatory notes included in bracketed italics]

[*Scene switches to teacher interview with Mr. Lowrey*]

Mr. Lowrey: I just made a deal with my students. We have a thing coming up next week called a Spelling Hornet.

[*Scene switches to classroom*]

Student1: Are you going to be in that Spelling Hornet thing?

Mr. Lowrey: The what?

Student #2: The Spelling Hornet?

Mr. Lowrey: Oh, No.... You mean that thing, for prom?

Student #1: Yeah

Teacher: Noooooo....

[Scene switches to teacher interview with Mr. Lowrey]

Mr. Lowrey: It's a spelling bee of slang words that the teachers try to spell words that the kids use everyday. So we hear these words, but we don't know what they mean.

[Scene switches back to classroom]

Mr. Lowrey: Alright.... give me an example... before I

Student #3: It's like..... whoady.

Mr. Lowrey: Like what?

[Scene switches back to teacher interview with Mr. Lowrey]

Mr. Lowrey: The kids are excited about it. They are going to 'coach' me

[laughs]

[Scene switches back to classroom]

Mr. Lowrey: How do you spell that?

Student #3: W-h-

Mr. Lowrey: Hold on *[turns to the board]* W-h

Student #3: o

Mr. Lowrey: o

Student #3: How do you think it's spelled? That's the point of the Spelling Hornet.

Mr. Lowrey: *[finishes spelling -a-d-e-e]* whoooooodeee. Like whoadeeee.

Like, 'slow down, Fred.'

[Students laugh]

[Scene switches back to teacher interview with Mr. Lowrey]

Mr. Lowrey: So, ummm, yeah, I'm looking forward to it.

[Scene switches to cheers from the audience in the auditorium. Assistant Principal (AP) walks to the microphone]

Student Judge #1: Your word is bling-bling.

AP: bling-bling *[smiles]*

AP: Could you use that in a sentence, please?

Student Judge #2: Check my bling-bling, yo.

AP: Check my bling-bling, you. [*cough*]

AP: bling-bling. B-l-i-n-g, hyphen, b-l-i-n-g.

[*bell dings*]

Student Judge #1: Thank you, but I'm sorry, there is no hyphen. It's just b-l-i-n-g –space-b-l-i-n-g.

[*Crowd ahs, AP mumbles*]

Student Judge #1: Your word is soulja

Mr. Lowrey: As in street soldier?

[*Fades to PE teacher, Coach Webb, walking to microphone, getting ready to spell. Fades to football coach at the microphone*]

FB Coach: Sha, sha, Shiesty?

[*Transitions to next teacher*]

Teacher2: Ba-dunk-a-dunk?

[*Transitions to next teacher*]

Mr. Lowrey: Origin, please?

[*Transitions to next teacher*]

FB Coach: Could you use that in a sentence?

Student Judge #2: Watch up, shawty, that boy is shiesty.

[*Transition to Coach Webb at microphone*]

Coach Webb: Can you spell it for me?

[*Crowd laughs, transition to next teacher*]

Mr. Elste: H-o-m-e-y

[*Transitions to Coach Webb*]

Coach Webb: N-u-n-y-a

Student Judge #2: That is correct.

[*Coach Webb raises hands in excitement*]

[*Transition to FB coach clapping hands in excitement*]

[*Transition to Coach Webb at microphone*]

Coach Webb: F-o-apostrophe-s-h-i-z-z-l-e

[*Bell dings*]

Student Judge #1: No, I'm sorry, there's no apostrophe.

Coach Webb: Ugh

[*FB Coach misses a word*]

[*Teacher #2 misses a word*]

[*Screen announces Final Round*]

Student Judge #1: Your word is hootie-hoo

Mr. Elste: Would you define that please?

Student Judge #1: A shout or a call to see what is going on or a call to one of your friends or associates that the police are nearby.

Mr. Elste: H-o-o-t-i-e-space-h-o-o

Student Judge #1: correct.

[*Crowd claps*]

Student Judge #1: Mr. Lowrey

[*Mr. Lowrey walks to the mic*]

Student Judge #1: Your word is wildn'

Mr. Lowrey: [*writes out the word on his nametag*] W-i-l-d-n-apostrophe

Student Judge #1: That's correct

[*Crowd claps*]

Student Judge #1: Mr. Elste, your word is falsifyin'

Mr. Elste: Falsifying. F-a-l-s-i-f-y-i-n-g

[*Bell dings*]

Student Judge #1: I'm sorry, there is no g. There is an apostrophe.

Student Judge #1: Mr. Lowrey, just so everyone knows, if you get this one correct, you will be the winner. Your word isyour word is shawty.

Student Judge #2: [*pronounces more authentically*] shawty.

Mr. Lowrey: [*nods head*] shawty. Uh....is the origin, um, from the dirty south, in Atlanta?

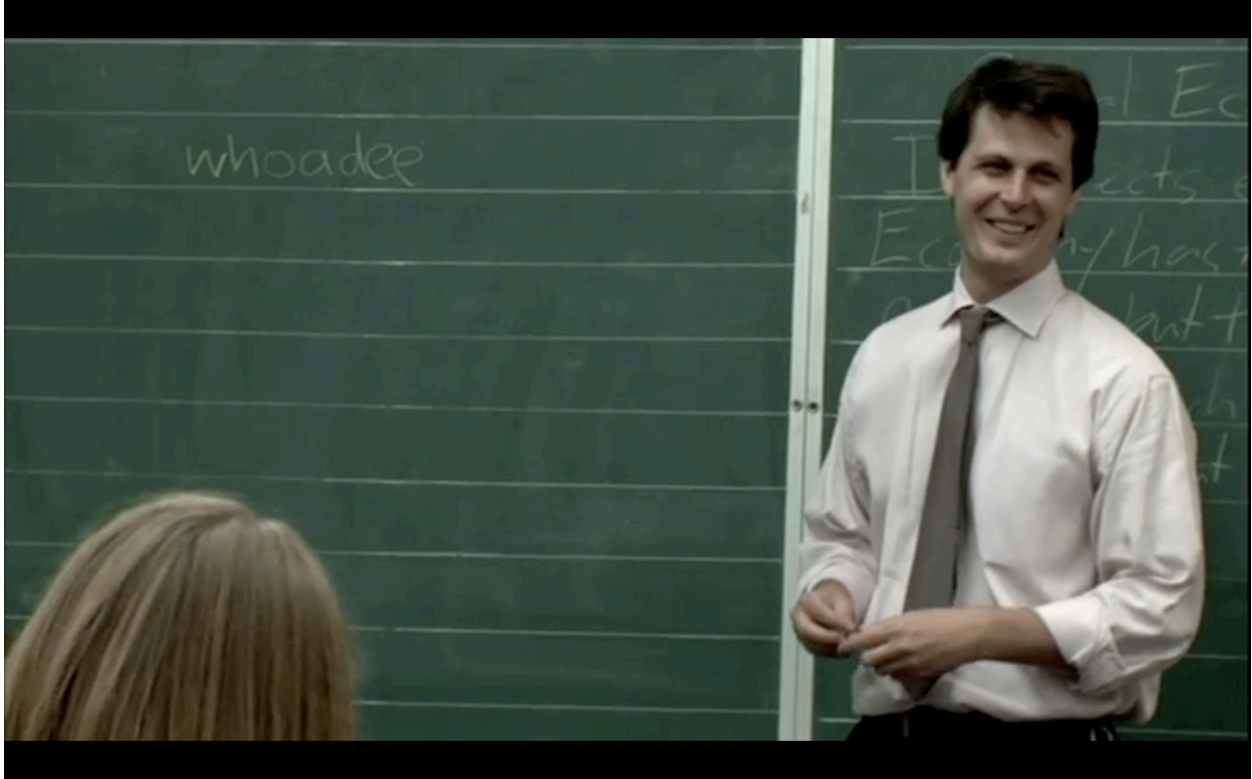
Student Judge #1: Yes ,sir, that is correct.

Mr. Lowrey: [*coughs*] Then, that would be, s-h-a-w-t-y.

Student Judge #1: That is correct.

[Crowd explodes in applause. Other contestants congratulate Mr. Lowrey.]

Figure 27-©Chalk



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The components of literacy represented in the dialogue of the scene include the ability to spell aloud in a spelling bee and the ability to use slang. The students are hosting a Spelling Hornet for teachers, a competition which uses slang words for the teachers to spell. Although there are only short sections of dialogue before the Spelling Hornet occurs, the conversation Mr. Lowrey has with his students is important in setting up the purpose for the Spelling Hornet.

Mr. Lowrey, in his first year of teaching, has tried desperately to connect with his students. When the students ask him if he is going to participate, then offer to coach him as a contestant in the competition, Mr. Lowrey feels as though he has made great strides in the relationship he has with his students. To honor the new appreciation they have for each other, Mr. Lowrey really wants to do well in the competition and takes it very seriously.

The analysis of the connotations of the dialogue Mr. Lowrey and the students at the beginning of the scene symbolize the clear division that exists between the traditional language used in schools and the slang language used by many students in their everyday informal speech and writing. By hosting the Spelling Hornet, the students are symbolically asking for their ‘language’, their dialect, to be appreciated by the teachers.

Importance of Literacy

The dialogue discusses the importance of literacy by highlighting the differences in the literacies of the teachers and the literacies of the students in the Spelling Hornet. Although some of the teachers participate in the Spelling Hornet as a joke, others take their participation seriously, including Mr. Lowrey, who studies the origins of the slang words.

The dialogue in this scene perpetuates the myth that ‘being literate’ can mean different things to different communities and situations.

How Literacy is Expressed

Literacy is expressed in the dialogue of the scene as the ability to appreciate and understand that the definition of a good speller is dependent upon the context of the words that one is spelling.

Role of Teacher, Student, and School

The traditional roles of teacher and student are completely turned about during this scene. The teachers in this scene are the students. First, they motivate their teachers to participate in an activity that will require their participation and practice before and after school. Secondly, they work with their teachers as tutors, helping them understand the slang words and the origins of the words. Finally, they assess their teachers’ learning of the material in a school-wide Spelling Hornet.

Likewise, the traditional role of the student is given to the teachers of the scene. Most of the teachers in the school do not use slang to teach their courses or to communicate in their daily lives. Therefore, to be willing to make themselves vulnerable, they must step outside of their comfort zone in order to challenge themselves and to be challenged by the students. Because the curriculum is so foreign to the teachers, the students must find ways to help them connect the slang words to their own lives, through discussions of word origins and the use of the words in sentences.

The dialogue of the scene symbolizes the transformation that can take place when teachers are willing to switch roles with their students, become learners themselves, and allow the students to gain confidence in their abilities as well. By ‘walking in each others’ shoes’, each finds a mutual respect for the work that is consistently done by the other as well as recognizes the challenges that being a teacher or being a student brings to the classroom.

The school does not participate actively in the dialogue, although it’s permission to host the Spelling Hornet event can be interpreted as its support of the activity.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene takes place in several different locations. Because the director shoots the film in a documentary style, there are several ‘confessional’ type scenes with the main characters, in this instance with Mr. Lowrey. There is also a scene in the classroom with Mr. Lowrey’s students. The remainder of the scene takes place in the school auditorium.

The cinematic techniques used in the film focus on the Spelling Hornet, the major component of literacy in the scene. The camera uses close-ups of all of the contestants as they spell the slang words for the competition and give brief reactionary shots from the students and teachers in the audience.

Importance of Literacy

The importance of literacy emphasized by the use of the cinematic techniques can be narrowed down to the conversation that Mr. Lowrey has with his students and to the confessional clip of Mr. Lowrey expressing his hesitation and excitement for the upcoming

competition. This clip is interwoven into the Spelling Hornet competition to show how Mr. Lowrey was encouraged to participate, but felt it was important to support the students and make a good-faith effort to participate in something in which they wanted him to participate.

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

With a majority of close-up shots of students and teacher spellers, the role of the students and teachers is emphasized. The shot of Mr. Lowrey speaking in front of his class is juxtaposed with the shot of the students leading the Spelling Hornet.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

The body language of Mr. Lowrey is very important in this scene. At the beginning of the scene, Mr. Lowrey is standing in front of his class, body straight in a nervous posture indicative of his teaching style. Next, Mr. Lowrey is shown in the confessional of the documentary, more relaxed in his demeanor, with shoulders more loose as he discusses his plan to participate in the Spelling Hornet. Transitioning to the Spelling Hornet, Mr. Lowrey's posture remains tense. When he wins the Spelling Hornet, his shoulders immediately relax and the demeanor he used in the confessional clip comes back, relaxed and confident.

The body language of Mr. Lowrey represents a teacher who desperately wants to find a way to fit in at the school and for his students to like him. Mr. Lowrey does not seem comfortable leading a classroom in a teacher-centered format and seems more at ease when the students are able and/or willing to take some ownership of their learning.

The body language of the other teachers in the Spelling Hornet is also remarkable in that all portrayed themselves as nervous and tense during the activity. All of the teachers were taken out of their comfort zones as the leader of their classrooms and put on display for the entire student body. Much like teachers try to make connections to their students, the students in this school were trying to also make a connection to their teachers with the activity.

Commodity Codes

Mr. Lowrey is dressed in a long sleeve shirt and slacks during the scene. In the tradition of a professional teacher who takes his or her job seriously, Mr. Lowrey always looks presentable in this scene. His dress can be compared in contrast to the other teachers of the Spelling Hornet competition, all of who seem slightly less professional in their dress. Their casual styles seem to be part of their personalities and help set Mr. Lowrey apart from the others.

The students of Harrison High School are represented as a diverse suburban school in Texas, with a variety of styles and personalities.



Figure 28-©Chalk

**“I don’t know why it bothered me so much”: A Semiotic Analysis of
*Freedom Writers***

Table 15 *Freedom Writers* Semiotic Analysis

| Semiotic | Representations of Literacy | | | | | | | | | Literacy Pedagogy | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------|------|--------------------|-------------|------|
| | Components of Literacy | | | Importance of Literacy | | | How is literacy expressed | | | Role of the teacher | | | Role of the student | | | Role of the school | | |
| | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth | Denotation | Connotation | Myth |
| Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cinematic Techniques | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Semiotic Codes | Body Codes | | | | | | Commodity Codes | | | | | | Behavior Codes | | | | | |

Dialogue [with my explanatory notes included in bracketed italics]

Subtitle: Freshman Year, Spring Semester

[Music starts]

[Mrs. Gruwell motions for a student to take off their baseball cap inside the museum]

Student 1 voice-over narration: At the beginnin' of the tour, they give you a card with a child's picture on it. You can find out who they were and what camp they was in to. And at the end of the tour, you can find out if they survived. I got a little girl from Italy.

Student 1 voice-over narration: My little boy died. He got off the train and they killed him. I don't know why it bothered me so much. . .I'd seen death all my life. But this little boy....was only five.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Dialogic Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

This scene provides no dialogue between individuals. It does allow a brief insight into one student's thoughts as he recounts the day in a narrator, voice-over style. The voice-over narration of the student's thoughts carries with it the connotation that the visit to the Holocaust museum is a moving experience. The sights and sounds of the things that they are witnessing overwhelm students. They do not converse with each other, but they are sharing in the experience nonetheless.

Importance of Literacy

The interactions that the students have among each other do not involve dialogue. However, the use of visual media in the museum involves the assigning of a card to the visitor in the museum that they carry with them. At the end of the tour, students are able to read what happens to the individual. The connotation of the importance of literacy in this scene is that if a person feels an emotional connection to the topics they are learning about, they will have a deeper desire or motivation to continue to learn more. Only until then, the material is abstract.

Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of the Cinematic Techniques Used for Representations of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Components of Literacy

The scene begins with a broad, encompassing outdoor shot of the entire Holocaust memorial building. The shot is well-lit and open. Next, there is a close-up shot on the memorial's name at the entrance of the building.

Once inside the building, there is a minimum of lighting. There are many close-up shots of students' faces. The camera scans the room slowly. The computer screens and videos provide the backdrop and the majority of the lighting in the scene. The visual media being used is in the background of almost every shot.

There are several slow scans of the room that leave time for the viewer to experience the museum's presentations on the walls and screens. The power of media is apparent in this scene, especially in the lack of dialogue. The lighting of the museum symbolizes the importance of the Holocaust, but it also highlights the interactions the students are having with the media and the connections they are making with it.

Importance of Literacy

Front and center in several shots are the photographs of Holocaust individuals and locations. Students view the scenes in close-up shots.

How Literacy is Expressed

The close-up shots of the propaganda posters, photographs, and information that scrolls on computer screens shows the variety of ways in which visual media expresses information.

Students can read about the Holocaust and write about their experiences with the written word, but visual media allows the students to experience the events of the Holocaust in a much more effective way. Watching the pictures of the concentration camps and the victims behind the documentary

Role of the Student, Teacher, and School

Miss Gruwell is only shown one time in the video and the school is not playing a role in the scene. The students are primarily shown in close up shots, highlighting the importance of their interactions with the museum media displays. The shots of their interactions connote that they are taking ownership of their learning in the museum.

Figure 29-©Freedom Writers



Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Semiotic Codes Used in the Representation of Literacy and Literacy Pedagogy

Body Codes

There are many slow movements within the scene. The students stand close together at the exhibits. The teacher uses nonverbal cues to tell a student to remove a hat. Students stand, sit, and walk next to each other while concentrating on the exhibits. They have solemn expressions on their faces. They are quiet, respectful, observant, and engaged.

The intimacy of the students in their nonverbal interactions shows the importance of the emotional connections the students are having with the exhibits. Indicates a level of

respect and rapport for learning/literacy. They are showing a reverence for historical situations and the opportunity they have. They are invested in the material and the connections that they have made between them and the individual on their card.

Literacy knows no barriers. The body movements, facial expressions and gestures of the students shows that they feel accountable for the knowledge they are being given and that they feel the pressure of the responsibility of making sure that they remember every moment of their experience.

Commodity Codes

The teacher is dressed nicely, wearing a string of pearls. The students are also dressed nicely. They are in ‘church dress’ and are showing respect for the opportunity they have been given to visit the museum. Students did not dress as they typically dress at school.

Behavioral Codes

The scene takes place in a museum, so there the traditional teacher/student protocol is not observed in the scene.



Figure 30-©Freedom Writers

CHAPTER 5 - Results

Data Processing and Preparation

After the semiotic analyses of each individual scene in the study corpus were completed, it was time to begin thinking differently about the study corpus. More than individual scenes from individual movies over the past seventy-five years, the study corpus as a whole represents a deliciously complex snapshot of the evolution of literacy and pedagogy during the past century. In order to process the data for common elements and emerging themes, it was necessary to watch the study corpus in its entirety several times in a row to get an idea of where to begin the coding process. I also reviewed the dialogue from the scenes as well as the semiotic analyses to determine the order in which the materials would be coded.

I chose to use the computer software program HyperResearch to assist me in the organization of the open coding and axial coding of the multiple sources of data from the study corpus. I began by uploading the video clips from each movie to the program for analysis, to be used mostly for immediate reference to the transcribed dialogue and semiotic analyses for each. I then converted each film's document file into a text file (.txt) in order to upload the dialogue and semiotic analyses into the HyperResearch program. Once these steps were completed, I began my initial coding of each film's scene of the study corpus, beginning with the video clip itself, the dialogue, and my semiotic analyses of each scene.

As I proceeded through each film, many codes continued to resurface, while others appeared during the process of the coding. A Master Code List of fifty-eight initial codes was created, with over 1,100 instances of the codes being recorded. I then examined each of the fifty-eight initial codes for consistency, pulling up each code's instances at once through the software's report option. Using the frequency report, I then studied and selected those codes that most frequently appeared in the coding of the data (Appendix F).

