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DEVELOPING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION  
THROUGH WHOLE LANGUAGE

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education:  
Reading/Language Arts

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by  
Zelda Marie Thomas  
March 2010

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION  
THROUGH WHOLE LANGUAGE

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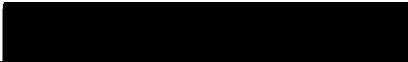
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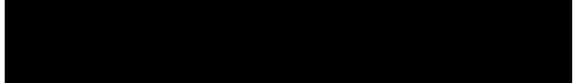
by  
Zelda Marie Thomas

March 2010

Approved by:

  
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## ABSTRACT

A descriptive six-week qualitative study on improving ninth grade students' reading comprehension through teaching the concept of whole language and Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) was conducted. Two questions were explored: 1) How will generative themes motivate students to read a novel for the purpose of improving reading comprehension?, 2) How will incorporating transactional strategies instruction (TSI) motivate students to read novels to improve reading comprehension?

Two groups, the experimental and the control consisted of six ninth grade students, three students to each group. Students completed a novel and a series of reading activities. Weekly reading, journal, discussions, and vocabulary exercises determined the effectiveness of generative themes and reading strategies in supporting struggling readers, English Learners, and special needs students.

Students' attitude and motivation determined students' progress in reading and literacy skills. Data suggested media devices and technology impact students' personal engagement to reading. With an increase in motivation to read, students' attitude and behavior improved.

Results in the effectiveness of TSI, generative themes, and media technology indicated an increase in reading engagement and sensitivity for social themes addressed in the study. Overall, findings on student motivation depended on individual student desire to learn, with or without media technology.

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CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The 2007 California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) scores in English and Language Arts (ELA) shows plummeting scores in basic reading skills by the time students complete at least one semester of high school. Statewide, out of five million ninth grade participants, only 26 percent of the students score under the Basic category. (California Department of Education, 2008) In the previous year, the same group of students (then as eighth graders) scores 31 percent in the same category, indicating a substantial five-point drop by the following year. Fluctuating reading scores are not unusual for California or any other state for that matter. The implementation of new intervention resources and programs and the number of students completing the STAR causes testing scores to shift. But in the past three decades, majority of public school students' competency in reading and literacy continues to register as basic and below basic.

In a recent long-term reading assessment by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), high school

students' reading improvement has not changed in the past thirty years. By using a scoring scale of 150-500, NAEP categorizes students' competence in reading, comprehending simple instructions, and synthesizing complex literature in three areas: Basic (< 400), Proficient (400-499), and Advanced (500+). The NAEP's 2004 long-term trend assessment documents reading and literacy improvements without regard to race, sex, learning disabilities and English language acquisition. As shown in Table 1, thirteen-year-old male students reading score demonstrate a six-point increase since 1971, while female students of the same age post a less impressive movement from 260 to 264.

Table 1: Average Reading Scale Scores on the Long-Term Trend National Assessment Educational Progress by Age, Sex, and Race/Ethnicity: Various Years, 1971 through 2008

Year:	1971	1980	1988	1994	1999	2004	2004	2008
Total	255	258	257	258	259	259	257	260
Male	250	254	252	251	254	254	252	256
Female	261	263	263	266	265	264	262	264

In the same study, between 1971 and 2004, 17 year-olds show no general reading improvements for any student of sex, race, ethnicity, learning disability and English language acquisition. As shown in Figure 1, the 2004 assessment score of 285 is identical to the score in 1971 as shown in the following graph:

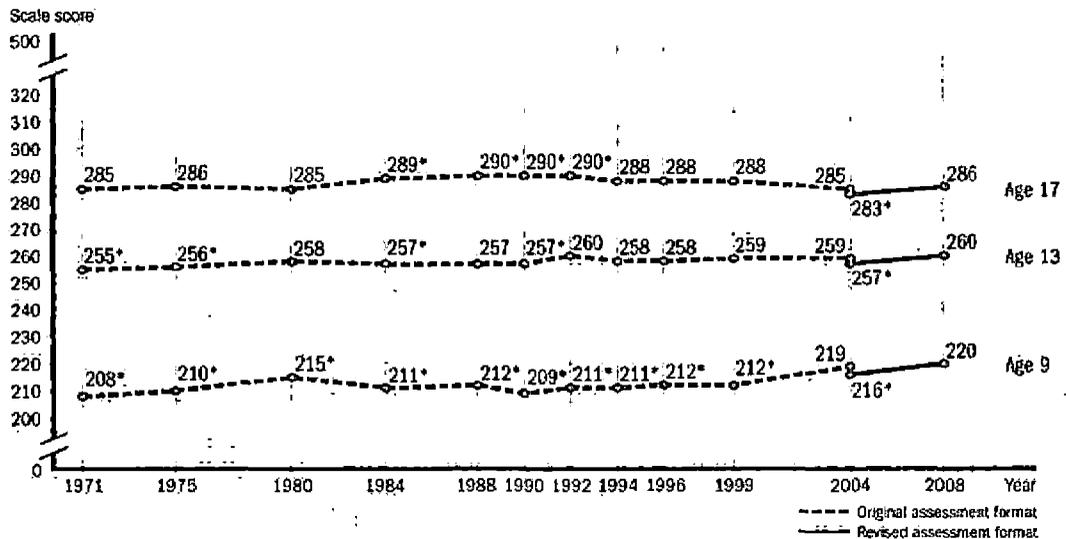


Figure 1: Trend in National Assessment of Educational Progress Reading Average Scores for 9-, 13-, and 17-Year-Old Students.