Open Coding

Twelve different codes emerged from the video clips, dialogue, and semiotic analyses of the study corpus. Descriptions of each of the twelve codes as well as a few brief examples

of the data to support the codes provide the scaffolding for the emerging axial codes and grounded theory.

| Open Codes | # of instances |
|---|----------------|
| Intrinsic Motivation | 66 |
| Passion | 97 |
| Empowerment | 53 |
| Outside Influences | 29 |
| School Criticism | 22 |
| Peer Influence | 31 |
| Connective Tissue | 108 |
| Critical Thinking | 82 |
| Teachers as Instructional Leader | 90 |
| Traditional Literacies | 38 |
| New Literacies | 23 |
| Expressions of Literacy | 90 |

Table 16 Open Codes

Intrinsic Motivation

The category of intrinsic motivation refers to specific teacher and student behaviors detailed in the dialogue and semiotic analyses of the scenes. For example, in 187, Mr. Garfield works with Rita on her essay in the school library.

Mr. Garfield: [*laughing*] This really is a good essay. You put out a lot of work. It shows.

Rita: Thanks. It comes from the heart. You think I could be? A writer?

By pointing out some of the good characteristics of her writing and giving her some helpful suggestions on how to improve it, Rita works hard to make it better, earning praise from Mr. Garfield and a sense of pride for the great work she has accomplished.

Mr. Escalante’s students in *Stand and Deliver* are motivated and engaged by the strategies he uses. Although his manner of connecting with the students is quite different

than one might expect of a teacher, his understanding of the culture provides him an opportunity to provide students with a safe environment to take risks.

Mr. Escalante: Okay, okay, okay [*calls on student raising hand*] How many girlfriends does each gigolo have? Anybody? You think you have it Einstein? You think you gonna do it?

Tito: Juan is x, Carlos is y, Pedro is x plus y. Is Pedro bisexual or what?

Mr. E: I have a terrible feeling about you.

[*Tito mouths a kiss to Mr. Escalante*]

Student #2: [*grabs Mr. Escalante's hand*] Five x equals Juan's girlfriends?

Mr. Escalante: Your good now, but you are going to end up barefoot, pregnant, and in the kitchen.

Student #3: Can you get negative girlfriends?

Mr. Escalante: No, just negative boyfriends. Please forgive them for they know not what they do.

Through his unique connections with the students, Mr. Escalante challenges the students who, in turn, want to meet the challenges he provides because they feel more confident in their ability to tackle a difficult class.

Passion

This category emerged from the dialogue and semiotic analyses of the scenes and was not something that was anticipated as a potential theme. Teachers, students, and school officials in each scene all showed a passion in various representations.

For example, in *Conrack*, Mr. Conroy exhibits frustration and anger at being fired from a job he loved and being kept away from the students who desperately need an advocate. Mr. Conroy, driving around Bueford with his speaker system and microphone, lets the citizens know he is frustrated with the blatant racism being shown to his former students and many like them in many of the small communities in South Carolina.

Mr. Conroy: It's true this town still has its diehards and nigger-haters, but they grow older and crankier with each passing day. When Bueford digs another 400 holes in their plentiful graveyards, deposits there the rouged and elderly corpses,

and covers them with the sand and low country soil, then the Old South will be silenced and not heard from again.

In *To Sir, With Love*, Mr. Thackeray also shows his passion for his teaching and the work he does with students by expecting nothing less than the very best:

Mr. Thackeray: Example, there are two ways to enter a room. One is like an adult, a lady with dignity. The other is like a brat. Miss Blanchard has just shown us the second way. Perhaps you would like to demonstrate the first.
[Miss Blanchard glares at Mr. Thackeray, looks around the room, gets up, walks to the door, and comes back in to the classroom quietly]

Miss Blanchard: I'm sorry I'm late.

[Miss Blanchard sits down at her desk. The other students whisper in amazement]

Encouraging his students to act like adults, Mr. Thackeray offers them the opportunity to discuss their emotions as adults. He is matter-of-fact with his students, respecting them by telling them the truth and treating them as they want to be treated.

Empowerment

The category of empowerment emerged from the scenes, especially in relation to the students who questioned whether or not they truly had a choice in their educations and their lives. In the study, the idea of choice was first introduced in the scene from *Teachers*.

Mr. Jurel: Alright. But you just got kicked out of your social studies class. So, I'll give you have a choice. You take my class. Or you can take study hall.

Eddie: I'll take study hall.

Mr. Jurel: Yeah, my class, third period, I'll see you there tomorrow. That's all.

This scene is an example of anti-empowerment. Although Mr. Jurel pretended that Eddie had a choice in the decision to take his class or study hall, he really didn't. Mr. Jurel made the hard decision that Eddie needed his class more than study hall.

The opportunity for students to make choices in their own lives and learning appear continuously throughout the scenes. A symbolic moment of student empowerment occurs in *To Sir, With Love*, when Mr. Thackeray enters back into the classroom. In the scene, Mr.

Thackeray stares at the students, picks up all of the textbooks from his desk, and throws them convincingly in the trashcan:

Mr. Thackeray: Those are out. They are useless to you. I suddenly realized that you are not children, you will be adults in a few weeks, with all the responsibilities that implies. So, from now on, you will be treated as such by me and by each other. As adults . . . responsible adults.

Outside Influences

This category emerged from the scenes because of the many instances of outside influences impacting the teachers and students in the classrooms. The students in Ms. Johnson's classroom in *Dangerous Minds* are insistent that the influences they deal with outside of school impact their ability and desire to learn anything in her class:

Student #7: Man, you don't understand nothin'. You don't come from where we live. You're not bussed here.

Being bussed to a school far away from their neighborhoods, the students feel like strangers in a foreign land. Yet, at the same time, the negative influences of the neighborhoods they come from take away their choices:

Student #7: Man, you come and live in my neighborhood for one week and then YOU tell me if you got a choice.

School Criticism

Examples from the scenes that fit into the category of school criticism emerge from situations in which the teachers or students are working against the status quo. Mr. Keating, in *Dead Poets' Society* encourages his students to rip out the pages of their textbook. As the students are ripping out the pages, he goes into his office to get a trashcan as Mr. McAlester, a teacher at the school, peers into the classroom and bursts into the room upon seeing the vandalism to the books.

Mr. McAlester: What the Hell is going on here?

Mr. Keating:[not hearing Mr. McAlester enter] I don't hear enough Rip!

Mr. McAlester: Mr. Keating.

Mr. Keating: Mr. McAlester

Mr. McAlester: I'm sorry, uh I didn't know you were here.

Mr. Keating: I am.

Mr. McAlester: Ah. So you are. [pauses in an awkward smile] Excuse me.

[Mr. McAlester backs out of the room and shuts the door]

In a few words, Mr. McAlester clearly implied that he was dissatisfied with Mr. Keating's teaching style and the freedoms that the students were experiencing. In his view, learning could not possibly take place.

Peer Influence

The category of peer influence revealed itself in the positive and negative impact that peer influence can have on students in the classrooms.

In *187*, Rita constantly looks over her shoulder during the scene, making sure that she is not seen by any of her friends while she is receiving extra help from Mr. Garfield. She is afraid of what her peers will say and how they will treat her when they realize that she is a good writer and a good student, much different from the expectations her peers have of her.

Positive peer influence is also a powerful theme in the scenes. During the scene in *Stand and Deliver*, Mr. Escalante is guiding his students through solving a complex story problem on the board. Several students attempt to answer the question, but none of them succeed until Ana, a student who has been missing from class, arrives in the doorway.

Ana: X equals Pedro's girlfriends. Five x equals Juan's girlfriends. X minus one equals Carlos's girlfriends. X plus five x plus x minus one equals twenty, so x equals three.

[Class applauds, Ana sits down in desk]

Mr. Escalante: Good to see you.

The positive cheers from her classmates shows the positive learning environment that Mr. Escalante has developed in his classroom and the power that a positive peer reaction can have on learning.

Connective Tissue

The term 'connective tissue' emerged directly from a quote from Mr. Holland in the scene from *Mr. Holland's Opus*. Mr. Holland sits down at his classroom piano to play a song for his students:

Mr. Holland: What's this called?

Class: Lover's Concerto

Mr. Holland: Who wrote it?

Student3: The Toys

Mr. Holland: Wrong

Mr. Holland: That was Minuet in G and it was written by Johann Sebastian Bach.

[Mr. Holland begins to play Minuet in G]

Mr. Holland: Do you hear it?

[Students nod, some take notes]

Mr. Holland: Bum bum bum bum bum.....

Mr. Holland: And he wrote it in 1725. They are both prime examples of the Ionian scale. Now listen, and see if you can hear the connective tissue between what I just played and this.

[Mr. Holland begins playing Rock and Roll].

The ability for teachers to help students make connections to and between texts is a common theme in many of the scenes of the study corpus. Depending on the type of text, each teacher asks critical questions to help students bridge their understandings to the new information being presented. In *Up the Down Staircase*, Miss Barrett introduces *Tale of Two Cities* to her inner-city classroom. Miss Barrett asks the critical question of whether it is the best of times or the worst of times:

Lenny: It's only the worst.

Miss Barrett: Why is it only the worst, Lenny?

Lenny: 'cause that's what it is.

Miss Barrett: Well, perhaps it would help us if you could tell us what you mean by the word 'worst'?

Lenny: poor

Lenny was able to connect the text to his self and the world around him, helping build scaffolding for a greater understanding of the text as they begin to read it.

Critical Thinking

The category of critical thinking was developed as the dialogue of each scene was analyzed. There were many instances of students critically thinking and analyzing the

curriculum and their lives. In *To Sir, With Love*, the students begin to question Mr. Thackeray's new standards for the students:

Mr. Thackeray: Miss Pegg?

Pegg: What about Mr. Weston, sir? His shoes are never tied and his hair is never brushed. And his ears a mess, isn't it.

[Students agree, nod]

Mr. Thackeray: Mr. Weston is not your teacher. We won't discuss him. I'm the one to criticize if I fail to maintain the standards I ask of you.

Denham: That's not fair.

Mr. Thackeray: Sir. Or Mr. Thackeray. Didn't you understand?

[Walking up to Denham]

Denham: That's not fair. . . . sir.

Mr. Thackeray: I agree. But that's just an example of the many things you'll have to put up with when you are an adult. You'll just have to take it.

Miss Ronberry, in *The Corn is Green*, also encourages students to think critically and to question things that confuse them. When an elderly student stops her at the end of a class session to ask "Where's Shakespeare?" it becomes clear that Miss Moffitt and Miss Ronberry have created an atmosphere that allows students to feel comfortable asking questions that have perplexed them for many years. The life-long learner continues to question his own understanding of the world.

Teacher as Instructional Leader

The role of the teacher emerged as a category because of the importance of a teacher as a central character in the selection of the study corpus, and because of the importance of the teacher's role in each of the selected scenes of the study corpus. The scenes provided quite a variety in the types of teaching activities and the different roles that teachers can play as leaders in the classroom.

Mr. Chips, in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, provides the first example of a traditional teacher in the study corpus. While the school is surrounded by a battle of World War I, Mr. Chips takes charge of the classroom and insists that students get to their proper places. Miss Moffitt, in *The Corn is Green*, also exhibits traditional traits as a teacher, although her

willingness to start a school in her personal home also shows that she is willing to think outside the traditional box.

Mr. Lowrey, in the scene from *Chalk*, represents the nontraditional roles that teachers can play in the classroom. Mr. Lowrey switches places with his students and becomes a contestant in the school-sponsored Spelling Hornet, a spelling bee for teachers based on slang words and phrases.

Traditional Literacies

The category of traditional literacies emerged in many of the scenes. The traditional canon of literature appears in several scenes of the film and is taught in traditional ways. In *Up the Down Staircase*, Miss Barrett asks Jerry to read from Tale of Two Cities and then discusses the literary elements of the text:

Miss Barrett: [*points to Jerry*] Jerry, Jerry will you read the first paragraph aloud please.

[*Miss Barrett walks to the side of the room to stand*]

Jerry: [*standing up*] 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. It was the epic of belief. It was the epic of futility. It was the season of light. It was the season of darkness. It was the spring of hope. It was the winter of despair. We had everything before us, we had nothing before us. We are all going directly to heaven. We were all going the other way.'

Miss Barrett: Yes. Dickens was saying something very simple by the use of contrast or opposites. Uh, we call this [*writing on the board*] antithesis. Instead of saying 'it was a crazy, mixed up period', he says 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times', but, the most interesting part of the paragraph is still to come. [*pointing to student*] Would you read the next part, please?

New Literacies

The category of new literacies emerged as it became clear that there were more types of literacies evident in the scenes than just the traditional literacies. In *Conrack*, Mr. Conroy taught more than the traditional reading and writing of school:

Mr. Conroy: I also try to teach them to embrace life openly, to reflect on its mysteries, and to reject its cruelties.

In *Chalk*, the Spelling Hornet is a spelling bee for teachers. The words used in the Spelling Hornet are slang words, words that the teenagers use in their daily lives. The spelling and punctuation of the words do not follow traditional rules and patterns.

Student Judge #1: Thank you, but I'm sorry, there is no hyphen. It's just b-l-i-n-g -space-b-l-i-n-g.

Student Judge #1: Your word is soulja

Student Judge #1: I'm sorry, there is no g. There is an apostrophe.

The literacies being portrayed in the scenes continue to show diversity in their definitions.

Expressions of Literacy

This code emerged in response to the multitude of ways in which literacy is expressed in the scenes of the study corpus. Literacy is expressed as writing with voice in *187*, singing a hymn in unison in *The Corn is Green*, and differentiating between an Ionian and Dorian scale in *Mr. Holland's Opus*. Also in *Mr. Holland's Opus*, as well as *The Ron Clark Story*, music provides the connection to understanding traditional curriculum. In *Freedom Writers* and *Blackboard Jungle*, two films more than fifty years apart, both use visual and media literacy.

Results

Using the research questions of the study as a framework for the analysis of the open codes, four themes emerged as the axial codes for which I have categorized the data—Self, Beyond Self, Critical Connections, and Representations of Literacy.

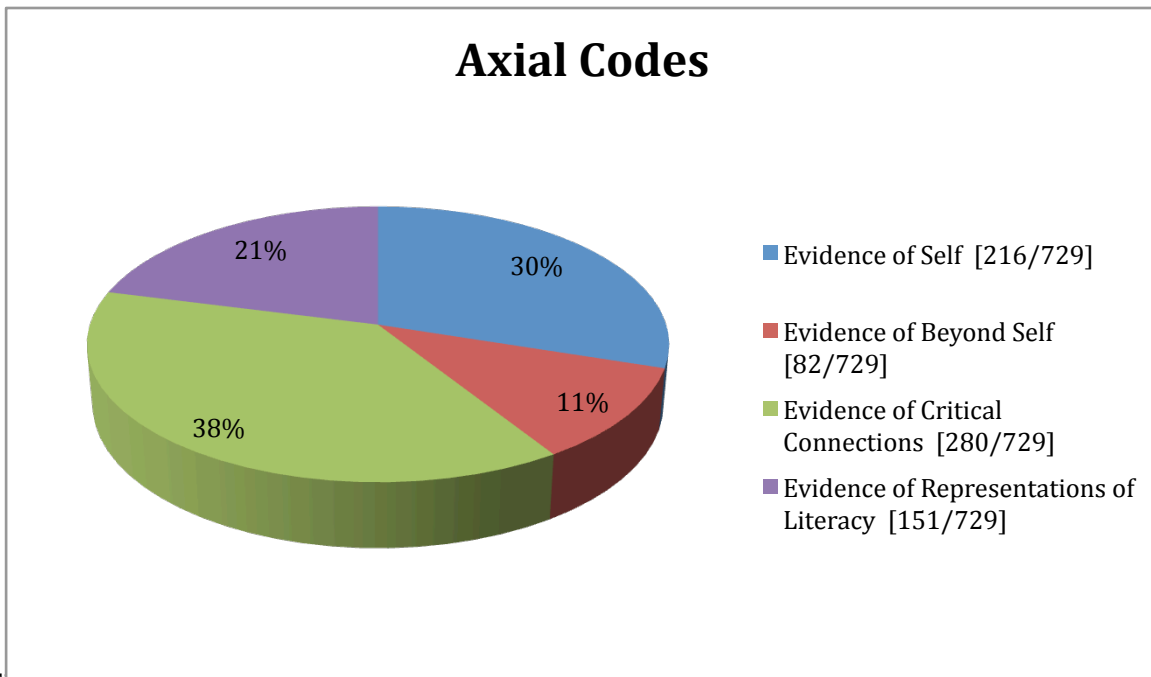


Figure 51 Axial Codes

Self

What are the role of the student and the role of the teacher as literacy pedagogy is advanced? Eight separate categories within three open codes contributed to the understanding of the importance of Self in the scenes of the study corpus. Of the 729 codes assigned to the open codes of the study, 30% (216/729) of the codes can be attributed to the larger group of Self. First, the importance of Intrinsic Motivation (31%, 66/216) revealed itself in a majority of the film scenes. When demonstrating examples of motivation and engagement, the students in the films were shown to be more successful. Secondly, the impact of Passion (45%, 97/216) on the role of the student and the role of the teacher emerged in the different emotions experienced by the teachers and students in the scene. Enthusiasm, anger, humor, encouragement, and apathy all contributed to the passionate responses given by the teachers and students in the scene. Finally, 24% (53/216) of the codes attributed to the larger group of Self can be identified as Empowerment. When students and teachers demonstrated that they had a choice or lack of choice in learning taking place in their classrooms, the connections to the curriculum were visibly impacted.

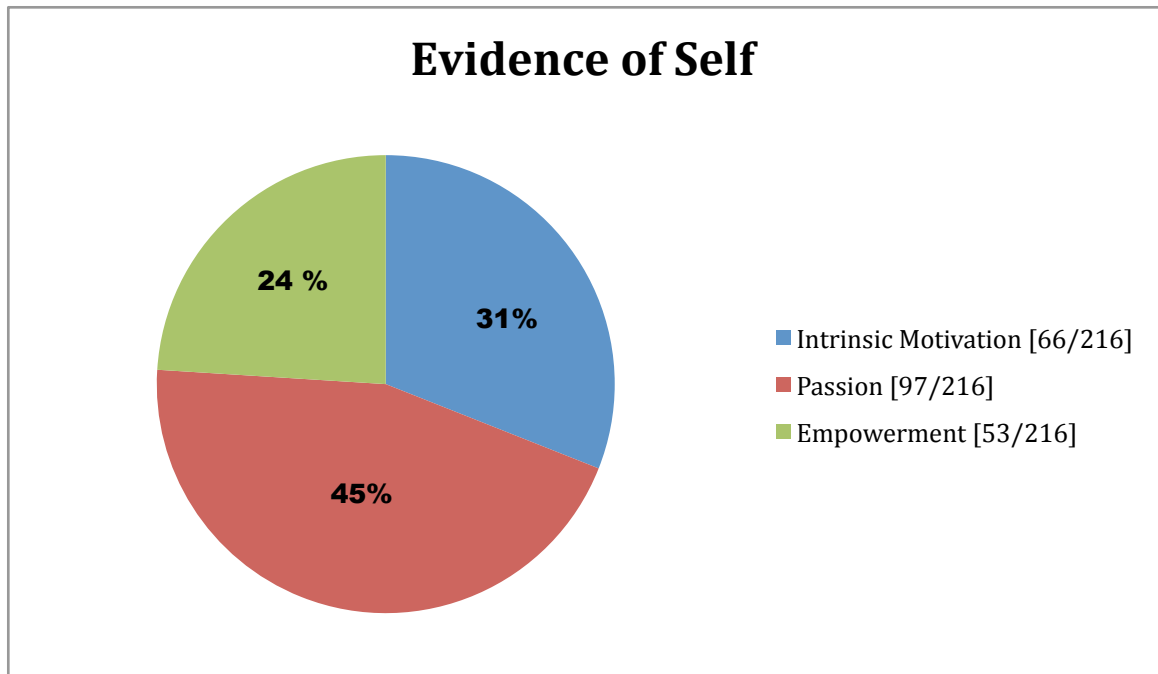


Figure 32 Evidence of Self

Evidence of Self in School Film of the 1930's

In *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, Mr. Chips has a genuine concern for his students' well being during the ongoing battle taking place nearby and tries to do what he knows to do best: teach his class. Amid the bombs blasting, Mr. Chips tries to encourage the students to go about business as usual.