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress

It is surprising to learn that even in the year 2009, 17-year-olds continue to struggle at closing the thirty-year gap in literacy and reading skills. Could the problem begin and end with public school teachers and curriculum? As I

explore the cause, other factors such as transference of knowledge, and human behavior are addressed as potential links to the problem.

Although high school teachers provide direct instruction, resources, collaborative and modified lessons, the majority of ninth grade students demonstrate difficulty in transferring previous literacy skills and knowledge to ninth grade reading and writing content standards. Pressley (2001) believes students' disconnect in mastering ninth grade reading and comprehension is a result of previous years of separating reading skills through instruction (Pressley, 2001).

While elementary teachers traditionally teach reading skills such as word recognition as a separate primary lesson, Pressley asserts that teaching reading skills in this manner prevents students from learning whole concepts which support reading comprehension (Pressley, 2001). After reviewing NAEP's long-term reading assessment scores, students compartmentalize each learned reading skill, resulting in their inability to combine and use skills as whole concept. Without the ability to apply multiple reading skills to further cognitive development, students

eventually lose the ability to demonstrate grade-level competence in reading comprehension.

Without competence in combining the different aspects of reading skills, many students find the transition from middle to high school literacy abrupt and difficult. Equipped with reading fundamentals, my students demonstrate proficiency in decoding, vocabulary, word recognition, and simple comprehension of short passages and stories. However, their reading comprehension skills (based on Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive development) fall to the lowest levels. In a lesson on direct characterization, students are capable of identifying direct characterization of Montressor and Fortunado's appearance and attitude. With confidence, students demonstrate their ability to cognate surface knowledge about character and story.

With more challenging questions that require students to combine prior knowledge and synthesis skills, students become discouraged. As an example, a lesson on indirect characterization literally places the majority of students in a cognitive frenzy. Whenever students are instructed to identify a story character's feelings about another character by using contextual clues, the questions usually remains not answered. Instead of writing an answer, nearly

one-third of students in my class skip the question entirely.

Increasingly, students complain over lengthy reading assignments and content standards. As I attempted to follow the curriculum plan, avoiding students' overt disconnect to lessons, my students eventually demonstrate the reality of receiving too much too soon with no time to learn. In reality, my ninth grade students nearly fail their first semester due to low motivation, incomplete homework, and poor effort to learn new reading skills. Although my assessment is based on six years of teaching experience, Erikson (1968) describes the counterproductive classroom as an inevitable teenage identity crisis (as cited in Santrok, 2005).

Erikson (1968), the psychosocial expert on the stages of human development reports how students' value social life before academics. It is during this period of human development that teenagers struggle with self, feelings of insecurity, and confusion (as cited in Santrok, 2005, p.185). Identity issues and social status emerge, preventing students from maintaining focus on academic progress (as cited in Santrok, 2005, p.186). If the truth be told, I have noticed students' level of interest in

reading assignments dropping dramatically by the end of the first quarter while social bonds develop in and outside the classroom. It becomes obvious, upon reviewing our district's quarterly ELA exam results that social acceptance and interaction hinders students' motivation for learning. (Santrok, 2005).

When considering President Bush's mandate to level the educational playing field for all public school students, we overlook the human connection to learning (Shor, 2001). Shor (2001) understands that cultural and social connections improve students' motivation for reading. Through the application of generative themes, teachers create reading topics and activities based on students' prior knowledge, community values, and social concerns. By doing so, reading becomes less of a mundane activity derived from basal reading and curriculum, but rather, more of a personal and social connection for students (Shor, 1992). Smith and Wilhelm (2006) report that high school students are "less engaged with their school text," (p.10) than books they choose to read for leisure. Adolescents' motivation to read derives from what students' value (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). When an adolescent is given an opportunity to share what is important to him or her, the

application of prior knowledge triggers motivation to read (Lofflin, n.d.). As students read, Shor believes students should connect what they know to what they are reading.

Researchers' findings on what is necessary to improve high school student reading comprehension have not nationally impacted the secondary level classrooms. Common reading instruction, according to Pressley (2001), has been limited to basic knowledge assessments, with the teacher checking student understanding on who, what, when, where, and why questions related to the reading (Pressley, 2001). This is not difficult to understand: Teachers are held accountable for following curriculum guidelines and demonstrating student learning through quarterly and yearly standardized testing (Armstrong, 2006). This inflexible curriculum limits teacher opportunities to incorporate real-life topics and students' personal experiences to classroom reading.

Generating lessons based on culture and community requires time unavailable to most teachers (Shor, 1992). But if an instructor is given the opportunity to encourage students to apply what they know, lessons will inevitably reflect student lives and interests. Student learning, in turn, would be more compelling and rewarding.

The following questions will be researched:

#### Research Questions

1. How will generative themes motivate students to read a novel for the purpose of improving reading comprehension?
2. How will incorporating transactional strategies instruction (TSI) motivate students to read novels to improve reading comprehension?

#### The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the motivational affects of Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) and generative themes applications in the effort to change students' attitude and behavior in reading novels and volume reading materials to improve ninth grade reading comprehension. By definition, TSI is a series of reading skills including: Making predictions, relating text to background knowledge, asking questions, seeking clarification through picture clues, audio, rereading, and visualizing meaning. As a supportive element to TSI and reading, Shor (1992) contends generative themes, a description of students' culture, beliefs, background and

social interests is necessary for student engagement.

Shor (1992) postulates "people begin life as motivated learners, not passive beings" (p.17). But through rote memorization and phonic-based lessons, learning shrinks to the lowest common denominator: worksheets, short passages and sight word cards. Shor states learning and developing competence in reading comes from a gamut of experiences not derived from text book knowledge. When my students enter the classroom, their various cultures and family backgrounds permeate the walls as rich and vibrant pastels. Learning for my students begins with tapping into their present lives and revisiting what they know. Dewey(1963), Piaget(1979) and Shor(1992) refer to students' personal journeys as "doing and thinking about our experiences" (p.17). What students know about a topic before reading allows them to find meaningful connections to their reading. The combination of generative themes and extensive reading enmeshes as primary components for improving literacy development (Shor, 1992).

The journey, according to Shor (1992), begins as inquiry, problem-posing questions initiated by students and encouraged by teachers. As the teacher provides a discussion topic, students ask questions that represent

what they know and want to learn about the topic (Shor, 1992). Smith and Wilhelm (2006) discover students' connection to certain topics. The posing of questions increases student motivation to read and to learn more about the topic.

Goodman (n.d.), one of the founders of whole language, teaching literacy development through extensive reading, believes extensive reading enriches students' ability to connect meaning to reading. When combined with TSI, extensive reading becomes an effective form of comprehension instruction. Brown (2008), author of *The Road Not Taken: A Transactional Strategies Approach to Comprehension Instruction* confirms that including time to establish an effective lesson, time to teach the lesson, and time for students to comprehend the lessons' objective(s) are essential components for effective reading instruction. Utilizing extensive reading materials or novels demonstrates, according to Australian Journal of Language & Literacy (2006), the instructor's efforts to include a strong literacy knowledge base as a means to enrich the learning environment with cultural diversity for the benefit of improved student learning.

There is controversy over the effectiveness of TSI and extensive reading for developing reading comprehension. Fletcher (2006) asserts that without tangible evidence such as multiple choice questions, it is difficult to assess individual students' success level with TSI. Moreover, individual interest in subject matter ranges as "degrees of imperfection" (p.324), making it even more challenging to accurately assess student mastery of necessary content standard skills (Fletcher, 2006). Fletcher describes reading comprehension "...not an overt process that can be directly observed" (p. 324). It is interesting to note that Fletcher's research is contradicted by Brown's hands-on experience in using TSI and extensive reading.

Brown (2008), documents TSI as improving student performance in reading comprehension. In a yearlong study, Brown's findings show TSI students outperforming non-TSI students in three types of assessments: standardized tests, verbal tests, and one-one-one student interviews. Brown's unorthodox teaching method demonstrates her ambition to connect students' lives to literature. And even though Brown demonstrates drive and tenacity, there is no guarantee student literacy development will improve with these methods. The point of concerns still remains:

students need motivation to read and to comprehend what they read.

In order for students to achieve grade-level reading and comprehension, students must read (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2001). Harris, Alexander, and Graham (2008), authors of "Michael Pressley's Contribution to the History and Future of Strategies Research" concur that reading allows students to transfer long-term memory, (i.e. prior knowledge) knowledge to developing new knowledge. Through reading, students learn to develop metacognitive skills, the ability to think about what they are thinking while reading (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Although numerous studies indicate reading text improves reading comprehension, the percentage of students actually reading continues to fall.

According National Endowment for the Arts (2007), teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 read fewer books than students two decades earlier. As shown in Figure 2, the category "Under Percentage Who Read almost Every Day for Fun" indicates seventeen-year-olds of 1984 outperformed those of 2004, resulting in an eight point drop in leisure reading.

Year	1984	1999	2004
9-year-olds	53%	54%	54%
13-year-olds	35%	28%	30%
17-year-olds	31%	25%	22%

Figure 2: Under Percentage Who Read Almost Every Day for Fun

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

In the category "Percentage Who Read a Book the Previous Day," 34 percent of 1984 17 year olds also outperformed the 2004 17-years-olds (as cited in National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). As reading text in books decreases at an alarming rate over the past two decades, during the late 1990s, we observe that media use soars with the advent of the new age of communication and entertainment.