Mr. Chips: Peter?

Peter: Yes, sir!

Mr. Chips: [Bomb blast] Turn to page 40 and begin at the bottom line, would you?

[The shrill of an incoming bomb startles the boys. The walls shake violently and the students jump under their desks. The lights swing from the ceilings.]

[Mr. Chips looks to the sky in disgust. Peter looks up from his desk.]

[Peter stands up. The sound of bombs exploding continues.]

Peter: [In Latin] This was kind of fighting [In Latin] in which the Germans busied themselves. [Bombs explode]

Mr. Chips is helping the students take control of the situation by helping the students to channel their nervousness in to the lesson. He uses humor to set their minds at ease and encourages them to see the irony of the Latin text in the context of the world situation:

Mr. Chips: But, believe me, you can't judge the importance of things by the [bomb blast] by the noise they make [students laugh at the irony][Bomb blasts get closer, students grab their desks]

Mr. Chips: Here, now, at this particular moment in history, [bomb blast] it may seem to you that the, uh, [bomb blast] the affairs of Julius Caesar in Gaul two thousand years ago [bomb blast] are somewhat uh [bomb blast] of somewhat secondary importance. [smiling]

The students in the classroom, although somewhat distracted, seem genuinely interested in the Latin text.

Evidence of Self in School Film of the 1940's

In the brief scene from *The Corn is Green*, there are several examples of the 'self' in the cinematic techniques and semiotic codes. The scene focuses on many of the students sitting in the class, singing a hymn together as a class. While a few students seem distracted or unengaged, the majority of the students appear as though they are in absolute bliss. The students truly enjoyed singing together and learning together in the classroom. A student replies when the song finishes, "Please Miss Ronberry, can we have some more?" This intrinsic drive for the students to want to continue to improve is evidence that they have been empowered to take ownership of their learning and their lives.

Evidence of Self in School Film of the 1950's

Within the study corpus, it is in *Blackboard Jungle* that we begin to see more of the student identification of 'self'. The students portrayed in the scene become more empowered to participate openly in their learning. The motivation of the students in the scene is a direct result of Mr. Dadier's lesson and the scaffolding he created to bridge the film clip to what the students already understood about equality issues. During the film clip, the students are attentive and engaged. It's the first time a teacher has used the 'visual arts' to stimulate their thinking, providing a stimulus for the motivation and engagement that the students have been lacking.

Also important in the representation of ‘self’ in the scene is their engagement in the student-driven discussion. The students in the classroom have not had the opportunity to express their views or opinions in this manner before, and yet, the students are very respectful of each other’s views. Mr. Dadier and the students take turns talking after the Jack and the Beanstalk film clip ends. Mr. Dadier prompts the students to participate in a discussion about the film, calling on specific students, and allowing students to interact throughout the conversation with one another. The students participate in a debate back and forth, some of them somewhat passionately, about the meaning of the clip and connecting it to their personal lives. Mr. Dadier redirects the students when needed and calls on students who have not been participating or have not been able to put in their thoughts because other students have dominated the conversation. Mr. Dadier is visibly excited when the students take the lead in the conversation, showing that the conversation is going where he hoped it would go:

Mr. Dadier: Now we are getting somewhere. Now, all of your lives, your gonna hear stories...about what some guy tells ya, what you see in books, in magazines, on television and radio. What you read in the newspapers. But if you could just examine the story, look for the real meaning, and most of all, fellas, if you could just, just learn to think for yourself...

Evidence of Self in School Film of the 1960’s

In the school films of the 1960’s within the study corpus, we again see a stronger presence of ‘self’ in the selected scenes. Mr. Thackeray, in *To Sir, With Love*, realizes in a weak moment of his teaching that he must meet the needs of each individual in his classroom. In doing so, he realizes that the curriculum he had planned for the class is no longer relevant:

Mr. Thackeray: Those are out. They are useless to you. I suddenly realized that you are not children, you will be adults in a few weeks, with all the responsibilities that implies. So, from now on, you will be treated as such by me and by each other. As adults . . . responsible adults. [Mr. Thackeray walks among the student desks]

Mr. Thackeray realizes in a critical moment that the skills his students will need after they graduate cannot be found in the reading of the textbooks and the lecturing he had been

doing. He realizes the most important way to develop the literacies of his students would be to respect the fact that the students will need a different set of skills in order to be successful in their futures. Mr. Thackeray also announces that he will insist that the ladies in the room be referred to as ‘Miss’ and that the men in the room will be referred to by their surnames, quite a departure from the status quo in the school. By showing the students the respect of an adult, in turn he gains the respect of the students and a respect for what he is trying to teach them about life.

Mr. Thackeray also allows students the opportunity to feel empowered in their learning:

Mr. Thackeray: Next, we are going to be reasonable with each other. We are just going to talk, you and I. You are going to listen without interruption, and when I am finished, one of you may have your say without interruption.

Student: [raises hand and is called on] What are we going to talk about, sir?

Mr. Thackeray: About life, survival, love, death, sex, marriage, rebellion, anything you want.

Likewise, in *Up the Down Staircase*, Miss Barrett fosters empowerment in her students and tries to gain the respect of her students by empathizing with their text-to-self connections. The students in Miss Barrett’s classroom are from a diverse, urban area. Miss Barrett’s question, “Can we say this is true today, the best of times, the worst of times”, brings forth many emotional responses from each student’s personal experiences. While mostly apathetic at the beginning, the students passionately describe why their lives are “the worst of times”. The students are thoroughly engaged in the conversation, even to the point of being physically descriptive in their responses to Miss Barrett’s questions and the responses of their peers.

Evidence of Self in School Film of the 1970’s

In *Conrack*, the scene chosen for analysis does not have Mr. Conroy interacting with his students. Instead, Mr. Conroy is talking about his students and the numbers of injustices being committed against them. The scene does not show the students being intrinsically motivated or being empowered to learn. Rather, Mr. Conroy, in his description of the learning that has taken place in his classroom, refer to the way his students were motivated and empowered.

Playing the part of his students' voices, Mr. Conroy shows the anger that he and his students feel at being broken apart. Mr. Conroy, in his quest to encourage his students to reflect on their life experiences, made the status quo quite uncomfortable. Helping his students find their identity, their selves, in such a racist community caused too many people to doubt his motives and made uncomfortable for them the possibility that "the world is very different now."

Evidence of Self in School Film of the 1980's

In the films of the 1980's, we are introduced to a wide range of representations of 'self' in the scenes of the study. *Teachers* gives us a snapshot of the typical 'struggling student' who is not motivated to do well in school and who does not feel empowered to drive his own learning. Mr. Jurel tries to motivate Eddie by challenging him to take his class, daring him to take it and to not find something interesting in it.

Emotional reactions are at the heart of the scene, with both Mr. Jurel and Eddie showing their anger and frustration with the state of the school and the idea that Eddie could pass a remedial reading class and still not be able to read.

Eddie: [staring at the magazine, putting the magazine down] I don't like this magazine.

Mr. Jurel: What kind of magazine do you like, Eddie?

Eddie: Ah, come on, just lay off...I don't need this.

Mr. Jurel: What you need, Eddie, is another remedial reading class, again. You're not foolin anybody.

Apathy comes through with the dialogue and body codes of Eddie, who is frustrated that despite doing what the school has asked of him (pass a remedial reading class), he is asked to do it yet again.

Eddie: I passed that class! You can't make me take it again. I read fine, so don't you worry about it, okay? Just lay off!

Mr. Jurel also uses his emotions, through dialogue and through body language to show his frustration. He jumps out of his seat, pounds the table, and has a very tense facial expression throughout the scene.

In *Stand and Deliver*, the students exhibit many characteristics of being intrinsically motivated and empowered in their learning. Mr. Escalante leads his students in a cheer at the beginning of class, motivating them to become a part of the learning in the classroom. Most of the students are engaged and motivated by Mr. Escalante's methods:

Mr. Escalante: Okay, okay, okay [calls on student raising hand] How many girlfriends does each gigolo have? Anybody? You think you have it Einstein? You think you gonna do it?

Tito: Juan is x, Carlos is y, Pedro is x plus y. Is Pedro bisexual or what?

Mr. Escalante: I have a terrible feeling about you.

While Mr. Escalante's humor may be troublesome to some, it is the right mix of sarcasm and silliness that hooks in the students to the class activities.

Finally, *Dead Poets' Society* offers yet another example of how the 'self' is represented in the scenes of the study corpus. Mr. Keating motivates his students through humor and giving them the opportunity to become empowered in their learning:

Mr. Keating: [Smiles and nods at the students] Excrement. That's what I think of Mr. Jay Evans Pritchard. [Students stare in amazement] We're not laying pipe, we're talking about poetry. How can you describe poetry like American Bandstand? "Well, I like Byron, I give him a 42, but I can't dance to it." [The students laugh and smile]

The students realize through Mr. Keating's humor that it is okay to have their own opinions about the literature that they are reading. This tremendous empowerment is something that they have never had before in their learning, motivating them to become more engaged in their literature class.

Mr. Keating also motivates the students to not only read poetry and disseminate it the way their textbook author suggests they do, but to truly internalize the poetry and to become empowered to make a difference with it:

Mr. Keating: Keep ripping, gentlemen. This is a battle. A war. And the casualties could be your hearts and souls. [Mr. Dalton throws his pages in the trash can]. Thank you Mr. Dalton. Armies of academics going forward, measuring poetry. No! We will not have that here. No more Mr. Jay Evans Pritchard. [Students finish throwing the introduction away]. Now in my class,

you will learn to think for yourselves again. You will learn to savor words and language. No matter what anyone tells you, words and ideas can change the world.

Evidence of Self in School Film of the 1990's

The school films of the 1990's highlight the importance of motivation in guiding the students to a stronger sense of empowerment and engagement in the classroom. *Mr. Holland's Opus* highlights how quickly a student can go from apathetic to engaged in an activity. Mr. Holland poses a question to the class and is met with no response:

[Students avoid eye contact with Mr. Holland, fidget]

Mr. Holland: Anybody.

Mr. Holland: [laughs] I just wanted to confirm the fact that I've made absolutely no impact on you in the last five months.

Mr. Holland realizes that his lack of impact on his students is because they are not engaged in the music they have been learning in class:

Mr. Holland: Mr. Sullivan?

Sullivan: Yeah?

Mr. Holland: What kind of music do you LIKE to listen to?

Sullivan: Um...

Mr. Holland: Don't be afraid.

Sullivan: Rock and roll?

Mr. Holland: [to another student] What about you?

Student1: Rock and roll.

Mr. Holland: You?

Student2: [smiling broadly] Classical!

Mr. Holland: Brown noser.

Mr. Holland has this dialogue with his students in order to guide them into a discussion of music that they do like and listen to in order to become engaged in the theory of music. Only a few students participate verbally in the dialogue, but all become engaged in the activity once Mr. Holland begins playing Rock and Roll music. Mr. Holland takes the curriculum he

is teaching and connects it to what the students know about music. By mentioning the very idea of Rock and Roll, the students have become a more active stakeholder in their learning.

Unlike *Mr. Holland's Opus*, which takes place beginning in the 1960's, *Dangerous Minds* takes place in the 1990's, bringing about a different set of motivation and engagement issues that represent the 'self' of the students.

In order for Mrs. Johnson to get to the heart of each student and to motivate them to learn, she had to break through the barrier of anger and apathy that existed cohesively throughout the class. The students were angry with Mrs. Johnson because they perceived her as being a snitch. When Mrs. Johnson tries to get them to discuss the poem, they respond with anger and apathy.

Mrs. Johnson: Hey, do you want to talk about this?

Student #5: Whatever floats your boat, teach.

The students react negatively by slumping in their desks or sitting on top of their desks with their backs turned to Mrs. Johnson. Their anger and apathy ranged from the events at school to the every day activities in their neighborhoods. The students felt trapped in their lives, not having the opportunity to make any choices for themselves:

Mrs. Johnson: Well, if ya'll feel that strongly about it, leave the room.

Student #5: What?

Mrs. Johnson: Listen, nobody is forcing you to be here. You have a choice.

You can stay or you can leave.

Student #6: Lady, why are you playin this game? We don't have a choice!

Mrs. Johnson: You don't have a choice? You don't have a choice whether or not you are here?

Student #6: Nah! If we leave, we don't get to graduate. If we stay, we have to put up with you.

Mrs. Johnson: Well that's a choice, isn't it? You have a choice. You either don't graduate or you have to put up with me. It may not be a choice you like, but it is a choice.

Student #7: Man, you come and live in my neighborhood for one week and then YOU tell me if you got a choice.

Ms. Johnson: There are a lot of people that live in your neighborhood who chose not to get on that bus. What do they choose to do? They choose to go out and sell drugs! They choose to go out and kill people! They choose to do a lot of other things. But they chose not to get on that bus. The people that choose to get on that bus, which are you, are the people that are saying 'I will not carry myself down to die, when I go to my grave, my head will be high.' That is a choice. There are no victims in this classroom.

The anger and frustration that each person is feeling in the scene begins to break once Mrs. Johnson breaks through to Emilio with a clear and convincing argument about the choices they have as young adults:

Emilio: Read it again Miss Johnson.

Mrs. Johnson: What?

Emilio: Read those lines you just read again.

Mrs. Johnson: 'I will not go down underground, cause somebody tells me that death is coming around.' Does that mean just what it says?

Emilio: No, it don't mean just what it says. Cause, you wouldn't go under the ground if someone told you death was comin. But you would go into the ground if you were already dead.

Many of the other students in the classroom become immediately engaged in the discussion about the poem once Emilio becomes engaged by it:

Mrs. Johnson: Do the rest of you agree with that?

Callie: Well, I kinda agree. But, I think it just means, he ain'tgonna help death out. It's not like he's going to lay down and wait for it. I think he's going to choose, no, I think he's going to make the choice to die hard.

Mrs. Johnson: [nods] Uh huh....

Student #9: Yeah, I'd agree with that.

Student #8: Yeah, that sounds good to me.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, but what about the rest of it. 'When I go to my grave, my head will be high.' Head will be high. What does that mean?

Student #9:Gonna die with pride.

The students that were initially hostile to Mrs. Johnson's effort to discuss the poem were now participating openly, taking an active role in their own learning.

In the film *187*, student motivation and empowerment takes on a specific identity with Rita, a student that Mr. Garfield is tutoring in writing. Rita is genuinely interested in learning to be a better writer, but is confused as to how she will be perceived by others once it becomes public knowledge that she has a gift for writing.

Mr. Garfield helps build Rita's sense of self by suggesting that she could have a very good chance at being selected as a graduation speaker. Yet, Rita does not feel that she fits the mold of a successful writer, saying "we are all products of our environment." Rita has no hope of ever being anything other than a product of the environment in which she lives, so Mr. Garfield points out that she has a choice in her future, a choice that greatly outweighs the influences of her environment.

Evidence of Self in School Film of the 2000's

The films of the 2000's from the study corpus bring forward unique representations of self in the selected scenes. Through *The Ron Clark Story*, motivation and student engagement become the key to the learning that is taking place in the classroom. Mr. Clark presents a large task for the students to tackle and the class reacts negatively:

Mr. Clark: The Revolutionary War. Industrialism. The Civil War. The Civil Rights Movement. I want you all to get the great big picture of American History. That's why this year, we are going to learn all 42 presidents of the United States in Order.

[Class groans]

When Mr. Clark realizes that the students were not empowered or engaged in the activity, he develops another strategy to tackle the same task, but in a way that will motivate the students to participate:

[Mr. Clark walks to the front of the room and uncovers a CD player. He pushes play and a rap song comes on. He puts on the student hat backwards and starts dancing in front of the room. The students looked surprised]

Mr. Clark: [rapping and doing choreography] Now let's get down to some presidential learnin'

We'll start with George Washington, straight from Mount Vernon.

First president, and commander-in-chief,
Of the Revolutionary War so we could be free.
John Adams was second, Thomas Jefferson, third,
When we fought for independence, their voices were heard.
When in the course of human events, we took a stance and we've been doing it
since.
It's a tribute to the leaders of the USA.
It's the presidents' rap, alright alright, okay okay.
[The students jump up and cheer].

By dancing in front of the class and performing the rap song, Mr. Clark breaks down the barrier that had developed when the students felt uninvolved in the decisions of their learning.

The enthusiastic interactions of the students with Mr. Clark show that the social aspects of learning can strengthen their grasp and understanding of the material.

The representation of self is flipped on its head in the film *Chalk*. The roles of teacher and student are changed, allowing a teacher's participation in the Spelling Hornet, a student-sponsored activity, to become a motivator for how students become engaged in the teacher's class. The students also work hard to motivate the teachers to participate in the Spelling Hornet, creating a unique partnership in motivating one another to take risks in their learning.

Likewise, the traditional role of the student is given to the teachers of the scene. Although some of the teachers participate in the Spelling Hornet as a joke, others take their participation seriously and use it as an opportunity to model for the students what it means to be a life-long learner as well as a risk taker. Mr. Lowrey takes his participation in the contest quite seriously, enlisting the help of his students to study the origins of slang words. Other faculty members participate as a way of showing their humorous side to the students:

FB Coach: Sha, sha, Shiesty?

[Transitions to next teacher]

Teacher2: Ba-dunk-a-dunk?

[Transitions to next teacher]

Mr. Lowrey: Origin, please?

[Transitions to next teacher]

FB Coach: Could you use that in a sentence?

Student Judge #2: Watch up, shawty, that boy is shiesty.

[Transition to Coach Webb at microphone]

Coach Webb: Can you spell it for me?

[Crowd laughs, transition to next teacher]

By hosting the Spelling Hornet, the students are symbolically asking for their ‘language’, their dialect, to be appreciated by the teachers. In gaining that appreciation, the students are also more motivated to take risks in their teachers’ classrooms.

Finally, the scene from the film *Freedom Writers* is quite brief and yet, shows the importance of how ‘self’ is represented. The students do not dialogue in the scene, but are expressive in the voice-overs in the museum:

Student: My little boy died. He got off the train and they killed him. I don't know why it bothered me so much. . .I'd seen death all my life. But this little boy....was only five.

The emotions of the students as they toured the Holocaust museum highlight the interactions the students are having with the media presentations. Not only are the students emotionally tied to the topic, but they become invested also in the child they are learning about in the museum, reinforcing the notion that a deeper engagement with a topic brings forth a stronger learning experience for the learner.

Beyond Self

What additional roles impact the classroom as literacy pedagogy is advanced? Four separate categories within three open codes contributed to the understanding of Beyond Self, the outside influences that impacted the scenes of the study corpus. Of the 729 codes assigned to the open codes of the study, 11% (82/729) of the codes can be attributed to the larger group of Beyond Self. First, the importance of Peer Influence (38%, 31/82) was demonstrated in a majority of the film scenes. The direct or indirect impact of a peer’s real or perceived influence upon the self was a powerful dynamic within the scenes. Positive and negative peer influences occur, bearing a partial responsibility for the success or lack of success of the students. Secondly, the impact of Outside Influences (35%, 29/82) on the

individuals and curriculum of the classrooms were slightly less frequent than the instances of Peer Influence. However, the impact that the Outside Influences created in the classroom were much more significant to the teachers in the scene. Community pressures and uninvolved parents create difficulties in many of the scenes. Finally, 27% (22/82) of the codes attributed to the larger group of Beyond Self can be identified as School Criticism. School administrators being visibly critical or teachers challenging the pedagogy of the scene protagonist are important obstacles in each scene.

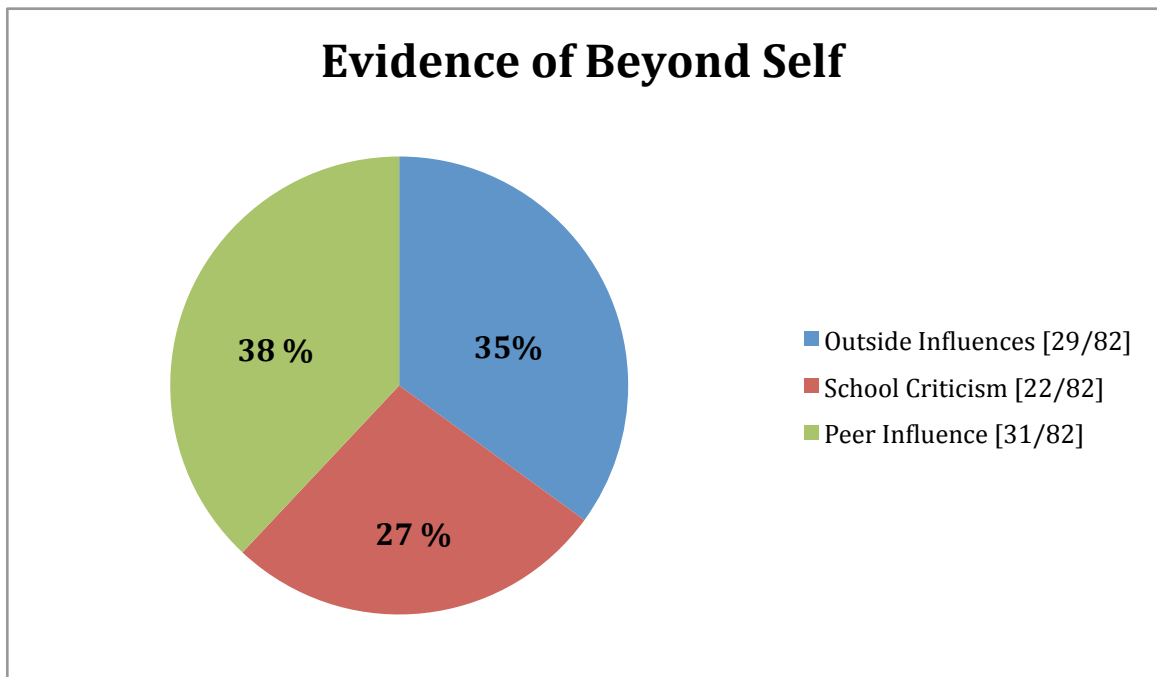


Figure 33 Evidence of Beyond Self

Evidence of Beyond Self in School Film of the 1930's and 1940's

Perhaps the lack of evidence of the theme of 'Beyond Self' in the films of the 1930's and 1940's of the study corpus should be a more appropriate title for this section. While the scene from *The Corn is Green* shows evidence of positive peer influence within the classroom, there is no evidence of outside influence or school criticism in the scene. The outside influence of a world at war is the background of the scene in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, creating a springboard for a classroom discussion and the motivation of students. However, the 'Beyond Self' characteristics that are present in the other films of the study corpus do not exist in the films' scenes that were chosen by the inter-raters.

Evidence of Beyond Self in School Film of the 1950's

Peer influence played a significant role in the scene from the film *Blackboard Jungle*. Mr. Dadier, using a film clip based on “Jack and the Beanstalk”, created an atmosphere that welcomed a frank discussion and critical thinking on behalf of the students. The film clip was a highly unusual addition to the daily routine of Mr. Dadier’s class, causing a group of students to gather outside the classroom door to watch the cartoon. Mr. Dadier facilitates a discussion of the film that generates a rich discussion about discrimination:

Mr. Dadier: No kidding, fellas, you don't like the Giant because he's different than anybody else.

The students begin to understand that “Jack and the Beanstalk” was not just a cartoon, but it was a story about them. Differing points of view on the cartoon provided an example of how a variety of opinions can influence each student’s thoughts to varying degrees.

When a student reacts negatively about Jack from the cartoon, Mr. Dadier is quick to point out their double standard:

Mr. Dadier: But is that right? Is it right to dislike someone just because they are different? There are a lot of us, right here in this classroom that are different than anybody else.

Mr. Dadier: Now we are getting somewhere. Now, all of your lives, your gonna hear stories...about what some guy tells ya, what you see in books, in magazines, on television and radio. What you read in the newspapers. But if you could just examine the story, look for the real meaning, and most of all, fellas, if you could just, just learn to think for yourself...

Once the students realized that they were victims of pressure and outside influence on their thoughts and opinions, their understanding of peer influence and the impact it can have on their learning is a powerful turning point in their maturation into adults.

Evidence of Beyond Self in School Film of the 1960's

The evidence of the ‘Beyond Self’ in the school films of the 1960’s begins with the criticism Miss Barrett endures in the scene from *Up the Down Staircase*. To begin the scene, Mr. Bester arrives at the beginning of class to conduct a teacher observation of Miss Barrett. Dr. Bester does not play a significant role during the scene, yet his mere presence in the room

is an outside influence to the class activities and to the way the students behave during the class. Standing in the back of the classroom to observe Miss Barrett and the lesson she is teaching the class, Dr. Besters' body codes create an additional level of outside influence in the class:

Mr. McKay, a teacher in the school, also serves as a dominant outside influence.

Mr. McKay: Miss Barrett, what is the meaning of this noise? Did Dr. Bester hear you and how loud your class was today? I can hear them all the way down in the corridor.

Miss Barrett introduces *Tale of Two Cities* to her class in an engaging and motivating way. In doing so, it draws serious criticism from Mr. McKay. Mr. McKay does not appreciate that the noise is from student discussion nor does he believe that there is any need for social interaction in the classroom. Symbolically, he is representative of many of the educators in the school who are reluctant to accept any level of collaboration or creativity that creates a lively classroom environment.

Another example of peer influences that impact the evidence of 'Beyond Self' in the study corpus takes place in the scene from *To Sir, With Love*. Mr. Thackeray is in the midst of explaining how the classroom environment is going to become transformed by their new mission, when Miss Blanchard walks into the classroom in a loud and obnoxious way.

Mr. Thackeray: Example, there are two ways to enter a room. One is like an adult, a lady with dignity. The other is like a brat. Miss Blanchard has just shown us the second way. Perhaps you would like to demonstrate the first.

[Miss Blanchard glares at Mr. Thackeray, looks around the room, gets up, walks to the door, and comes back in to the classroom quietly]

Miss Blanchard: I'm sorry I'm late.

[Miss Blanchard sits down at her desk. The other students whisper in amazement]

The class's reaction to Miss Blanchard's new entrance is an excellent example of the power of peer influence in a learning environment. It is at this point in the scene that all of the students realize that things in the classroom will be dramatically different from this point forward.

Evidence of Beyond Self in School Film of the 1970's

Conrack, in the brief scene from the study corpus, intricately weaves in evidence of 'Beyond Self' in Mr. Conroy's monologue. Mr. Conroy has been dealing with extreme pressures from school officials, ultimately resulting in his firing. He has also been dealing with the lack of parental or community involvement in the lives of his students, reinforcing the discriminatory divide that has long plagued the town:

Mr. Conroy: They think as long as Blacks and Whites are kept apart, with the Whites getting scholarships and the Blacks pickin' cotton or tomatoes, with the Whites going to college, and the Blacks eating Moonpies and drinkin Coca-Cola, that they can weather any storm and survive any threat. Well, they are wrong. Their day is ending.

According to Mr. Conroy, the school board believes that the system of keeping Blacks and Whites apart and to keep the area segregated should be continued. The system of discrimination creates an enormous force of influence on the students in the classrooms of the town and ultimately impacts their well-being.

Evidence of Beyond Self in School Film of the 1980's

The film *Teachers* provides us with a powerful example of how the lack of involvement of parents creates a challenging learning environment. Mr. Jurel, in a conference to discuss what he believed to be parental concerns over Eddie's grades, is shocked to learn that the conference isn't about Eddie's education in the least:

Mr. Jurel: [asking Eddie's mother]: Don't you care about your son's education?

Eddie's mother: Isn't that your job, Mr. Jurel?

Even though Mr. Jurel is attempting to have Eddie's parents be more involved in Eddie's education, his mother is not interested in discussing it, nor does she feel responsible for Eddie's success or lack of success. The short dialogue exchange exemplifies how students like Eddie can fall through the cracks without a system of checks and balances, parents and teachers who work collaboratively. Not only does the scene highlight that there are many parents too uninvolved in their children's lives, but there are too many schools that allow students to be passed along without the ability to master proficiently basic literacy skills.

'Beyond Self' also plays a role in the criticism of teachers and administrators in films of the 1980's. In *Stand and Deliver* Mr. Escalante teaches in an urban, mostly Hispanic

school, the target of criticism for his unconventional teaching methods and repaire with his students. In the study corpus scene, two school administrators enter the classroom to conduct a classroom observation. The students, in response, heckle the arrival of the administrators, letting them know that their criticism of their teacher makes them an outsider in the classroom.

In *Dead Poets' Society*, Mr. Keating and his students are also faced with 'Beyond Self' influences through the criticism of Mr. McAlester. Mr. McAlester is shocked to see the students in Mr. Keating's class ripping out the pages to their textbooks and throwing them around the room. Mr. Keating, in response to the introduction of the text, encouraged his students to rip out the introduction to the text so as to not be influenced by the thoughts of others when reading poetry. Mr. McAlester's reaction to the activity symbolizes the views of the traditional school disapproving of the new methods used by Mr. Keating.

Evidence of Beyond Self in School Film of the 1990's

School criticism appears only briefly at the end of the study corpus scene from *Mr. Holland's Opus*, but leaves a lasting impression on how the school administration will react to the idea that Mr. Holland has decided to use Rock and Roll music in his music class. As a way of connecting to the music students like, Mr. Holland shows them how their favorite genre of Rock and Roll connects directly to the classical music they studied previously. Once Mr. Holland begins playing the Rock and Roll on the piano, he stands up at the piano and pushes the bench backwards, pounding on the keys and drawing the attention of his class.

Audible throughout the hallways, the music gets the attention of the Assistant Principal, who rushes to the doorway of Mr. Holland's classroom, with a look of fear and disgust on his face. The impact of the outside influence in this scene does not become evident until later on in the film, but it infers that the Assistant Principal believes he knows better how to teach the music class than the music teacher.

Dangerous Minds also deals with the power of outside influences on the learning in the classroom. Mrs. Johnson helps bring many of the issues to light when discussing the poem in class. The students are quick to point out that they have many influences that affect their learning choices:

Student #7: Man, you come and live in my neighborhood for one week and then YOU tell me if you got a choice.

The pressures that the students endure in their neighborhoods as well as the peer influence they endure at school make survival more of a focus in the students' lives.

Finally, in 187, perhaps the best example of peer influence verbalized is the discussion between Mr. Garfield and Rita:

Mr. Garfield: Are you afraid it will be some kind of Pyrrhic victory?

Mr. Garfield, in his encouragement of Rita's talents as a writer, also recognizes that she is taking a risk in being ostracized by her peer group for being 'smart'. Constantly looking over her shoulder in nervousness during her tutoring session with Mr. Garfield, Rita is frightened about being discovered by her peers. The allusion to King Pyrrus, and the idea that a victory can be achieved at a great cost to the victor, recognizes that Rita may lose more than she may gain in following her dream of being a writer. And yet, Mr. Garfield assures her it is a risk worth taking.

Evidence of Beyond Self in School Film of the 2000's

Most surprisingly from the data was the lack of evidence of 'Beyond Self' in the study corpus of films from the 2000's. Although each film had evidence of peer influences, school criticism, and powerful outside influences, the scenes chosen by the inter-raters did not exhibit remarkable evidence of any of those themes. In *The Ron Clark Story*, we only briefly see an outside reaction to the classroom environment, with the gifted class peeking into the room to see what activity Mr. Clark has assigned. In *Chalk*, many interesting dynamics exist regarding the influencing of others to participate in the Spelling Hornet, where the students become the teachers and vice versa, but the dynamics do not follow the pattern set by the other films in the study corpus. The *Freedom Writers* scene selected by the inter-raters is quite short and does not offer the researcher an opportunity to observe any 'Beyond Self' characteristics.

Critical Connections

What importance does the film place on literacy? Eleven separate categories within three open codes contributed to the understanding of the importance of Critical Connections in the scenes of the study corpus. Of the 729 codes assigned to the open codes of the study,

38% (280/729) of the codes can be attributed to the larger group of Critical Connections. First, the importance of Critical Thinking (29%, 82/280) revealed itself in a majority of the film scenes. When students demonstrate their ability to question and participate in student-driven discussions, the thinking becomes visible in the scenes. Secondly, the impact of the Teacher as Instructional Leader (32%, 90/280) is significant in bridging the students to the curriculum. Through traditional and non-traditional teaching activities, the teachers in the scenes use a variety of methods to make the curriculum connect with the students. Some teachers remain the central impetus for the learning in the classroom, while others demonstrate more student-centered activities, attempting to teach “outside the box”. Finally, 39% (108/280) of the codes attributed to the larger group of Critical Connections can be identified as Connective Tissue. When the teachers in the scenes allowed students to collaborate with one another, the students were viewed as more successful and more engaged in their learning. Many of the teachers make implicit effort to in guiding students to text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections.

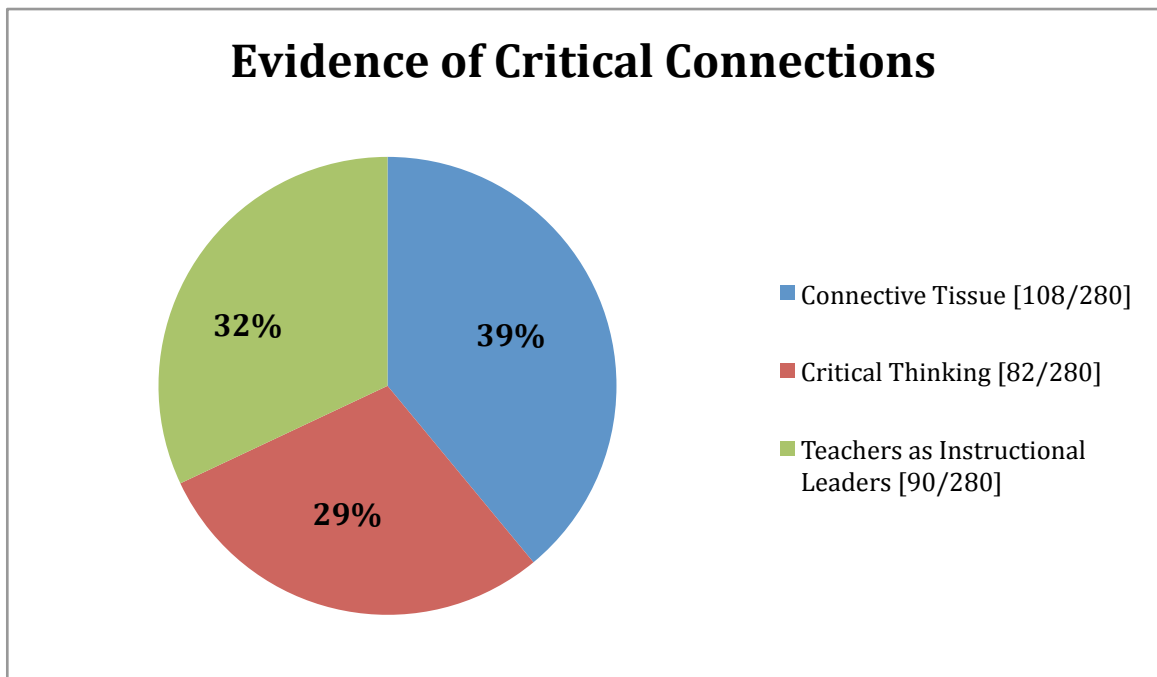


Figure 34 Evidence of Critical Connections

Evidence of Critical Connections in School Film of the 1930's

In *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, students are forging critical connections their learning through the leadership of Mr. Chips. As the class begins, the town is rumbling and shaking from the nearby bomb blasts of a battle that is taking place during the war. Mr. Chips uses the emotions the students are feeling during the event [excitement, fear] and channels it into the Latin lesson:

Mr. Chips: Here, now, at this particular moment in history, [bomb blast] it may seem to you that the, uh, [bomb blast] the affairs of Julius Caesar in Gaul two thousand years ago [bomb blast] are somewhat uh [bomb blast] of somewhat secondary importance. [smiling]

Mr. Chips helps students see the humor and irony of reading about Gaul, while the Germans are fighting outside. The students are reading of *Julius Caesar* and his journey in to Gaul, an ironic twist to the German fighting taking place in the village where the school is located.

Mr. Chips continues to help the students make text-to world and text –to-self connections through his humor and his comparison of the text the students are reading to the world outside the shaking walls of their school:

Mr. Chips: But, believe me, you can't judge the importance of things by the [bomb blast] by the noise they make [students laugh at the irony]
[Bomb blasts get closer, students grab their desks]

Mr. Chips allusion to the fact that history repeats itself, as witnessed by the students, creates a critical connection to the text of *Julius Caesar* that might not have otherwise been made. The appreciation for reading a text aloud and the necessity for discussions and analysis of the historical text is a powerful way for Mr. Chips to take the students' minds off of the fighting taking place at their doorstep while at the same time using the fighting as a springboard for a discussion about the relevance of the things they read about in history.

Evidence of Critical Connections in School Film of the 1940's

The Corn is Green provides evidence of 'Critical Connections' through the collaboration of the students in the classroom and the environment that has been created that allows students to ask difficult questions. During the scene, the cinematic techniques focus specific attention on the group signing the hymn. Close-ups of several of the students show varying degrees of engagement in the song, with most being very excited to sing

together. Despite being from a wide range of ages and experiences, the students in the classroom seem genuinely happy to be working together. The majority of the students in the classroom are children, but the camera specifically zooms in on three adults in the class who are participating and collaborating next to the children

Miss Ronberry dismisses the class, only to be stopped by one of her elderly students to ask the question “Where’s Shakespeare?” This gentleman, throughout his entire life had believed that Shakespeare was a place and not a person. The willingness of the gentleman to ask the question provides evidence of Miss Ronberry and Miss Moffitt creating a comfortable environment that allows for risk-taking in learning.

Evidence of Critical Connections in School Film of the 1950’s

Blackboard Jungle provides more evidence of ‘Critical Connections’ and forward-thinking pedagogy than many of the films of the study corpus that take place decades later. First, Mr. Dadier plays a very important role as the teacher leader in the classroom. Although he is a fairly traditional teacher, there are many instances in the scene where he steps out of his role as a traditional teacher and allows his students to take the lead in the classroom discussion in order to make valuable text-to-self and text-to-world connections.

Mr. Dadier and the students follow a traditional teacher/student protocol at the beginning of the scene until the students take ownership of the discussion and create a student-centered classroom environment. Mr. Dadier, using his instinct as a teacher leader, knows when to step forward from the perimeter of the classroom to facilitate and connect the discussion to critical points:

Mr. Dadier: Wilson, do you think Jack should've killed the Giant?

and

Mr. Dadier: It was a crime, wasn't it?

Mr. Dadier also knows when to take a step back, outside the box, to allow the free-flowing exchange of ideas and opinions of the students. All students are allowed to talk and share their views, although Miller really stands out in his critical connections to the film clip and his analysis of the situation:

Miller: Well, this Jack, he ain't, he ain't no hero...he's a pretty dumb hick. Yeah, look, his old lady sends him out to sell a cow. Well, Jack the jerk meets up with a con man and he lets him have the cow for a couple of crazy beans.