The popularity of media with young people 15 years old and over causes a significant decline in weekday and weekend reading (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). In NEA's national data report on the "Average Time Spent Reading" in 2006, young people spend less than ten minutes a day reading and more than two hours watching television

(as cited in National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). Even when reading, young people will use media, such as Ipods (for listening to music), television, or website surfing (as cited in National Endowment for the Arts, 2007).

According to Santrok (2005), applying additional stimulus while reading will divert students' attention from initial activity, reading (Santrock, 2005). Further, students struggle to maintain their primary focus when distracted by irrelevant information (Santrock, 2005). My ninth grade students claim their concentration on primary stimuli (i.e. reading or testing) improves with the application of a secondary stimuli (i.e. listening to music). Santrock reports the opposite. The combination may be more of a detriment than an asset.

The inverse relationship between students' media use and reading scores provides a realistic explanation as to why students are regressing in reading achievement. In the category, "Trend in Average Reading Scores for Students Ages 17and 9" 17-year-olds' reading scores from 1990 through 2004 continue to drop (as cited in National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). As the nation faces the daunting truth about adolescent literacy decline,

the State of California's middle and high schools demonstrate similar deterioration in reading achievement on statewide exams.

In 2008, the California State Standardized (CST) English-Language Arts (ELA) reports the overall basic skills competency of ninth graders. With over 500,000 ninth grade students enrolled, only 27 percent achieve basic competency in ELA. In the previous year, the same group of students ELA score is 31; a four point drop. Substandard motivation for independent reading and academic learning is explained by Erikson's (1968) theory on teenage bonding for identity (as cited in Santrok, 2005, p. 178). Even thirty years later, teens continue to sacrifice their reading and literacy skills to secure social interests.

Weekend activities are dictated by students' interest, whim and motivation. Every Monday morning, students share stories on their weekend at The River, a local shopping and entertainment center. Most students attend movies with friends or shop with siblings. Either way, students spend time affiliating with others and sharing common social interests. Erikson's (1968) human behavior model describes this stage as "identity versus identity confusion," (p.178) where adolescents struggle to learn who they are and how

they fit in with others. Piaget's (1979) cognitive development theory identifies this questioning behavior in adolescents as a way to bring balance to school and social cultures (as cited in Santrock, 2005, p. 133). Because of this, reading instructors continue to clash with students on what is more important in classroom learning: connecting with peers through text messages and cell phones or connecting with instructors' guidelines for understanding reading curriculum objectives.

In order to redirect students' attention from outside distractions to in-class academic learning, especially in reading, instructors are well advised to implement useful components to reading instruction: effective reading strategies and generative themes. Pressley (2001) believes TSI is a way to support the development of student's reading comprehension. Through the application of five components, students learn to comprehend reading through making predictions, asking questions about text, relating text to prior knowledge, seeking clarification through sensory detail, and visualizing the meaning of text (Pressley, 2001). Even though four of these components (i.e. predictions, questions, clarification, and summarization) make up cognitive strategy instruction or

reciprocal teaching (Brown, 1984), Pressley contends students are synthesizing what they are reading, and seeking real world connections with text (Pressley, 2001). Despite this, research continues to find adolescent literacy improves when students find meaningful connections with literature through the application of generative themes. Brown's (2008) yearlong study also supports TSI and teacher-student collaboration improves reading comprehension.

#### The Teacher

The teacher in this study is also the research investigator. In this study, Zelda, an English teacher of six years, has a diverse background in teaching at inner city and suburban middle and high schools. She has experienced culturally diverse student learning environments and continues to view each class as separate enigmas, unique in personalities and learning potential.

#### The Community

In a Palm Desert Community Center (2008) demographic update, the community is affluent suburban with a growing population of 47,000. Demographics are 51 percent females;

48 percent male; 12.1 percent families have children; 41 percent are single; and 58 percent married. The estimated median living cost is \$ 71, 895 per year. The average home cost is \$475,000 with 47 percent of the populace as homeowners. Less than 24 percent of residents rent. The unemployment rate is 4.8 percent with an estimated job growth of 29 percent. The primary industry is hospitality.

#### The School

The high school in this study employs 84 teachers. Student population is 2100. Student body demographic includes: 61.8 percent European American; 28.2 percent Hispanic or Latino American; 2.5 percent African American; 2.5 percent Asian-American; 0.5 percent Native American; and 1.2 percent other. The school is not a Title I school, a funding program providing additional monies for academic resources and programs for socio-economic disadvantaged community. However, 23 percent of students receive free or reduced lunch vouchers. In the state, the average for student receiving lunch vouchers is 43 percent (California Department of Education, 2006).

This school curriculum includes California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) courses twice each year. Sections of

English CAHSEE prep is provided to sophomores and CAHSEE remediation is provided to junior and senior students who failed the test in previous years. The passing or proficiency rate for English CAHSEE is 52.1 percent. Non-proficient rate is 32.7 percent. Most students repeating the exam have a history of failing English because of poor writing skills and inability to understand and critically analyze subject matter.

Three quarterly school district proficiency exams are given to measure students' progress in understanding content standards. Each quarter, ninth graders scores fluctuate between basic to below basic in reading analysis and vocabulary. Teachers have learned that students' comprehension deficiency begins with test questions. We have learned that students do not understand terms such as "precise," "purpose," and "clarify."