Other students contribute to the discussion as well:

Student #7: Jack, he should have called the cops.

The students begin to grasp the importance of being able to have a discussion, especially when there are differing points of view. The students come from a variety of backgrounds that impact their understanding and viewpoint of the discussion taking place, bringing to light the importance of equity and tolerance to themselves, text-to-self connection, and the ability to promote equity and tolerance in the world, text-to-world connections.

Evidence of Critical Connections in School Film of the 1960's

The scene from *Up the Down Staircase* provides examples of how critical thinking and text-to-self connections can provide students with opportunities to make historically important texts like *Tale of Two Cities* relevant to their contemporary lives.

Miss Barrett asks a critical question to connect the students to the text:

Miss Barrett: Stop, that's enough, thank you. Uh, Dickens wrote that more one hundred years ago referring to a time almost two hundred years ago. It was so far like the present period. Now, what I want to know is, can we still say that today? Is it the best of times, the worst of times?

Miss Barrett is thrilled at the critical responses students give to her questions:

Miss Barrett: But, aren't we in the midst of prosperity? Isn't it also the best of times?

Student #4: There's still the rats and no toilets.

Miss Barrett: Aren't there also new housing developments, with playgrounds and parks?

Student #5: Parks are murder pits.

Miss Barrett: Is Yellowstone National Park a murder pit?

Student #6: We saw a movie in assembly.

Student #7: Narcotics makes it worse.

[Students raising their hands, wanting to participate]

Miss Barrett: It's still the season of light and darkness.

Student #8: Miss Barrett, darks don't got no chance.

Miss Barrett: What about the Civil Rights Movement and integration?

Student #9: Oh, how stupid can you get?

Student #8: Yeah, they passed the law.

Student #10: Bussing students from miles away.

Student #11: Yeah, they can't keep juggling us like different colored marbles.

Student #4: And go home to rats and no toilets.

[All students start yelling out their examples]

With Miss Barrett's leadership, the students who were apathetic at the beginning of the scene are critically engaged to the text and to their experiences in relation to the text.

In the scene from *To Sir, With Love*, Mr. Thackeray provides an opportunity for his students to talk about real-world issues that impact their lives. Mr. Thackeray realizes in a critical moment that the skills his students will need after they graduate cannot be found in the reading of the textbooks and the lecturing he had been doing:

Student: [raises hand and is called on] What are we going to talk about, sir?

Mr. Thackeray: About life, survival, love, death, sex, marriage, rebellion, anything you want.

He also realizes that in order for students to take risks in their learning, he must create an environment where respect and collaboration are essential:

Mr. Thackeray: Next, we are going to be reasonable with each other. We are just going to talk, you and I. You are going to listen without interruption, and when I am finished, one of you may have your say without interruption.

Mr. Thackeray: Next, we are all going to observe certain courtesies in this classroom. You will call me Sir or Mr. Mr. Thackeray. The young ladies will be addressed as Miss, the boys by their surnames.

Potter: Why should we call them Miss? We know em'!

Mr. Thackeray: I beg your pardon?

Potter: I said 'Why should we call them Miss' sir? We know them.

Mr. Thackeray: Is there any one of these young ladies that you feel does not deserve to be addressed as Miss?

[Potter glances across the room, embarrassed]

Potter: No, sir.

Evidence of Critical Connections in School Film of the 1970's

As evidence of 'Critical Connections' in the scene from *Conrack*, Mr. Conroy talks about helping the students learn about much more than reading and writing.

Mr. Conroy: I taught them to embrace life openly, to reflect on its mysteries, and to reject its cruelties.

Although the scene does not show Mr. Conroy's interactions with his students, it is clear from his speech that critical thinking is the foundation of the interactions he has had with his students. He does his best to help the community and his students to understand that "the world is very different now."

Evidence of Critical Connections in School Film of the 1980's

Eddie struggles with reading in *Teachers* because he has not found the 'Critical Connection' necessary to make it relevant to his life. Mr. Jurel, upon noticing that Eddie still cannot read, decides that despite Eddie's rejections, he will use his social studies class as a vehicle for Eddie's 'Critical Connection'. Mr. Jurel takes control of a Eddie's illiteracy, a situation that had spun out of control.

Mr. Escalante, in *Stand and Deliver*, is faced with teaching advanced mathematics to a diverse classroom of students in an urban high school, uses the story problems he creates for the class to make a connection to the students' lives:

Mr. Escalante: Everybody look at the board. Will someone please read for me what's on the board? Anybody.

Everyone: Juan has five times as many girlfriends as Pedro. Carlos has one girlfriend less than Pedro. If the total number of girlfriends between them is twenty, how many does each gigolo have?

Mr. Escalante leads his class much like a traditional teacher and yet, he connects with his students personally with a unique sense of humor. The students treat Mr. Escalante in a more informal manner, creating a comfortable environment for them in which to take risks in their learning.

Perhaps most powerful from the data as evidence of 'Critical Connections' is a response to the story problem by one of the students:

Student #7: This stuff makes no sense unless you show us how it works in the real world.

The story problem, although creatively crafted with words and names the students would enjoy, still didn't create a 'Critical Connection' for the students. Only until Mr. Escalante is able to show how the formulas and equations work in the real world, the students remained healthy skeptics.

Near the end of the scene in *Dead Poets' Society*, Mr. Keating provides for his students the true purpose of reading poetry:

Mr. Keating: I have a little secret for you. Huddle up. Huddle up! [The students gather around Mr. Keating, who kneels on the floor in the middle of the classroom]. We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. Medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits necessary to sustain life. But poetry. Beauty. Romance. Love. These are what we stay alive for. To quote Whitman "Oh me, Oh life, the questions of these recurring, of the endless trains of the faithless. Of cities filled with the foolish. What good amid these. Oh, me. Oh, life." Answer that you are here. That life exists. And identity. That the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse. What will your verse be?

For the first time, the students are being allowed to critically think and connect with the curriculum at their school. Mr. Keating, as the leader of the class, provides the avenue through which the students can experiment with thinking for themselves. Mr. Keating also guides the students to understand that they are all connected inherently, because they are members of the human race. This great equalizer provides a common ground that encourages the students to take risks in their learning.

Evidence of Critical Connections in School Film of the 1990's

In *Dangerous Minds*, Mrs. Johnson struggles to lead her students to make 'Critical Connections' to the poetry she is introducing while also struggling to help them see a purpose in their learning:

Mrs. Johnson: 'And I will not carry myself down to die, when I go to my grave, my head will be high.' My head will be high. What does that mean?

The students in the class are defiant and reluctant to participate. Mrs. Johnson has to first work through the students' anger and apathy before she can motivate the students to participate in the discussion.

Student #6: Lady, why are you playin this game? We don't have a choice!

Mrs. Johnson: You don't have a choice? You don't have a choice whether or not you are here?

Student #6: Nah! If we leave, we don't get to graduate. If we stay, we have to put up with you.

Mrs. Johnson: Well that's a choice, isn't it? You have a choice. You either don't graduate or you have to put up with me. It may not be a choice you like, but it is a choice.

Patiently and unrelenting, Mrs. Johnson continues to make connections between the text her view of the socio-cultural struggles her students are making. Emilio, the most unlikely contributor to classroom activities, is the first to have an Aha moment:

Emilio: Read it again Miss Johnson.

Mrs. Johnson: What?

Emilio: Read those lines you just read again.

Mrs. Johnson: 'I will not go down underground, cause somebody tells me that death is coming around.' Does that mean just what it says?

Emilio: No, it don't mean just what it says. Cause, you wouldn't go under the ground if someone told you death was comin. But you would go into the ground if you were already dead.

Once Emilio has made a text-to-self connection, other students begin to make connections as well, collaborating together to come of a common understanding of the poem.

Mrs. Johnson: Do the rest of you agree with that?

Callie: Well, I kinda agree. But, I think it just means, he ain't gonna help death out. It's not like he's going to lay down and wait for it. I think he's going to choose, no, I think he's going to make the choice to die hard.

Mrs. Johnson: [nods] Uh huh....

Student #9: Yeah, I'd agree with that.

Student #8: Yeah, that sounds good to me.

Mrs. Johnson: Yeah, but what about the rest of it. 'When I go to my grave, my head will be high.' Head will be high. What does that mean?

Student #9: Gonna die with pride.

Despite their difficult life situations, the students in Mrs. Johnson's class realized that the literature they had been reading all year could actually be about them.

Mr. Holland also struggled to find a way to connect the music curriculum, based on classical music and music theory, to the lives of his students. As he began to doubt his impact as a teacher, he decided to ask his students about the types of music they like in order to find a way to bridge their likes to his curriculum. Upon hearing verbalized what he already knew, Mr. Holland introduces the connective tissue:

Mr. Holland: Does anyone here like Johann Sebastian Bach?

[Student 2 raises hand]

Mr. Holland: Other than you?

Mr. Holland: I bet all of you, whether you know it or not, already like Johann Sebastian Bach.

[Mr. Holland sits down to Lover's Concerto]

Mr. Holland: What's this called?

Class: Lover's Concerto

Mr. Holland: Who wrote it?

Student3: The Toys

Mr. Holland: Wrong

Mr. Holland: That was Minuet in G and it was written by Johann Sebastian Bach.

[Holland begins to play Minuet in G]

Mr. Holland: Do you hear it?

[Students nod, some take notes]

Mr. Holland: Bum bumbumbum.....

Mr. Holland: And he wrote it in 1725. They are both prime examples of the Ionian scale. Now listen, and see if you can hear the connective tissue between what I just played and this.

[Holland begins playing Rock and Roll].

Mr. Holland's instincts as a teacher told him that the students were having difficulty comprehending the material, while his instincts as a musician told him to find a way to connect to the music of his students' generation. Mr. Holland uses the various songs to emphasize the connections they are making with the music, text-to-text connections, and the connections they are making with the songs themselves, text-to-self connections.

Evidence of Critical Connections in School Film of the 2000's

In *The Ron Clark Story*, Mr. Clark gives his students the assignment to memorize all of the presidents of the United States. The students react unenthusiastically to the request and to no one's surprise; all of the students failed the quiz Mr. Clark had designed. A reflective thinker, the scene shows Mr. Clark working through the failed quizzes, trying to find a way to re-teach the material to the students in a much different way. Mr. Clark provides evidence of 'Critical Connections' through his new teaching strategy:

Mr. Clark: None of you passed the test [handing out the graded tests and removing a student's hat] and there is going to be punishment.

[The students moan]

[Mr. Clark goes to the front of the room and grabs a stack of papers]

Mr. Clark: I want you to pass these all around.

[The students moan again. Mr. Clark walks to the front of the room and uncovers a CD player. He pushes play and a rap song comes on. He puts on the student hat backwards and starts dancing in front of the room. The students looked surprised]

Mr. Clark: [rapping and doing choreography] Now let's get down to some presidential learnin'

We'll start with George Washington, straight from Mount Vernon.

First president, and commander-in-chief,

Of the Revolutionary War so we could be free.

John Adams was second, Thomas Jefferson, third,

When we fought for independence, their voices were heard.

When in the course of human events, we took a stance and we've been doing it since.

It's a tribute to the leaders of the USA.

It's the presidents' rap, alright alright, okay okay.

The reaction of the students to Mr. Clark's rap song shows that they are excited to see a connection between the things they are required to learn and the things they love to do. Learning is a social activity clearly demonstrated in this scene and as such, the students enjoyed that they could be most successful when allowed the opportunity to interact in social activities and projects within the curriculum.

Mr. Lowrey, in *Chalk*, demonstrates for his students the importance of making 'Critical Connections' with the things he wants to learn. In his first year of teaching, Mr. Lowrey has tried to connect with his students, but has struggled with many aspects of classroom management and positive interactions with students. When Mr. Lowrey decides that he will participate in the student sponsored Spelling Hornet, he takes a great risk in allowing his vulnerability to be witnessed by the entire school body. Yet, this risk pays off, as the students seem genuinely excited that he is participating, and ultimately wins, the Spelling Hornet.

The last film of the study corpus, *Freedom Writers*, offers a unique view of the importance of 'Critical Connections' in literacy learning. The scene is very short and is comprised mainly of a student's voiceover over clips from the field trip to the Holocaust museum. However, it is the body language combined with the voiceover that is most compelling in illustrating that connections to text are critical to deep understanding.

During the scene, the close proximity of the students to each other in the exhibit demonstrates the importance of the emotional connections the students are having with the exhibits:

Student #1:At the beginnin' of the tour, they give you a card with a child's picture on it. You can find out who they were and what camp they was in to. And at the end of the tour, you can find out if they survived. I got a little girl from Italy.

Each student tracks the livelihood of a Holocaust victim during the exhibit, making an emotional and powerful connection between the students and the curriculum:

Student #2:My little boy died. He got off the train and they killed him. I don't know why it bothered me so much. . .I'd seen death all my life. But this little boy....was only five.

The text-to-self connections the students were making were powerful experiences that make historical events and literature relevant to their lives.

Representations of Literacy

How is literacy represented in serious school film? Why is literacy important and how is it expressed. Nine separate categories within three open codes contributed to the understanding of the Representations of Literacy in the scenes of the study corpus. Of the 729 codes assigned to the open codes of the study, 21% (151/729) of the codes can be attributed to the larger group of Representations of Literacy. First, the importance of Traditional Literacies (25%, 38/151) revealed itself in many of the film scenes. Traditional literature and traditional writing activities occurred during the scenes or were referred to by the teachers or students of the scenes. Secondly, the occurrence of New Literacies (15%, 23/151) within the scenes emerged in various formats and activities. Through visual and media literacies and the integration of art and music into the classroom, there were several examples of the changing definition of literacy during the scope of the study corpus. Finally, 60% (90/151) of the codes attributed to the larger group of Representations of Literacy can be identified as Expressions of Literacy.

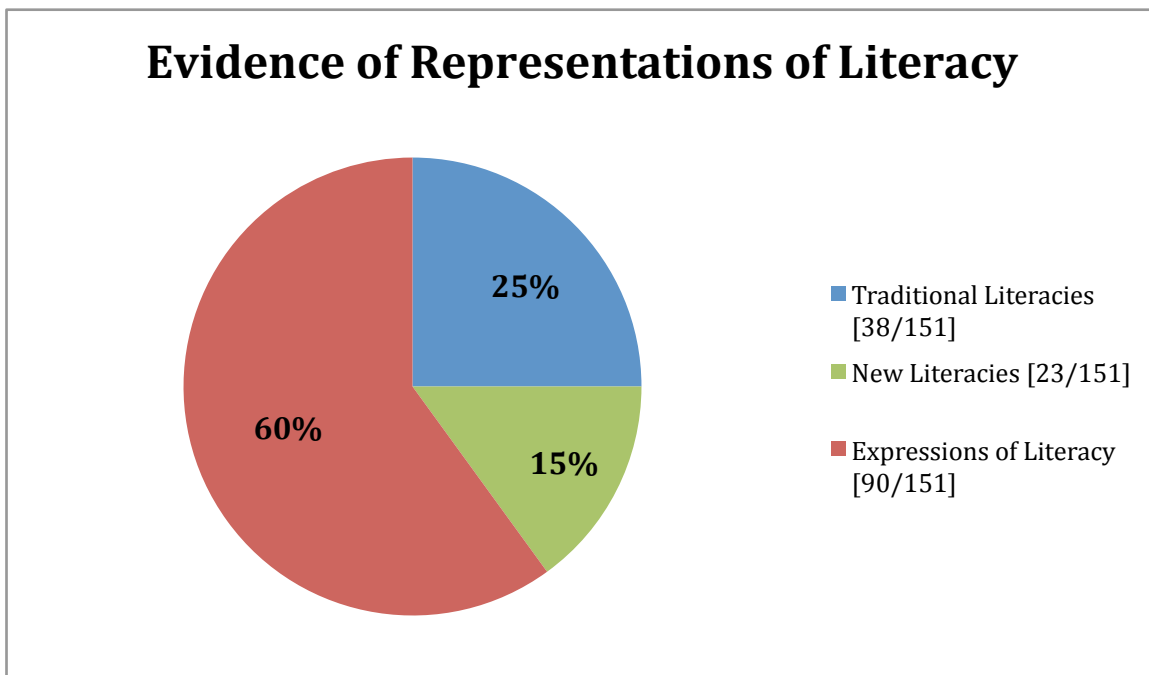


Figure 35 Evidence of Representations of Literacy

Evidence of Representations of Literacy in School Film of the 1930's

Goodbye, Mr. Chips provides evidence of traditional literacies woven within a traditional classroom environment. At the beginning of the class, Mr. Chips asks for volunteers to read the text aloud:

Mr. Chips: Peter?

Peter: Yes, sir!

Mr. Chips: [Bomb blast] Turn to page forty and begin at the bottom line, would you?

[The shrill of an incoming bomb startles the boys. The walls shake violently and the students jump under their desks. The lights swing from the ceilings.]

[Mr. Chips looks to the sky in disgust. Peter looks up from his desk.]

[Peter stands up. The sound of bombs exploding continues.]

Peter: [In Latin] This was kind of fighting [In Latin] in which the Germans busied themselves. [Bombs explode]

[Students laugh]

Peter's oral reading of *Julius Caesar*, the text written in Latin, is an example of the classic, traditional literacy that one would expect from a private school during this time in history. Reading it first in Latin and translating it orally to English, Peter and his classmates routinely participate in these types of literacies. During the scene, Mr. Chips points out that dead languages, such as Latin, has a relevance to the present day lives of the boys, as evidenced by the fighting taking place in the war. Connecting the traditional literacy to a discussion of the text-to-world connection is an expression of literacy equated as the ability to learn from historical events in the context of current events that are directly impacting their lives. The expressions of literacy in the scene symbolize a much bigger picture of literacy than what a traditional view of literacy might have been at the time.

Evidence of Representations of Literacy in School Film of the 1940's

The Corn is Green provides two very different representations of literacy. Miss Moffitt returns from town after picking up her shipment of new Greek textbooks for Morgan Evans, a gifted student she is tutoring to prepare for entrance into Oxford. In order to have a chance for admission, Miss Moffitt must teach Morgan Greek, a language that she must work hard in order to stay at least a day ahead of him. The traditional literacies of reading

and writing during this time also meant the ability to read and write fluently in the traditional languages of Latin and Greek.

In *The Corn is Green*, we also see another representation of literacy in the choral singing of the hymn during the class lead by Miss Ronberry. The cross-generational group is expressing their oral fluency together as celebration of life-long learning and literacy. This is the first example in the study corpus of literacy being something other than reading or writing.

Evidence of Representations of Literacy in School Film of the 1950's

Blackboard Jungle provides the first example of media literacy in the study corpus. After having his first successful classroom discussion, prompted by the students' reaction and connections to a film clip, two of Mr. Dadier's peers enter his classroom to see what all of the commotion is about:

Mr. Dadier: No, but if you can get them to use their knowledge, get their minds out of comic books.

Teacher #1: What's the answer? Visual education?

Teacher #2: Sure, they'll go for movies, but will that teach them to read?

Mr. Dadier: But if you can get them to use their imagination, to reach out for something...

Using a film like *Jack and the Beanstalk* to reach reluctant students is a new way of looking at literacy. The students' excitement as they watched the film clip shows that there can be an element of new in the traditional discussions of texts. The students in the classroom have not had the opportunity to express their views or opinions in this manner before, so the discussion is a breakthrough in their literacy development.

Evidence of Representations of Literacy in School Film of the 1960's

The evidence of representations of literacy in *Up the Down Staircase* is the discussion and lesson centered on the novel *Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. A traditional text of the literature canon, Miss Barrett faces the challenge of bridging a traditional text with a diverse and reluctant classroom of students. Miss Barrett asks students to read aloud, to discuss the introductory paragraph of the text, and to connect Dickens' "best of times, worst of times" to their current situations. Miss Barrett helps the students find a reason to read the

novel, despite it being written over two hundred years ago. Miss Barrett points out to Mr. McKay at the end of the class that the student discussion was the key in motivating students to read the difficult text:

Miss Barrett: It's the sound of thinking, Mr. McKay. This class cannot wait to read *A Tale of Two Cities*. And Lou Martin made a joke with a point . . . a serious point. . . and Eddie Williams spoke out for the first time in class.

Miss Barrett wants desperately to show students how literature can help them make better sense of the world in which they live. The very idea that the students can not only use texts as an escape from their current troubles, but can use literacy as a way to leave behind the rough lives they face reinforce the scene's view of the importance of literacy.

Mr. Thackeray, in *To Sir, With Love*, throws the traditional literacies in the trash, literally, as he discovers the clear between the curriculum taught in school and the skills one needs to be successful outside of school. Mr. Thackeray takes a great risk in forgoing the assigned curriculum to focus on the life skills and soft skills that they world would require:

Mr. Thackeray: They are useless to you. I suddenly realized that you are not children, you will be adults in a few weeks, with all the responsibilities that implies. So, from now on, you will be treated as such by me and by each other. As adults . . . responsible adults.

Mr. Thackeray realizes that his students need a new type of literacy, one that goes further than the traditional reading and writing of the classroom curriculum. His students need the opportunity to ask questions, critical questions that they have never been allowed the chance to ask before:

Student: [raises hand and is called on] What are we going to talk about, sir?

Mr. Thackeray: About life, survival, love, death, sex, marriage, rebellion, anything you want.

Evidence of Representations of Literacy in School Film of the 1970's

In *Conrack*, Mr. Conroy shares with the town of Bueford the importance of teaching students more than the traditional literacies in order for them to become critical thinkers, thinkers capable of working through the segregation and discrimination:

Mr. Conroy: I was paid \$510 a month to teach kids that live a little off this coast how to read and write. I also try to teach them to embrace life openly, to reflect on its mysteries, and to reject its cruelties.

Mr. Conroy believes that the traditional skills of reading and writing are not enough to help his students become successful in a town determined to discriminate against them. Again, the racial disparity in the town harbors the inequities of the education that the Black students receive.

Mr. Conroy: Ladies and gentleman, the world is very different now. It's true this town still has its diehards and nigger-haters, but they grow older and crankier with each passing day. When Bueford digs another 400 holes in their plentiful graveyards, deposits there the rouged and elderly corpses, and covers them with the sand and low country soil, then the Old South will be silenced and not heard from again.

[An older white-haired gentleman walks up to the driver window of the van with his white poodle. Conroy turns to speak to him]

Mr. Conroy: As for my kids, I don't think I changed the quality of their lives significantly or alter the fact they have no share in the country that claimed them . . . the country that has failed them. All I know is I found much beauty in my time with them.

By teaching his students that there is a world that exists beyond the discrimination they face in the South, he is providing opportunities for them to develop literacies they need in order to be successful, regardless of how the system continues to fail them.

Evidence of Representations of Literacy in School Film of the 1980's

Teachers brings to the forefront the struggles that many students have with the learning of traditional literacies and the failure for many schools to formulate a plan to help struggling secondary students who have fallen through the cracks.

Mr. Jurel: Read that.

Eddie: Do what?

Mr. Jurel: Just open it up someplace and start reading.

[Eddie hesitantly takes the magazine, opens it up, and begins looking at the pages and moving his lips]

As has been discussed in the pilot study, it is obvious from the scene that Eddie cannot read, despite his passing of the remedial reading class. The importance of literacy, the ways in which literacy can be measured, as well as the definition of literacy are challenged in this scene.

Mr. Jurel's answer for Eddie is to take use his social studies class as a vehicle for his literacy development, hoping to tap into Eddie's interests to guide him to a purpose for reading. Because Eddie does not hold literacy as a valuable skill, Mr. Jurel is willing to take Eddie under his wing and into his own classroom to ensure his success. Yet, symbolic within the scene is the idea that literacy means different things to different people. As far as Eddie is concerned, he is fine with faking his way through life rather than learning how to read.

Stand and Deliver brings a different representation of literacy to the study corpus. Mr. Escalante is introducing critical literacy to his students through problem solving activities based upon algebraic formulas. Mr. Escalante asks the students to read the problem, which they do in unison. The students then take turns trying to solve the problem, with Mr. Escalante being supportive in a humorous way when the students come up with a wrong answer. Each student is working diligently to try to solve the problem, with several of the students taking a risk by attempting to give their solution to the question aloud in class.

Dead Poets' Society illustrates a clear division between the 'realist' view of literacy prevalent in the schools during the time and the 'romantic' view of literacy that Mr. Keating embraces. The introduction of the textbook chapter of poetry shows the realist view of literacy at its roots:

Mr. Keating: Gentlemen, open your texts to page 21 of the introduction. Mr. Perry, will you read the opening paragraph of the preface entitled "Understanding Poetry"?

[The students open their books to the introduction and follow along as Neil reads aloud]

Neil Perry: "Understanding Poetry, by Dr. Jay Evans Pritchard, Ph.D. To fully understand poetry, we must be fluent in its rhythm, rhyme, and figures of speech,

then ask two questions. One, how artfully has the objective of the poem been rendered, and two, how important is that objective? Question one rates the poem's perfection. Question two rates its importance.

[Mr. Keating stands to write on the chalkboard]

And once these questions have been answered, determining the poems greatness becomes a relatively simple matter.

[Neil glances up, then continues reading].

If the poem's score for perfection is plotted on the horizontal of a graph [Mr. Keating draws a horizontal line on the board and labels it P, students began taking notes and drawing the chart on their papers], and its importance plotted on the vertical [Mr. Keating draws a vertical line on the board and labels it I], calculating the total area of the poem yields the measure of its greatness. A sonnet by Byron might score high on the vertical, but only average on the horizontal. [Mr. Keating plots the sonnet on the graph, filling in the total area]. A Shakespearean sonnet, on the other hand, would score high both vertically and horizontally, yielding a massive total area [Mr. Keating plots the sonnet on the graph, filling in the total area], thereby revealing the poem to be truly great. As you proceed through the poetry in this book, practice this rating method. As your ability to rate poetry in this manner grows, so will your enjoyment and understanding of poetry.

Mr. Keating very quickly discredits Dr. Pritchard's quantitative take on the measurement of poetry and encourages the students to rip out the pages of their textbook. Mr. Keating introduces poetry to the students again, this time through a 'Romantic' lens by emphasizing the poetry is "what we stay alive for". Mr. Keating wants literature to be something that students embrace as a pathway to understanding the beauty of life, evaluating and interpreting poetry according to one's own passion. Mr. Keating and the students are no longer willing to take a passive approach to their literacy learning.

Evidence of Representations of Literacy in School Film of the 1990's

Literacy is represented and expressed as the ability to make text-to-text connections in *Mr. Holland's Opus*. Bridging classical music to contemporary music, Mr. Holland is introducing critical literacy to his students for the first time.

Mr. Holland: What's this called?

Class: Lover's Concerto

Mr. Holland: Who wrote it?

Student3: The Toys

Mr. Holland: Wrong

Mr. Holland: That was Minuet in G and it was written by Johann Sebastian Bach.

[Holland begins to play Minuet in G]

Mr. Holland: Do you hear it?

[Students nod, some take notes]

Mr. Holland: Bum bumbumbum.....

Mr. Holland: And he wrote it in 1725. They are both prime examples of the Ionian scale. Now listen, and see if you can hear the connective tissue between what I just played and this.

[Holland begins playing Rock and Roll].

Just as *The Corn is Green* introduced music as a text, so does *Mr. Holland's Opus*, showing that traditional literacy strategies can be carried over into a variety of media.

Dangerous Minds also shows the importance of bridging the abstractions of traditional literacies to the lives of the students:

Mrs. Johnson: 'I will not go down underground, somebody tells me that death is coming round.' Okay, this is another Dylan poem. Now, is that a code or does it just mean what it says.

The applicability of the poetry to the students' lives was something that had to be highlighted in order for the students to connect with it. By discussing the meaning of the poem, the students are also in a discussion of the meaning of their lives. The poem summarized the fear and the bravery they hope to have in the face of fear that many of the students face everyday. Literacy, to the students, meant nothing if they couldn't find applicability to their own lives.

In *187*, literacy is represented as the ability to write well, for a specific audience, using a variety of methods. Literacy is also represented as a 'way out' for Rita, a way to make a successful life for herself as a writer. Rita understands that being a good writer,

someday, might be something that she wants to do and asks Mr. Garfield about the possibility. She wants to continue to make writing an important part of her life and future.

Evidence of Representations of Literacy in School Film of the 2000's

The scene from *The Ron Clark Story* represents literacy in two different ways. The first representation is met with groans from the students, reacting to Mr. Clark's request that the students memorize the Presidents of the United States in chronological order. The skill of memorizing facts is necessary, according to Mr. Clark, because it will allow students to have a time reference for most events in American History. It is the strategy, however, that is not successful with his students.

The students fail the test because there isn't a context within which to learn the material. The second representation of literacy is through music, with Mr. Clark using the list of presidents to create a rap song for his students to learn. This student-centered activity represents literacy as a social activity, bridging a set of basic skills, skills that may seem easy or dull to most students, to something fun and interesting to them. Students first listen to the teacher rap as he models the expectations and then the students rap together with the teacher. The students then rap alone or with their friends. All of the students know the lyrics by the end of the clip, showing that the students can learn the list of presidents when it is partnered with an exciting activity.

Chalk provides an interesting representation of literacy in that the literacy being highlighted is very different from the traditional literacies modeled by the teachers of previous films. The traditional language typically used in reading and writing in schools is quite different from the slang language used by many students in their everyday informal speech and writing. The students host a Spelling Hornet as a fundraiser, using teachers as contestants in a Spelling Bee format using slang words:

Mr. Lowrey: It's a spelling bee of slang words that the teachers try to spell words that the kids use everyday. So we hear these words, but we don't know what they mean.

By hosting the Spelling Hornet, the students are showing that there are also ways to be literate with slang language. The teachers participating in the Spelling Hornet not only show respect for the students' culture, but they also recognize what it must feel like to be asked to do something outside of their comfort zone.

Media literacy reappears again in the study corpus during the scene from *Freedom Writers*. During the visit to the Holocaust museum, the students are surrounded by a combination of digital media and interactive exhibits. The students are remarkably silent during the scene, with only the voice-overs of student explanations playing over the scene. The body codes of the scene are more powerful because of the lack of dialogue.

Data Analysis

By simplifying fifty-eight original codes in to twelve open codes, four axial codes emerged—Self, Beyond Self, Critical Connections, and Representations of Literacy. The data within the four axial codes revealed three new themes as they contributed to the grounded theory: Internal versus External Forces, Traditional Pedagogy versus Nontraditional Pedagogy, and Traditional Representations of Literacy versus New Representations of Literacy.

Internal versus External Forces

The scenes of the study corpus illustrate the importance of the students being engaged in their literacy learning. Although each scene varies in setting and situation, each provided clear evidence that in order to learn, a student must have the desire and motivation to do so. The scenes also provided evidence that every classroom and every learner faces a variety of outside influences that impact the literacy learning in the classroom. However, it has been shown that a certain level of Beyond Self interference can be a motivator for the Self, and not necessarily a detractor to the learning process.

Through the two axial coding categories of Self and Beyond Self, it is possible to see the impact of this theme on the literacy learning in the scenes of the study corpus. Ultimately, there must be a balance of Self and Beyond Self in order for this theory to move forward. Six open coding categories combine here to create the theme of Internal (Intrinsic Motivation, Passion, and Empowerment) versus External Forces (Outside Influence, School Criticism, Peer Influence).

Traditional Pedagogy versus Nontraditional Pedagogy

There are several examples of traditional and nontraditional pedagogy in the scenes of the study corpus. Teachers using traditional methods of pedagogy appeared more

frequently in the study corpus, with nontraditional pedagogy appearing most frequently during the past two decades. Several of the teachers portrayed in the scenes were able to use both traditional and nontraditional methods in an effort to engage all students in the literacy learning. While the nontraditional pedagogies are always shown as successful in the scenes of the study corpus, the traditional pedagogies are shown to be successful in some scenes and unsuccessful in others.

Through the axial coding categories of Critical Connections and Representations of Literacy, it is possible to see the impact of this theme on the literacy learning in the classroom and the characterization of teachers in school film. Six open coding categories combine here to create the theme of Traditional Pedagogy (Teacher as Instructional Leader, Traditional Literacies) versus Nontraditional Pedagogy (Teacher as Instructional Leader, New Literacies, Critical Thinking, Connective Tissue).

Representations of Traditional Literacies versus Representations of New Literacies

Through a combination of traditional and nontraditional pedagogies, traditional and new literacies, as well as internal and external forces, literacy is represented in a variety of ways in school film.

Through the axial coding category of Representations of Literacy and Critical Connections, it is possible to see the impact of this theme on how the film represented literacy in the classroom. Six open coding categories combine here to create the theme of Representations of Traditional Literacies (Traditional Literacies, Expressions of Literacy, Teacher as Instructional Leader) versus Representations of New Literacies (New Literacies, Expressions of Literacy, Teacher as Instructional Leader).

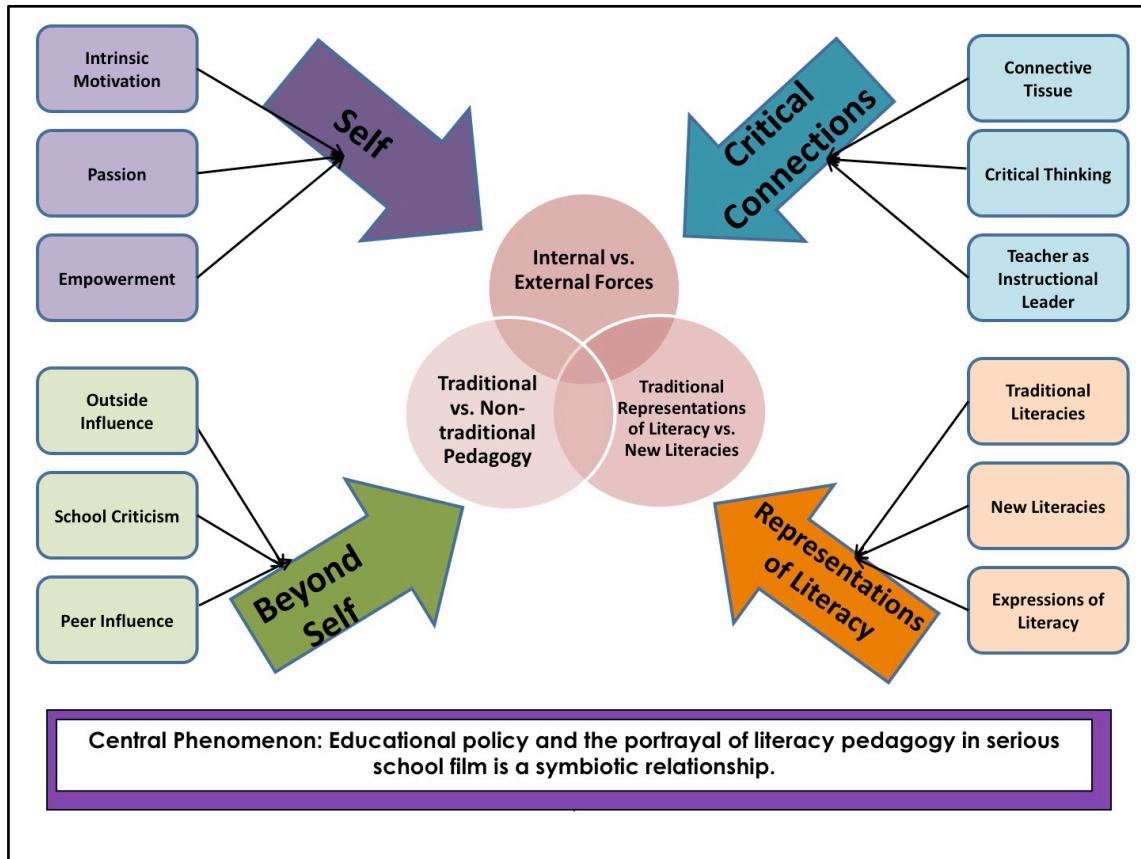


Figure 36 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory

Taking in to account all of the data collected and presented throughout this chapter, I arrived at a grounded theory to explain the central phenomenon that the portrayal of literacy pedagogy in school film is symbiotic with the state of educational policy prevalent at the time. Joseph Reed argues that how we see ourselves, what we think of us, what we think our world is like, how we think it works, all come from the movies (Reed, 1989). Thus, the ways in which literacy is portrayed in school film is how the world understands it to be, impacting the ways in which educational policies are devised, implemented, and argued. The grounded theory is explained as follows:

- Central Phenomenon
- Open Coding
- Axial Coding
- Theme One: Internal Forces versus External Forces

- Theme Two: Traditional Pedagogy versus Nontraditional Pedagogy
- Theme Three: Representations of Traditional Literacies versus Representations of New Literacies
- Conditional Propositions

Central Phenomenon

The central phenomenon as stated in the grounded theory is “Educational policy and the portrayal of literacy pedagogy in serious school film is a symbiotic relationship.” According to David Trend, the stories we tell about ourselves as a society in the popular culture are always constructed, delivered, and received in specific historic encounters (Trend, 1995). Cohen (1999) believes that films about schooling and popular culture are a visual report on the world of education in that the film occupies the same spaces as written texts about the same subjects. This symbiosis supports the relationship between education and popular culture.

Open Coding

The Open Coding process produced twelve different categories that are represented in Figure 31. These categories were described at length in Chapter Five of the research study. The twelve categories are represented in the rectangles located on the outer perimeter of Figure 31.

Axial Coding

The Axial Coding process required putting the data in a different arrangement in order to understand the different ways in which the emerging themes impacted the research study. The Axial Codes of Self, Beyond Self, Critical Connections, and Representations of Literacy are represented in the arrow shapes of the grounded theory.

Theme One

The theme of Internal Forces versus External Forces was created when the axial coding categories were analyzed. Internal Forces of intrinsic motivation, emotion, and empowerment are vital to the successful classroom environment. External Forces such as outside influences, school criticism, and peer influence are also influential to the classroom

environment in that they are many times a motivator for stronger Internal Forces. Theme One partners equally with Themes Two and Three.

Theme Two

The theme of Traditional Pedagogy versus Nontraditional Pedagogy was also created when the axial coding categories were analyzed. The traditional pedagogies represented on screen were shown both as successful and unsuccessful depending on the context of the scene and the time period of the film's setting. The nontraditional pedagogies were always shown as successful, with several teachers representing both types of pedagogies in the scenes from the study corpus. Theme Two partners equally with Themes One and Three.

Theme Three

The theme of Representations of Traditional Literacies versus Representations of New Literacies was the final theme to emerge when the axial coding categories were analyzed. Both literacies recognized as traditional and new were depicted in the scene of the study corpus. Theme Three partners equally with Themes One and Two.

Conditional Propositions

The following conditional propositions can be hypothesized from the grounded theory:

- If traditional pedagogy is depicted in the school film, it is most likely that the literacies will be represented as traditional literacies.
- If external forces are depicted in the school film, it is most likely that the pedagogy being represented will be nontraditional or that the literacies will be represented as new literacies.
- If a combination of traditional and new literacies is depicted in the school film, it is most likely that the factors that impact internal forces will be depicted as well.