Remedial reading and Language Arts course, READ 180, provides support for incoming freshman who tested below basic on CST during the previous year. Each block period of 118 minutes supports at least 16 to 20 students.

Tutoring, additional reading, and writing support are available to each student before and after school.

## Definitions of Terms

Definition in this investigative study will include, but not limited to the following:

1. Adolescent Literacy refers to a young person's ability to "(1) integrate information across multiple texts, (2) critically relate paragraph meanings to personal experience, (3) employ knowledge from texts to evaluate science observations or historical documents, and (4) compose complete messages in the form of stories and reports for actual audiences." (p. 382)
2. Basal is a textbook or anthologies, a compilation of short stories used to teach students literacy skills in grammar and writing.
3. Bloom's Taxonomy is the cognitive assessment of learning. Teachers' apply six steps: Knowledge, Understanding, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation.
4. Cognitive or cognition is the process of thoughts, a mental process to gain knowledge.

5. Critical Literacy is one's ability to construct opinions and ideals from social contexts of reading and writing (Shor, 1992).
6. Empower Educator is a reference Shor uses to define a teacher that creates a social and culture sensitive learning environment to encourage students to apply high order thinking skills including synthesis and evaluation to their reading to help students connect meaning to text.
7. Generative Theme is developing reading topics based on students' culture, beliefs, background and social interests and concerns.
8. Phonics is the basic lesson to teaching young students how to read and sound out words.
9. Reading Comprehension refers to students' ability to understand reading content and components to reading. Adolescent Literacy is written communication form (Goody, 1999).
10. Rote is the process of repetition to retain knowledge.
11. Transaction Strategies Instruction (TSI) instruction or helping students' improve their reading comprehension by making predictions,

relating prior knowledge to text, asking question (or posing-problems), seeking clarification of text, and visualizing the meaning of text (as cited in Reading Online, e.g., Cordon & Day 1996).

Consistent application of TSI components improves students' ability to draw meaning from text.

12. Volume Reading is another term for reading novels or extensive reading materials.
13. Whole Language (WL), the concept of whole reading, not fragmented short stories. Students learn to develop literacy skills in reading and writing through the context of whole language.

#### Limitations of the Study

From this author's classroom experience, ninth grade students tend to avoid extensive reading, especially novels. Although the study requires students to read the novel, *Of Mice and Men*, (John Steinbeck's depiction of The American Dream during the Great Depression era), students have been conditioned through years of basal reading to believe twenty pages or more is extensive reading.

Students' reading expectations will cause many to disengage and lose motivation for the assignment. In the past,

students avoided completing reading assignments, resulting in low student performance on formative and summative assessments.

The research study duration is six weeks. The limitation of not teaching students each TSI component during the study may influence study results. Students that normally do not read novels will need time to learn how to transfer knowledge learned from previous years to new reading material (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). This will mean students need to show understanding in each TSI component taught each week. If the majority of the class is finding difficulty in understanding and applying the TSI component to their reading, instructor will continue to focus on that TSI component until the majority of the class has learned and mastered the new skill.

Reading comprehension studies incorporating TSI are conducted with elementary to early middle school students for several months to a year (Brown, 2008 and Kamil, Mosenthal, Pearson, & Barr 2000). This study will include high school struggling readers for duration of six weeks.

Time is an important concern when teaching TSI. Each school quarter of ten weeks requires English teachers to teach selected content standards. This study is being

conducted six weeks before the administration of the California Standardized Test (CST). The instructor is required to provide review lessons on content standards that will be featured on the upcoming CST. It is interesting to note that, researchers confirm teachers need sufficient time to organize and create TSI lessons: semester to yearlong TSI proves better student performance than students without TSI (Brown, 2008).

Assessing students' progress in TSI will be limited to verbal discussions, teacher monitoring students groups, and review of students verbal and written journal answers. STAR exam will be administered after the study. The possibility of TSI impacting students' progress is minimal when considering TSI is taught for less than a full semester.

Within these confines, the instructor will introduce TSI as whole instruction, introducing one component to students. Due to student apprehension for reading, TSI and WL will begin as a class activity. To further student understanding of topics and TSI components, weekly PowerPoint presentations will provide additional instruction.

The primary purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of teaching students how to improve their

reading comprehension through the use of extensive reading (i.e. reading a short novel). The following chapters will address the study objective by defining today's school curriculum and effects on student attitudes, motivation, and performance on exams. Contrary perspectives on the concept of whole language and phonic-based instruction will be addressed with an emphasis on teacher instruction as the core to students' motivation.

A pilot study will indicate the researchers' thoroughness in selecting ideal students for the study. Two groups, one TSI and the other non-TSI will read the same novel, but have varied exercises and activities to complete each week. The study will require assessments to determine the effectiveness of TSI versus traditional reading instruction.

Further, the qualitative study will require close observations on student performance and response to TSI instruction and non-TSI instruction. Students' response in journal entries and comprehensive assessments will determine the effectiveness of implementing TSI and generative themes to improving reading comprehension.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

While students may exhibit disinterest in classroom and leisure reading, school curriculum and state-mandated content standards reduce students' classroom motivation to learn. In this chapter, I will observe the teacher's role in developing a learning environment that is conducive for improving students reading comprehension. In addition, I will explore the effectiveness of Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) and the concept of Whole Language instruction for authenticating reading lessons for the purpose of increasing students' motivation.

#### Curriculum

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandate assures that public school children will receive content standard curriculum and instruction. Content standards, a list of grade-appropriate learning objectives for kindergarten through twelfth grade, are scaffold to support students' cognition. For each grade, English Language Arts (ELA) content standards have a primary category with

specified strands. Each strand represents a specific skill to be learned by students. As students progress to the next grade, content standards and related strands increasingly challenge students' competence in mastering skills.

Although NCLB blueprints learning goals in the content of specified skills, limited class time for mastering required skills literacy development overshadows NCLB objective: equal education for every student.

District-mandated curricula and instruction calls for flexibility to support student performance in cultural and socio-economic diverse classrooms (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). At any given school site, class periods will run between 47 to 56 minutes. In a fraction of time, teachers are expected to reteach previous concepts and teach new concepts (Armstrong 2006). Could short instructional periods hamper student mastery of ninth grade content standards? Jacob (2008), author of *Adolescent literacy: Putting the Crisis in Context*, confirms that mastering skills is a process that requires students to have time to learn. In 2006 and 2007, according to California Department of Education (2008) CST scores suggest that time is a factor for improving literacy skills. The economically disadvantaged students' score of 31 percent and English Language Fluency

students' score of 26 percent remain unchanged for two years (California Department of Education, 2008). In a separate study, teachers play a leading role in Latino students' continual struggle in acquiring a new language to improve reading literacy.

### Teachers

Valdes (2001) discovers ESL teachers expecting Latino immigrant students to acquire language through sporadic reading lessons and vocabulary activities. Mrs. Gordon at Gardena Middle School provides fun activities to engage students in learning vocabulary. The "hangman" or "hang-the-spider" (p.51) game teaches students how to spell and recognize words. Valdes questions whether the game should last for an entire period, when reading instruction "did not take up much time" (p. 53). Students opportunities to master grammar and writing conventions depends on Mrs. Gordon's time and effort to review students' completed assignments and give instruction on wrong answers. (Valdes, 2001) Without specific reading and language support, students continue to make the same mistakes.

What really happens in the classroom contradicts policy makers' belief that the study of language is no

different than any other subject being learned in a specified time frame (Valdes, 2006). Learning a foreign language, its idioms and cultural meanings is difficult for ESL and requires a teacher to give students time to learn. Without ample time, and in many cases, appropriate reading instruction, non-English speaking students cannot show competence in reading and language as English-speaking students. The economically disadvantaged students' classroom and learning encounters emerge as similar inferior experiences.

Academic success for inner-city or at-risk students is usually determined by parents' educational background (Kozol, 1991). Like any parent, white or black, children learn the trade of success through parents' educational background and social class. In Chicago, Kozol (1991) reports educational inequity causing job placement disadvantages for African Americans. While suburban communities receive seven billion dollars in federal grants for education African American and inner-city communities receive barely a fraction of the money allotted for city-wide school districts (Kozol, 1991). More money means better school site facilities, updated textbooks and resources. By the time, students from affluent

neighborhoods graduate from private or selected schools, employment opportunities will complement their educational background (Kozol, 1991). As for poor African American students, blue-collar jobs with an earning potential similar to their parents' current customer service positions reflect the history of inferior education at inner-city schools.

Giroux (1981) recognizes the huge gap between students as hegemonic conditioning, a way to maintain dominant culture structures for "interpreting the boundaries of individual and social existence" (p. 130) While the dominant culture sets rules for employment, wages and working conditions, a different set of rules are established to divide workers into categories identifying workers as the The Have and The Have Not's (Giroux, 1981). Under NCLB, teachers indirectly support a social system that encourages inferiority in nonwhite, socially disadvantaged students.

Teachers, according to Valdes, may have the required ESL resources for supporting ESL students, but they "do not know about how the English language develops in second-language learners" (p.16). Without the knowledge and finding ways to support ESL students, teachers cannot

thoroughly provide support to individual needs, Mrs. Gordon may have found a way to entertain her students with elementary Mother Goose games and rote reading materials designed for special education students, but her position requires her to provide effective strategies to support language acquisition for ESL students. Instead of closing the learning gap between mainstream immigrant students, teachers, like Mrs. Gordon, avoid teaching immigrant students who are deficient in language and reading skills (p.16). Without flexibility to teach skills and lessons based on students' knowledge, standard curriculum provides a disservice to students.

The task of teaching literacy skills to English Learners, socio-disadvantaged or mainstream students requires the teacher to incorporate an integrated curriculum to support students' application of previous skills to new skills (as cited in Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). According to Haskell (2000) American educational institutions have not performed proficiently at supporting students in transferring learning (as cited in Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). If CSTs are the standard form of evaluating students' progress, in 2007, only 29 percent of California ninth grades are proficient in reading literacy.