Summary

Chapter Five provided the contextual data and information necessary to understand the research study. By understanding the emerging themes from the semiotic analyses of the study corpus, the researcher has attempted to create an understanding of the symbiotic

relationship between educational policy and the representation of literacy in serious school film as they contributed to the three central themes of the study: Internal Forces versus External Forces, Traditional Pedagogy versus Nontraditional Pedagogy, and Representations of Traditional Literacies versus Representations of New Literacies. These three themes represented the understanding of how the depiction of literacy in school film directly impacts popular culture, which in turn, directly impacts the development of educational policy.

CHAPTER 6 - Discussion

This chapter provides additional insight and discussion into the findings and conclusions of the study. By examining the central phenomenon demonstrated in the grounded theory, the researcher will interpret the implications of these findings for educators and propose further considerations of the study. A discussion of additional recommendations and suggestions for further research will conclude the study.

Summary of the Study

Miles Myers (1995, p. 15), in his book *Changing Our Minds*, outlines four specific literacy shifts that have taken place in the United States: from orality to signature literacy (1660-1776), from signature literacy to recitation literacy (1776 to 1864), from recitation literacy to decoding/analytic literacy (1864-1916), and from decoding/analytic literacy to critical/translation literacy (1916-1983). Most of the films of the study corpus represent the literacy shift of decoding/analytic literacy to critical/translation literacies. However, several of the films represent a different perspective in critical/translation literacies in their accounting for the sociocultural influences that impact student learning.

The purpose of this study was to examine the representations of literacy in popular school film. This study was conducted in the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008. This study sought to answer the following research questions: The present study is guided by two research questions: How is literacy represented in serious school film? What is the ideal of literacy pedagogy advanced in school film? The subsidiary questions were: What are the components of literacy in serious school film? What importance does the film place on literacy? How is literacy expressed? What is the role of the teacher as literacy pedagogy is advanced? What is the role of the student as literacy pedagogy is advanced? What is the role of the school as literacy pedagogy is advanced?

In order to examine the primary and subsidiary questions, films were selected for the study corpus following an examination of an existing school film filmography by Nederhouser (2000). Using a series of criteria, the study corpus was narrowed to a body of

twelve films prior to the year of 1996. Using the same methodology employed by Nederhouser and again using the same series of criteria to narrow the field, a body of three films were added to the study corpus from 1999 to present day, bringing the total study corpus to fifteen films, with at least one film from each decade since 1930. As described in Chapter 3, a team of literacy experts [inter-raters] was called together in order to select scenes from each of the films that best represented the film's view or definition of literacy. These scenes were subject to a semiotic analysis using semiotic codes developed by Daniel Chandler (2006) based upon dialogue, body codes, and commodity codes.

Findings

The semiotic analyses were then coded qualitatively, assisted by the software program HyperResearch. Data revealed fifty-eight initial coding categories that emerged from the semiotic analysis of the study corpus of film. Twelve open codes were identified: Intrinsic Motivation, Passion, Empowerment, Outside Influence, School Criticism, Peer Influence, Connective Tissue, Critical Thinking, Teacher as Instructional Leader, Traditional Literacies, New Literacies, and Expressions of Literacy. These categories combined to create the axial coding categories of Self, Beyond Self, Critical Connections, and Representations of Literacy. They were separated into the emerging themes of Internal versus External Forces, Traditional versus Non-traditional Pedagogy, and Traditional Representations of Literacy versus New Literacies.

1. How is literacy represented in serious school film?

Throughout the data of the study corpus, literacy represents the paradigm (O'Brien and Bauer, 2005) of two specific categories: traditional literacies and new literacies. While appreciating that two distinct paradigms exist, several of the scenes from the study corpus contain components of literacy representing both traditional and new literacies.

Regarding the **components of literacy**, several of the scenes represented literacy as the ability to read or write. In *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (1939), *Up the Down Staircase* (1967), *Teachers* (1984), *Dead Poets' Society* (1989), *Dangerous Minds* (1995), and *187*(1997), the ability to read a text or to write fluently for a specific audience is emphasized. *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* and *Teachers* also emphasized the component of fluency as well as comprehension when students were depicted reading a text, while *Chalk* (2006) represented the component

of oral spelling. Fluency was also a component of the musical recitations in *The Corn is Green* (1945) and *The Ron Clark Story* (2002), although the latter falls under the category of new literacies.

New literacies are also represented in the scenes from the study corpus. In *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) and *Freedom Writers* (2007), the students are exposed to a variety of video media that serves as a springboard or reinforcement of classroom content. In both instances, the students remain emotionally engaged to the media texts. Music as a text is explored in *Mr. Holland's Opus* (1995), as well as *The Ron Clark Story* (2002). The teachers in each of the films use the popular music of the students' generation to engage them in the curriculum of the class.

Within both traditional and new literacies, evidence of critical literacy emerged in the scenes of the study corpus. The ability to analyze a text (in various forms), collaborate with their peers, and make critical connections were components demonstrated in every film of the study corpus. *To Sir, With Love* (1967) and *Stand and Deliver* (1987) emphasize the importance of conversation in order to learn to become proficient problem solvers, while *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), *Up the Down Staircase* (1967), *Conrack* (1974), *Dead Poets' Society* (1989), and *Dangerous Minds* (1995) demonstrate the importance of social collaboration and discussion in order to unveil a deeper meaning within a text.

The value or **importance** each film places on literacy is interwoven with the ways in which **literacy is expressed** in the scenes of the study corpus. Literacy is expressed as an avenue to a better way of life in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (1939), *The Corn is Green* (1945), *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), *Up the Down Staircase* (1967), *To Sir, With Love* (1967), *Conrack* (1974), *Teachers* (1984), *Stand and Deliver* (1987), *Dangerous Minds* (1995), *187* (1997), and *The Ron Clark Story* (2002). All of these films depict a teacher that truly values literacy and wishes to share the opportunities that literacy can provide with the students in the classroom. Literacy is also expressed as an avenue of emotional expression in the scenes from *Dead Poets' Society* (1989), *Mr. Holland's Opus* (1995), *Chalk* (2006), and *Freedom Writers* (2007).

2. What is the ideal of literacy pedagogy advanced in school film?

The ideal of literacy pedagogy advanced in school film varies greatly from film to film, although there are similarities depending on the role of the teacher in the classroom. Traditional pedagogies, including teacher-centered and teacher-directed activities, are present in most of the films of the study corpus. Mr. Chips, Miss Ronberry, Mr. Holland, and even Mr. Keating all use traditional pedagogies to some degree in the scenes. The **role of the teacher** in the use of traditional pedagogies in the scenes from the study corpus is as a director of a fixed curriculum and as a disseminator of information to the students. The **role of the students** in the traditional pedagogy depicted in the scenes is typically passive, working independently as a recipient of information from the teachers.

Nontraditional teaching methods, by definition, encourage active, cooperative, and collaborative learning. Nontraditional literacy pedagogy first appears in *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), followed by *To Sir, With Love* (1967), *Conrack* (1974), *Dead Poets' Society* (1989), *The Ron Clark Story* (2002), *Chalk* (2006), and *Freedom Writers* (2007). The **role of the teacher** in the use of nontraditional pedagogies in the scenes from the study corpus is that of an interactive facilitator, using student interests and needs to guide the curriculum of the classroom. The **role of the students** in the nontraditional pedagogy depicted in the scenes is that of an active collaborator, using critical thinking and problem-solving techniques to find connective tissue between the curriculum and their own lives.

Most of the films of the study corpus have a combination of traditional and nontraditional literacy pedagogies. For example, Mr. Clark employs traditional pedagogy with his students at the beginning of the scene in *The Ron Clark Story*. After realizing that his students were not successful with the traditional pedagogy, he uses a collaborative and active nontraditional method to engage the students in their learning. Also, in *Dead Poets' Society*, Mr. Keating begins the scene using traditional methods with his class, as this has been the type of teaching the students have become accustomed. At a pinnacle moment in the scene, Mr. Keating switches pedagogical styles, powerfully illustrating to the students that learning will forever be different for them from that point forward.

The **role of the school** in the scenes of the study corpus, when depicted, is that of a critic, to varying degrees. The teachers who dialogue with Mr. Dadier in the scene from *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) question his use of media in the classroom as a springboard for

discussions. As an administrator, Dr. Bester is a silent observer in Miss Barrett's classroom in *Up the Down Staircase* (1967), but it is Mr. McKay, a peer teacher, who is extremely critical of the level of sound that came from the classroom discussion of *Tale of Two Cities*. In *Conrack* (1974), the school board disagreed with Mr. Conroy's nontraditional teaching methods and dismissed him, much to the disappointment of Mr. Conroy and his students. Mr. Keating faces scrutiny from his peers in *Dead Poets' Society* (1989) as he is encouraging the students to rip out the pages of their textbooks. Mr. Holland, when finally engaging his students in a discussion of Ionian and Dorian scales through Rock and Roll music, is observed by a visibly angry assistant principal who has heard the music in the school's hallways. Unfortunately, within the scenes of the study corpus, there is a distinct lack of any positive support from school representatives.

Conclusions

This study highlights the representation of literacy in what Myers would call a component process of a sign-system, representation, or cognitive-processing intelligence (Myers, 1996, p. 287). Myers describes this type of intelligence as a focus on "the discourse of many different sign systems, shifting among the visual, the alphabetic, and the action-sequence, thereby introducing into English classes improvisational drama, film studies, computerized simulations, TV dramas, radio and TV talks shows, and the use of charts and diagrams for thinking through problems" (p. 295). This discourse of sign systems is shifting into the classroom more quickly because of our students' exposure to popular culture.

As a culture, literacy is moving into this phase of sign system discourse that Myers predicted. Most recently, this literacy movement has been termed 21st-Century literacy or literacies, most recently defined by the National Council of Teachers of English:

Literacy has always been a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups. As society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. These literacies—from reading online newspapers to participating in virtual classrooms—are multiple, dynamic, and malleable. As in the past, they are

inextricably linked with particular histories, life possibilities and social trajectories of individuals and groups. Twenty-first century readers and writers need to

- Develop proficiency with the tools of technology
- Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes
- Manage, analyze and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multi-media texts
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.” (NCTE, 2008)

If research in the field of literacy is evolving to include any and all of the characteristics mentioned above, then shouldn't the representations of literacy in popular school film also reflect this evolution?

Implications for Practice

The evolution in the definition of literacy, what it means to be literate, and what it means to teach literacy as it is represented in popular school film is a mirror to the ways in which literacy has been defined, understood, and taught in schools. The findings of this study are that of only one study corpus of popular school films with a serious message. The team of inter-raters ultimately chose the scenes that were analyzed semiotically by the researcher, selecting the scenes that best defined the film's definition of literacy. The patterns and themes that emerged were unique and by design produced unique results. Nonetheless, a study of additional scenes from each film may also bring to light similar trends throughout the decades of film. Additionally, the study of each of the films of the study corpus in its entirety could serve as a springboard for many research studies.

Although the film scenes that were studied are fictional, with actors playing the roles of teachers and students, one can assume certain truths about these portrayals as they reflect many ways in which classrooms have and will continue to operate. Within these

assumptions, we should note that all stakeholders have a preconceived idea of what literacy pedagogy is supposed to look like in the classroom.

Our students and their parents come to school with an understanding of literacy pedagogy, based upon their experiences in school and the portrayal of literacy pedagogy in the media. The seminal films *Animal House*, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, all incredibly popular portrayals of school environments of the past thirty years, continue to pervade the popular culture through repetitive showings on TV and catch phrases used within and outside of the educational community (“Bueller.....Bueller.....”). The recent and incredibly popular *Napoleon Dynamite*, with its portrayal of the ‘nerd’ for the 21st century, might well be on its way in joining the aforementioned seminal films. These examples of school help define for our students and their parents what ‘school’ is supposed to look like and feel like, sometimes causing a dissonance between families and schools.

Secondly, pre-service teachers also come to the classroom with presumptions about literacy pedagogy. Take for example the pre-service teachers of my generation, many of whom chose teaching as a profession for one simple reason: they wanted to be Mr. Keating from *Dead Poets' Society*. As pre-service teachers, many looked forward to the day when students would walk their own individual paths, rip out textbook pages, and chant ‘carpe diem’. For many, Mr. Keating was the first example of teacher that could change lives, motivating pre-service teachers like myself ‘to find my verse’ and to contribute creativity to the classroom. Pre-service teachers of today mention Ms. Gruwell in *Freedom Writers* or Mrs. Johnson in *Dangerous Minds* as on-screen teachers that have guided their decisions to become teachers. Educators, and those who consider entering the profession, are molded by the classroom examples that they see, in their personal experiences, and the experiences they have with representations of classrooms and pedagogy in popular culture.

Just as we account for someone’s prior experiences with school, we also need to account for the baggage they acquire from media messages. As a profession, we need to understand to what extent our stakeholders’ notions of teaching are based upon examples from popular culture.

As the definition of literacy evolves, so does the need for a ‘malleable’ pedagogy. Media texts, much like they are becoming part of the pre-service programs for teachers (Trier), need to become part of the continuing education of practicing teachers and in-service

programs. Film clip studies, much like the design of the study corpus, could not only be used to examine current trends in literacy representations in popular culture with practicing teachers, but could also serve as the springboard for valuable discussions about teachers' definitions and understandings of school, curriculum, pedagogy, and literacy. I would argue that a media study of this type would at least be as worthy as an in-service book study of professional texts and, perhaps, more engaging. Indeed, a professional series of videos and in-service activities based upon the scenes of the study corpus would be a valuable and worthy endeavor.

Using the film clips to inform parents and students of the representations of literacy in popular culture and media would also be a powerful way to impact the learning that happens in the classroom. By carefully studying these scenes, the stakeholders can assess what biases they have about literacy and school because of the portrayal of them in the media.

The four axial codes of this study could serve as thematic umbrellas under which series of in-services are developed for teachers. Studying the influence of Self, Beyond Self, Critical Connections, and Representations of Literacy on current classroom pedagogy of teachers would serve to be a powerful conversation, a needed conversation, in our schools.

Further Considerations and Implications for Further Research

Several limitations of this study were previously discussed and are outlined again below, expanding upon the specific considerations that should be taken into account.

Because this research was an exploratory study based on techniques of semiotic analysis, this investigation cannot provide definitive answers regarding the potential impact of representations of literacy in popular school films had on a variety of audiences. Rather, the techniques borrowed from the humanities and the social sciences to explore the research questions and to provide the initial analysis served as a foundation for additional examinations grounded in social sciences. Several specific limitations are detailed below.

Because of the large number of popular school films produced since the 1930's, it was necessary to narrow the scope of the study corpus through a series of criteria. A team of inter-raters selected the scenes chosen for analysis. The semiotic analysis is essentially my own, with the results being subjective with the possibility of researcher bias.

We are becoming a multimodal society in many ways. We live in a society that revolves around media in a critical mass. The integration of the traditional literacies of reading and writing are being woven into the new literacies in the classrooms. Is this being reflected accurately on screen? Does society understand that the use of media and technology in the classroom can strengthen literacy instruction? Or does society believe that education has moved too far away from the traditional reading and writing instruction that many received in school?

We are continuing to grow as a profession as our field of study evolves. Over the past fifty years, the standards for English teachers included the areas of reading and writing. The standards for English classrooms then added listening and speaking, soon followed by the area of viewing as a standard skill necessary of all students to be successful.

The undergraduate curriculum also continues to transform, recently adding courses such as linguistics, multicultural literature, and young adult culture. Why not multimodal literature? Should we not prepare our pre-service teachers for the multimodal authoring that students will be doing in their classrooms?

An important question, one that remains unanswered in this study is to what extent these films play a role in shaping the perceptions of literacy instruction with the popular culture. What impact do these perceptions have on educational policy?

This field of study provides a multitude of avenues from which to choose future research projects. As this study was an overview of school films since 1930's, the study could be repeated in order to study more specifically particular decades of school film, tracing the progression of representations of literacy from the beginning of each film until the conclusion. The transferability of the research study could also take place with television representations of literacy in series or sitcoms that depict adolescents and/or schools.

Examining literacy representations in popular television shows of teenagers since the 1950's would also provide an additional layer of understanding to this area of research. Beginning with "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" (1952-1966) to "The Facts of Life" (1979-1988) to "Smallville" (2001-present), with many series in between, a fertile ground of research exists in which to examine the impact of these school and literacy representations on the stakeholders of our schools.

While a great deal of research exists on the portrayal of teachers in popular school film (Dalton, Considine, Trier), a study of the portrayals of real-life teachers in school film would be an area worth investigating. Many of the teachers in the study corpus are based upon the lives of real teachers (Mr. Conroy, Mr. Escalante, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Clark, Ms. Gruwell) who made a remarkable impact on their students.

The inter-rater group that was used in this research study could easily be expanded to a focus group, reflecting and responding through semiotic analysis to the same study corpus or a larger group of school films. This would broaden the results of the semiotic interpretations of the literacy representations, possibly providing more generality and universality. Also broadening the focus group to include a larger cross-section of consumers of popular culture would enrich the discussions of literacy representations and offer more insight to the impact of these representations on society.

Although not a primary focus of this research, it has been mentioned that the role of the school, when revealed in the study corpus scenes, was the role of a skeptic or critic to the teacher/pedagogy/students in the classroom. The role of the school was most frequently represented as a skeptical or critical administrator. Why are the administrators in these films often portrayed as villains? Where is the villainy typically located in school films? Why do we (popular culture, filmmakers, educators) place the villainy there? This is an area that could also be served by further investigation and analysis.

And finally, a more in-depth historical analysis of the symbiotic relationship between educational policy and representations of literacy in school film is needed. While clear connections exist between several groundbreaking educational events and school films, a more detailed analysis is needed to strengthen the theory.

Summary

Through a semiotic analysis of representations of literacy in scenes from the films of the study corpus, the data provided twelve open codes and four axial codes that contributed to the grounded theory presented in this study. The classroom environments studied in this film were depictions created by writers, directed by filmmakers, and dramatized by talented actors. However, these depictions are not isolated to their DVD cases. These depictions are timeless, being viewed and viewed again through television broadcasts, rentals at the local

video store, and video clips on YouTube.com. These classroom environments and the literacy representations within them continue to be viewed by a large segment of the popular culture, providing influence to the ways in which popular culture comes to understand the meaning of literacy and how literacy is taught.