Even though state mandated curriculum guides provide teachers with a set of instructions on what to teach, students still enter the classroom after each summer oblivious to what they learned the previous year.

In order for curricula to support students' previous competencies in reading and writing, students need a platform for applying their knowledge to increase higher-order thinking. Haskell suggest the following:

1. A command of the knowledge that is to be transferred;
2. A theoretical understanding of the principles to be transferred;
3. The classroom culture cultivates a spirit of transfer; and
4. Plenty of practice. (as cited in Smith & Wilhelm, 2006, p.26)

Students' minimal knowledge on grade-level standards continues to press American educators to find answers to rectify reading comprehension deficiencies (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006).

Shor (1992) confirms as students apply and reapply knowledge in various ways, what students learn improves students' engagement in learning. The process requires a

teacher to transform the learning environment into social engagement for the students. The empowered teacher creates a forum of discussion on social and personal topics related to students' knowledge and experiences (Shor, 1992). By implementing accessible resources, the teacher and the standard curriculum, Shor contends ideal learning evolves through social connections.

When teachers apply generative themes, a given study on student's culture or "unresolved social problems in the community" (p.47) to a lesson, student motivation and engagement increases learning (Shor, 1992). The idea of learning curriculum through student generated inquiry and personal connections to society is a phenomena overshadowed by No Child Left behind (NCLB). According to Popham (2004), the 2001 NCLB mandate manipulates teachers to prepare students for the progression of state standardized testing, not real world experiences. As the focus continues to stay on standards, school sites progression on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and Academic Performance Index (API), the movement toward purposeful teaching becomes a narrow to non-existent path (Popham, 2004).

When Shor (1992) writes "students do not leap out of their cultural territory into teacher's academic terrain"

(p.204), he confirms Valdes' findings on EL students. Teaching English or non-English speaking students requires a teacher to provide lessons and reading materials that will help students to develop necessary communication skills and knowledge not yet held by them (Shor, 1992). One instructor integrates his curriculum with generated themes.

Smith and Wilhelm (2006) observe a seventh grade teacher, Jeff applying inquiry as background information before students read the novel, *The Incredible Journey*. His series of questions on core subjects, science, social studies, and health spark students' interest in learning more about novel's theme on human survival. Smith and Wilhelm explain that the lesson is planned out a year in advance, providing detail and additional resources, including volume reading materials (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). As Jeff teaches beyond the curriculum, he offers "visuals, cartoons, articles, photographs, picture books..." (p. 59), allowing students to generate questions.

Smith and Wilhelm (2006) observe a teacher fulfilling his discipline and curriculum requirements "but in a way that made more sense to him..." (p. 59). Fullan (1993) would add that teaching for Jeff, in a way, makes sense when he creates a learning environment that would also make

sense to his students. Jeff integrates instruction by using other course subjects and real-life sources to make it possible for his students to connect with something that would make sense to them "instead of being a bunch of disconnected facts" (p.59) and that he knew would lead to greater and more transferable learning (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006).

#### Whole Language versus Phonics

The subject of whole language instruction, according to Lofflin (n.d.) continues to perplex educators who believe phonics-based reading instruction supports reading comprehension. Beginning readers learn to recognize and identify words and meanings of words, but according to Pressley (2001) it is the transference of these basic reading skills that support students' reading comprehension and literacy development. Language that is fractured into simple sentences or short reading passages, denies the reader "at least two-third of the cues students would need to use in "real-world reading" (Pressley, 2001).

Reading novels gives students an opportunity to combine their prior knowledge on reading and literacy skills to master grade level reading comprehension (as cited in Lofflin, n.d.). As a student applies every

language component learned such as recognizing sounds of letters and words, understanding correct sentence structure, making sense of what he or she is reading and understanding context and picture cues related to text, reading becomes a whole language. Moreover, Wilde (2000) notes the application of every phonic reading component while reading helps construct language as a single, whole component that helps students to develop a natural rhythm for language usage and understanding language (as cited in Lofflin, n.d.). The language process is viewed as complex and "whole" with all language systems working together when a learner encounters a text.

Because the learner is important to the teacher, the teachers' objective is to treat the learner as a whole person. Implementing whole language instruction in the classroom requires a teacher, according to Goodman (2003) to allow students to open up and explore their set of values, culture, priorities and interest (as cited in Lofflin, n.d.). The teacher who creates whole language lessons encourages "literacy engagements," a term that describes students' involvement in reading and writing activities that help students to construct a meaningful connection from reading and activities (as cited in

Lofflin, n.d.). In whole language classrooms, literacy tasks are viewed as "whole" authentic, and above all, meaningful. With a supportive empowered teacher, students openly delve beyond contents standard expectations and apply generative themes, a reflection on real-life issues that surface from reading materials (Shor, 1992).

Whole language instruction combined with generative themes encourages students to communicate in various social contexts. (Lofflin, n.d.). Lev Vygotsky (1962), the Russian human development theorist addresses social interaction and culture as essentials to students' ability to build competence in a skill or subject (as cited in Santrock, 2005). Through group engagement, students listen to peers ideals and opinions that allow them to consider another perspective to the reading topic. Group interaction and reading a novel challenges students to develop higher order thinking skills.