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Appendix A - Initial Filmography

| Title | Year | Genre |
|---------------------------------|------|-----------|
| The Great Train Robbery | 1902 | Action |
| Birth of a Nation | 1915 | Drama |
| The Mark of Zorro | 1920 | Action |
| Robin Hood | 1922 | Action |
| The Jazz Singer | 1927 | Drama |
| Frankenstein | 1931 | Horror |
| Little Caesar | 1931 | Drama |
| Topaze | 1933 | Drama |
| Silk Hat Kid | 1935 | Drama |
| Top Hat | 1935 | Musical |
| College Holiday | 1936 | Musical |
| Follow the Fleet | 1936 | Musical |
| These Three | 1936 | Drama |
| Hoosier School Boy | 1937 | Drama |
| Life of Emile Zola | 1937 | Drama |
| Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs | 1937 | Animation |
| Two Wise Maids | 1937 | Drama |
| Varsity Show | 1937 | Musical |
| Boys' Town | 1938 | Drama |
| Gone With the Wind | 1939 | Drama |
| Goodbye, Mr. Chips | 1939 | Drama |
| Second Fiddle | 1939 | Musical |
| Wizard of Oz | 1939 | Musical |
| Dr. Kildare Goes Home | 1940 | Drama |
| The Philadelphia Story | 1940 | Comedy |
| Tom Brown's Schooldays | 1940 | Drama |
| Cheers for Miss Bishop | 1941 | Drama |
| Citizen Kane | 1941 | Drama |
| Hold Back the Dawn | 1941 | Drama |
| How Green Was My Valley | 1941 | Drama |
| Casablanca | 1942 | Drama |
| Thunderbirds | 1942 | Drama |
| Bathing Beauty | 1944 | Musical |
| Meet Me in St. Louis | 1944 | Musical |

| | | |
|---|------|-----------|
| The Corn is Green | 1945 | Drama |
| A Tree Grows in Brooklyn | 1945 | Drama |
| The Brute Man | 1946 | Horror |
| It's a Wonderful Life | 1946 | Drama |
| Gentlemen's Agreement | 1947 | Drama |
| Mother is a Freshman | 1948 | Comedy |
| City Across the River | 1949 | Drama |
| Legend of Sleepy Hollow | 1949 | Animation |
| Pinky | 1949 | Drama |
| A Woman of Distinction | 1950 | Comedy |
| Bannerline | 1951 | Drama |
| The Browning Version | 1951 | Drama |
| A Streetcar Named Desire | 1951 | Drama |
| Tom Brown's Schooldays | 1951 | Drama |
| Dreamboat | 1952 | Comedy |
| Bright Reed | 1953 | Drama |
| Desert Rats | 1953 | Drama |
| A Lion in the Streets | 1953 | Drama |
| The Robe | 1953 | Drama |
| Shane | 1953 | Western |
| Seven Brides for Seven Brothers | 1954 | Musical |
| Tanganyika | 1954 | Action |
| Blackboard Jungle | 1955 | Drama |
| Bring Your Smile Along | 1955 | Comedy |
| Good Morning Miss Dove | 1955 | Drama |
| The Kentuckian | 1955 | Western |
| Marty | 1955 | Drama |
| Our Miss Brooks | 1955 | Comedy |
| Rebel Without a Cause | 1955 | Drama |
| High Society | 1956 | Movies |
| The King and I | 1956 | Musical |
| The Unguarded Moment | 1956 | Drama |
| An Affair to Remember | 1957 | Drama |
| Blood of Dracula | 1957 | Horror |
| Bop Girl Goes Calypso | 1957 | Musical |
| Hot Rod Rumble | 1957 | Drama |
| Merry Andrew | 1958 | Comedy |
| Teacher's Pet | 1958 | Comedy |
| The Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend | 1959 | Comedy |
| Ben Hur | 1959 | Drama |
| Daddy-o | 1959 | Drama |
| Teenagers from Outer Space | 1959 | Sci-Fi |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------|---------|
| Lost World | 1960 | Sci-Fi |
| The Children's Hour | 1961 | Drama |
| Spare the Rod | 1961 | Drama |
| The Miracle Worker | 1962 | Drama |
| Term of Trial | 1962 | Drama |
| A Child is Waiting | 1963 | Drama |
| The Nutty Professor | 1963 | Comedy |
| Father Goose | 1964 | Comedy |
| Johnny Tiger | 1966 | Drama |
| The Sand Pebbles | 1966 | Action |
| Never a Dull Moment | 1967 | Comedy |
| To Sir With Love | 1967 | Drama |
| Up the Down Staircase | 1967 | Drama |
| Charly | 1968 | Drama |
| Mary Jane | 1968 | Drama |
| Rachel, Rachel | 1968 | Drama |
| Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid | 1969 | Western |
| Goodbye, Mr. Chips | 1969 | Drama |
| Halls of Anger | 1969 | Drama |
| The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie | 1969 | Drama |
| The Beguiled | 1971 | Action |
| The Steagle | 1971 | Comedy |
| Summer of '42 | 1971 | Drama |
| Child's Play | 1972 | Drama |
| The Poseidon Academy | 1972 | Action |
| American Graffiti | 1973 | Comedy |
| Conrack | 1974 | Drama |
| The Teacher | 1974 | Drama |
| Towering Inferno | 1974 | Drama |
| Airport | 1975 | Action |
| Cooley High | 1975 | Comedy |
| Jaws | 1975 | Drama |
| Rocky | 1976 | Drama |
| Why Shoot the Teacher | 1976 | Drama |
| Looking for Mr. Goodbar | 1977 | Drama |
| Class of Miss McMichael | 1978 | Drama |
| Star Wars | 1979 | Sci-Fi |
| Starting Over | 1979 | Comedy |
| Airplane | 1980 | Comedy |
| Fame | 1980 | Musical |
| Fast Times at Ridgemont High | 1982 | Comedy |
| First Blood | 1982 | Drama |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|---------|
| Gremlins | 1984 | Sci-Fi |
| Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom | 1984 | Action |
| Police Academy | 1984 | Comedy |
| Sixteen Candles | 1984 | Comedy |
| Teachers | 1984 | Comedy |
| Breakfast Club | 1985 | Comedy |
| St. Elmo's Fire | 1985 | Drama |
| Children of a Lesser God | 1986 | Drama |
| Ferris Bueller's Day Off | 1986 | Comedy |
| Pretty in Pink | 1986 | Drama |
| Wildcats | 1986 | Comedy |
| Good Morning Vietnam | 1987 | Drama |
| The Principal | 1987 | Drama |
| Summer School | 1987 | Comedy |
| Naked Gun | 1988 | Comedy |
| Stand and Deliver | 1988 | Drama |
| Torch Song Trilogy | 1988 | Drama |
| Dead Poets Society | 1989 | Drama |
| Lean on Me | 1989 | Drama |
| Dances With Wolves | 1990 | Western |
| Kindergarten Cop | 1990 | Comedy |
| Russia House | 1990 | Drama |
| Oscar | 1991 | Comedy |
| School Ties | 1992 | Drama |
| Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot | 1992 | Comedy |
| The Last Action Hero | 1993 | Comedy |
| Sister Act 2 | 1993 | Comedy |
| Renaissance Man | 1994 | Comedy |
| The Browning Version | 1995 | Drama |
| Dangerous Minds | 1995 | Drama |
| Mr. Holland's Opus | 1995 | Drama |
| High School High | 1996 | Comedy |
| Mirror Has Two Faces | 1996 | Comedy |
| The Substitute | 1996 | Drama |
| Sunset Park | 1996 | Comedy |
| Twister | 1996 | Drama |
| In and Out | 1997 | Comedy |
| 187 | 1997 | Drama |
| One Fine Day | 1997 | Comedy |
| Titanic | 1997 | Drama |
| The Faculty | 1998 | Horror |
| Substitute 2 | 1998 | Drama |

Wild Things
Election

1998 Horror
1999 Drama

Appendix B - Study Corpus Selection Criteria

1: set in K-12 school 2: teacher as central character 3: serious film 4: serious literary event
5: available for rent in the United States

| Title | Year | Genre | Criteria 1 | Criteria 2 | Criteria 3 | Criteria 4 | Criteria 5 |
|--|-------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Airport | 1975 | Action | N | | | | |
| Airplane | 1980 | Comedy | N | | | | |
| American Graffiti | 1973 | Comedy | N | | | | |
| An Affair to Remember | 1957 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Bannerline | 1951 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Bathing Beauty | 1944 | Musical | N | | | | |
| The Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend | 1959 | Comedy | N | | | | |
| The Beguiled | 1971 | Action | Y | N | | | |
| Ben Hur | 1959 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Birth of a Nation | 1915 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Blackboard Jungle | 1955 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Blood of Dracula | 1957 | Horror | N | | | | |
| Bop Girl Goes Calypso | 1957 | Musical | N | | | | |
| Boys' Town | 1938 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Breakfast Club | 1985 | Comedy | Y | N | | | |
| Bright Reed | 1953 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Bring Your Smile Along | 1955 | Comedy | N | | | | |
| The Browning Version | 1951 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | N | |
| The Browning Version | 1995 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | N | |
| The Brute Man | 1946 | Horror | N | | | | |
| Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid | 1969 | Western | N | | | | |
| Casablanca | 1942 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Charly | 1968 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Cheers for Miss Bishop | 1941 | Drama | N | | | | |
| A Child is Waiting | 1963 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Child's Play | 1972 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |
| The Children's Hour | 1961 | Drama | Y | Y | N | | |
| Children of a Lesser God | 1986 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Citizen Kane | 1941 | Drama | N | | | | |
| City Across the River | 1949 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Class of Miss McMichael | 1978 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| College Holiday | 1936 | Musical | N | | | | | |
| Conrack | 1974 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Cooley High | 1975 | Comedy | Y | Y | N | | | |
| The Corn is Green | 1945 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Daddy-o | 1959 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Dances With Wolves | 1990 | Western | N | | | | | |
| Dangerous Minds | 1995 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Dead Poets Society | 1989 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Desert Rats | 1953 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Dr. Kildare Goes Home | 1940 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Dreamboat | 1952 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Election | 1999 | Comedy | Y | Y | Y | N | | |
| The Faculty | 1998 | Horror | Y | N | | | | |
| Fame | 1980 | Musical | Y | N | | | | |
| Fast Times at Ridgemont High | 1982 | Comedy | Y | N | | | | |
| Father Goose | 1964 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Ferris Bueller's Day Off | 1986 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| First Blood | 1982 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Follow the Fleet | 1936 | Musical | N | | | | | |
| Frankenstein | 1931 | Horror | N | | | | | |
| Gentlemen's Agreement | 1947 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Gone With the Wind | 1939 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Good Morning Miss Dove | 1955 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | |
| Good Morning Vietnam | 1987 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Goodbye, Mr. Chips | 1939 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Goodbye, Mr. Chips | 1969 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| The Great Train Robbery | 1902 | Action | N | | | | | |
| Gremlins | 1984 | Sci-Fi | N | | | | | |
| Halls of Anger | 1969 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |
| High School High | 1996 | Comedy | Y | Y | Y | N | | |
| High Society | 1956 | Movies | N | | | | | |
| Hold Back the Dawn | 1941 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Hoosier School Boy | 1937 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Hot Rod Rumble | 1957 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| How Green Was My Valley | 1941 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| In and Out | 1997 | Comedy | Y | Y | N | | | |
| Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom | 1984 | Action | N | | | | | |
| It's a WonderfulLife | 1946 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Jaws | 1975 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| The Jazz Singer | 1927 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Johnny Tiger | 1966 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| The Kentuckian | 1955 | Western | N | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Kindergarten Cop | 1990 | Comedy | Y | N | | | | |
| The King and I | 1956 | Musical | N | | | | | |
| The Last Action Hero | 1993 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Lean on Me | 1989 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |
| Legend of Sleepy Hollow | 1949 | Animation | N | | | | | |
| Life of Emile Zola | 1937 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| A Lion in the Streets | 1953 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Little Caesar | 1931 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Looking for Mr. Goodbar | 1977 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Lost World | 1960 | Sci-Fi | N | | | | | |
| The Mark of Zorro | 1920 | Action | N | | | | | |
| Marty | 1955 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Mary Jane | 1968 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |
| Meet Me in St. Louis | 1944 | Musical | N | | | | | |
| Merry Andrew | 1958 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| The Miracle Worker | 1962 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Mirror Has Two Faces | 1996 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Mr. Holland's Opus | 1995 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Mother is a Freshman | 1948 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Naked Gun | 1988 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Never a Dull Moment | 1967 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| The Nutty Professor | 1963 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| 187 | 1997 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| One Fine Day | 1997 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Oscar | 1991 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Our Miss Brooks | 1955 | Comedy | Y | Y | N | | | |
| The Philadelphia Story | 1940 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Pinky | 1949 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Police Academy | 1984 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| The Poseidon Academy | 1972 | Action | N | | | | | |
| Pretty in Pink | 1986 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie | 1969 | Drama | Y | Y | N | | | |
| The Principal | 1987 | Drama | Y | Y | N | | | |
| Rachel, Rachel | 1968 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Rebel Without a Cause | 1955 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |
| Renaissance Man | 1994 | Comedy | Y | Y | N | | | |
| The Robe | 1953 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Robin Hood | 1922 | Action | N | | | | | |
| Rocky | 1976 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Russia House | 1990 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| St. Elmo's Fire | 1985 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| The Sand Pebbles | 1966 | Action | N | | | | | |
| School Ties | 1992 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Second Fiddle | 1939 | Musical | N | | | | | |
| Seven Brides for Seven Brothers | 1954 | Musical | N | | | | | |
| Shane | 1953 | Western | N | | | | | |
| Silk Hat Kid | 1935 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Sister Act 2 | 1993 | Comedy | Y | N | | | | |
| Sixteen Candles | 1984 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs | 1937 | Animation | N | | | | | |
| Spare the Rod | 1961 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Stand and Deliver | 1988 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Star Wars | 1979 | Sci-Fi | N | | | | | |
| Starting Over | 1979 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| The Steagle | 1971 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot | 1992 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| A Streetcar Named Desire | 1951 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| The Substitute | 1996 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |
| Substitute 2 | 1998 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |
| Summer of '42 | 1971 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Summer School | 1987 | Comedy | Y | Y | N | | | |
| Sunset Park | 1996 | Comedy | N | | | | | |
| Tanganyika | 1954 | Action | N | | | | | |
| The Teacher | 1974 | Drama | Y | Y | N | | | |
| Teachers | 1984 | Comedy | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Teacher's Pet | 1958 | Comedy | Y | N | | | | |
| Teenagers from Outer Space | 1959 | Sci-Fi | N | | | | | |
| Term of Trial | 1962 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| These Three | 1936 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Thunderbirds | 1942 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Titanic | 1997 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| To Sir With Love | 1967 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Tom Brown's Schooldays | 1940 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |
| Tom Brown's Schooldays | 1951 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |
| Topaze | 1933 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Top Hat | 1935 | Musical | N | | | | | |
| Torch Song Trilogy | 1988 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Towering Inferno | 1974 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| A Tree Grows in Brooklyn | 1945 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Twister | 1996 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| Two Wise Maids | 1937 | Drama | N | | | | | |
| The Unguarded Moment | 1956 | Drama | Y | N | | | | |
| Up the Down Staircase | 1967 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Varsity Show | 1937 | Musical | N | | | | | |
| Wildcats | 1986 | Comedy | Y | N | | | | |
| Wild Things | 1998 | Horror | N | | | | | |

| | | | |
|------------------------|------|---------|---|
| Wizard of Oz | 1939 | Musical | N |
| Why Shoot the Teacher | 1976 | Drama | Y |
| A Woman of Distinction | 1950 | Comedy | N |



Appendix C - 1999-2007 Additions to Study Corpus Filmography

| Title | Year | Genre | Criteria 1 | Criteria 2 | Criteria 3 | Criteria 4 | Criteria 5 |
|---|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| A Beautiful Mind | 2001 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Akeelah and the Bee | 2006 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Bang Bang, You're Dead | 2002 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Bowling for Columbine | 2002 | Documentary | N | | | | |
| Bring It On | 2000 | Comedy | Y | N | | | |
| Center Stage | 2000 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Chalk | 2006 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Cheaters | 2000 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Coach Carter | 2005 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen | 2002 | Comedy | Y | N | | | |
| Drumline | 2002 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Finding Forrester | 2000 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Freedom Writers | 2007 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Friday Night Lights | 2004 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Girlfight | 2000 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Half-Nelson | 2006 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | N | |
| Light It Up | 1999 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Love Don't Cost a Thing | 2003 | Comedy | Y | N | | | |
| Mean Girls | 2004 | Comedy | Y | N | | | |
| Mona Lisa Smile | 2003 | Drama | N | | | | |
| Music of the Heart | 1999 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | N | |
| Napoleon Dynamite | 2004 | Comedy | Y | N | | | |
| October Sky | 1999 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Pay It Forward | 2000 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Radio | 2003 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Raise Your Voice | 2004 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Remember the Titans | 2000 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Save the Last Dance | 2001 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| Saved | 2004 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| School of Rock | 2003 | Comedy | Y | Y | N | | |
| Take the Lead | 2006 | Drama | Y | N | | | |
| The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys | 2002 | Drama | Y | N | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------|-------|---|------------|------------|---|---|
| The History Boys | 2006 | Drama | Y | N | [REDACTED] | | |
| The Perfect Score | 2004 | Drama | Y | N | [REDACTED] | | |
| The Ron Clark Story | 2006 | Drama | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Thirteen | 2003 | Drama | Y | N | [REDACTED] | | |
| Wonderboys | 2000 | Drama | N | [REDACTED] | | | |

Appendix D - Study Corpus Final Filmography

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| <i>Goodbye Mr. Chips</i> | 1939 |
| <i>The Corn is Green</i> | 1945 |
| <i>Blackboard Jungle</i> | 1955 |
| <i>Up the Down Staircase</i> | 1967 |
| <i>To Sir, With Love</i> | 1967 |
| <i>Conrack</i> | 1974 |
| <i>Teachers</i> | 1984 |
| <i>Stand and Deliver</i> | 1988 |
| <i>Dead Poets' Society</i> | 1989 |
| <i>Dangerous Minds</i> | 1995 |
| <i>Mr. Holland's Opus</i> | 1995 |
| <i>187</i> | 1997 |
| <i>The Ron Clark Story</i> | 2006 |
| <i>Chalk</i> | 2006 |
| <i>Freedom Writers</i> | 2007 |

Appendix E - Inter-rater Selection Sheet

| | |
|--|---|
| Interrater: _____ | |
| Your charge is to select a scene from each film of the study corpus that best represents the film's attitude or message on literacy. | |
| Literacy, for the purposes of this study, will be defined as a level of sophistication in which one could interpret sign systems and to differentiate between those sign systems and reality. This definition of literacy can be expanded to include communication within any medium, within and outside of text. To be literate is not only to know, but also to be able to use that knowledge, to make meaning of it and use it to understand the world differently. | |
| The interrater group will need to come to a consensus at the end of the film as to the scene that is selected. | |
| Film _____ | |
| Notes: | |
| Scenes of Interest: | |
| Scene Selected: | : |

Appendix F - Hyper Research Screen Shot

| Code | Total | Min | Max | Mean | Std Dev | Bar |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----|-----|------|---------|-----|
| ACCOUNTABILITY | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 00nan | |
| ADVOCATE | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 00nan | |
| ANGER | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 00nan | |
| APATHY | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 00nan | |
| ART | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 00nan | |
| CHOICE | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 00nan | |
| COLLABORATION | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 00nan | |
| CONFIDENCE | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 00nan | |
| CONNECTIONS | 58 | 58 | 58 | 58 | 00nan | |
| CRITICAL THINKING | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 00nan | |
| CURIOSITY | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 00nan | |
| DISCOURAGEMENT | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 00nan | |
| DISSONANCE | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 00nan | |
| DIVERSITY | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 00nan | |
| DOUBT | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 00nan | |
| DUTY | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 00nan | |
| EMPOWERMENT | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 00nan | |
| ENCOURAGEMENT | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 00nan | |
| ENGAGEMENT | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 00nan | |
| ENTHUSIASM | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 00nan | |
| EQUALITY OR INEQUALITY | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 00nan | |
| EXPRESSIONS OF LITERACY | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 00nan | |
| HUMOR | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 00nan | |
| LACK OF CONFIDENCE | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 00nan | |
| LACK OF INTERACTION | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 00nan | |
| LACK OF RESOURCES | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 00nan | |
| LITERACIES NEW | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 00nan | |
| LITERACY TRADITIONAL | 38 | 38 | 38 | 38 | 00nan | |
| MODELING | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 00nan | |
| MOTIVATION | 41 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 00nan | |
| MULTIGENERATIONAL LEARNING | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 00nan | |
| MUSIC | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 00nan | |
| OPINION | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 00nan | |
| OUT OF SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 00nan | |
| OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL INFLUENCES | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 00nan | |
| OUTSIDE THE BOX | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 00nan | |
| OWNERSHIP | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 00nan | |
| PEER INFLUENCE | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 00nan | |
| PRIDE | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 00nan | |
| QUESTIONING | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 00nan | |
| RESISTANCE | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 00nan | |
| RESPECT | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 00nan | |
| SCHOOL AND OTHER TEACHERS CRITICISM | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 00nan | |
| SELF DOUBT | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 00nan | |
| STUDENT LED DISCUSSION | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 00nan | |
| STUDENTS AS TEACHERS | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 00nan | |