According to Watson (1989a, p.193), whole language instruction, unlike phonics instruction, applies the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (as cited in Lofflin, n.d., Whole Language Misconception #3). As shown in Figure 3, intellectual skills are identified in Benjamin Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy chart, beginning with knowledge and moving

upward to challenging levels of higher order of thinking.

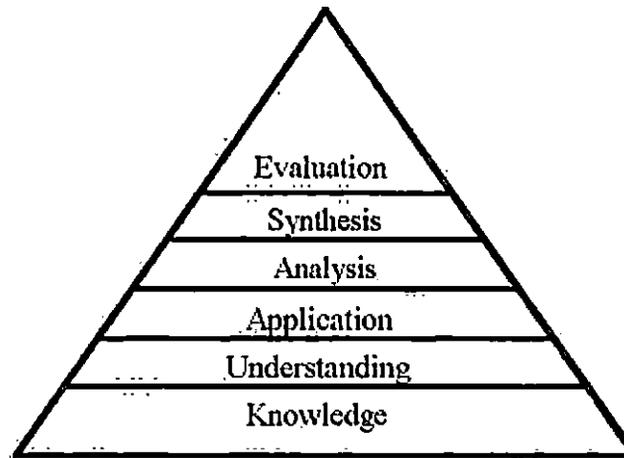


Figure 3: Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking

Source: officeport.com

Watson explains that whole language instructors spend quality time preparing lessons to address students' literacy needs beginning with the lowest level of Bloom's cognitive scale. Through tailored lessons, students apply prior knowledge and "use what they know in authentic contexts, to analyze, to create, to evaluate" (as cited in Lofflin, n.d., Whole Language Misconception #3). Before long, students are making great strides in critical literacy.

Whole Language Instruction, according to Vivian Vasquez (2003), helps students to practice thinking about

the reading and their purpose for reading (as cited in Lofflin, n.d., Whole Language Misconception #3). Brantley (2007) contends self-regulation helps students to explore their strengths and weaknesses in learning and to establish personal connections with what they are learning. In theory, self-regulation is a significant component in advanced placement college level courses, including English Language and Composition.

Even though the concept of whole language instruction is not a common classroom practice, it supports the development of students' higher-order thinking in high school advanced placement college preparatory course. Advanced Placement English Literature courses require students to read novels and to take time to absorb and process the meaning from context. In order to demonstrate mastery in language and content, Vogel and Winans (2001) state that students must be adept in reading challenging literature, including authors Richard Selzer, Tim O'Brien, Rachel Carson, and Fredrick Douglas. Shor (1992) would asses AP Students as self-motivated to achieve competence in reading challenging materials and reading aptitude beyond the set of content standards assigned. While AP students are unique exceptions to achieving reading

aptitude and reading comprehension goals, ninth grade students require additional support to reach AP status. Variation in reading strategies provides ninth graders a framework for reading achievements.

### Reading Comprehension

As long as there have been teachers, classrooms, students and reading lessons, teachers have been expected to assess students reading comprehension to confirm competence in literacy skills. In the 1990s, Pressley (2001) observes fourth and fifth grade students receiving a comprehension assessment from their teachers. Pressley and his research team witness "many teachers posing post reading comprehension questions," but not providing instruction on how to extract meaning from reading. Considering the lack of formative research on reading comprehension, teachers are ill-prepared in supporting school students (Pressley, 2001). Without specific instruction on how to teach reading comprehension, teachers will continue to deliver post-reading domain target questions on main idea and summarizing story as primary reading skills (Pressley, 2001). It is the before, during and after instruction on finding meaning from reading

materials that encourages students to connect to their reading assignments (Pressley, 2001).

### Transactional Strategies Instruction

Reading is complex and requires a reader to read beyond identifying characters and primary events (Harris, Alexander, and Graham, 2008). Good readers, according to Brown (2008) can develop reading comprehension by applying the following:

1. connections and inferences to background information either provided through whole group, frontloading or individual student experiences;
2. predictions to maintain reader engagement and set goals for reader to fulfill while reading;
3. visual connections to text through sensory detail, identify descriptive language in text;
4. questions on incidents or text that causes confusion or if reader is curious about something occurring or not in the story;
5. summaries on story or event to identify surface facts, in addition to reader demonstrating mastery in reading varied genres and text (Brown, 2008).

In the classroom, TSI guides ninth grade students to recall their knowledge and skills. Through visuals or PowerPoint presentations, my students share memories and personal experiences often related to reading lesson. Contrary to my first-hand experience, Smith and Wilhelm (2006) assert TSI components are not conducive to all learners. Some of the components may not support readers who are unfamiliar with topics and incidents that are outside their realm of knowledge or experience (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). Although the authors establish a valid point, Brown (2008) observes a teacher frontloading a reading assignment and instructing students on predicting events and situations that occur in a story.

What is not clearly understood in Smith and Wilhelm's (2006) study is whether the teacher gives specific instruction on how to use pre-determined reading strategies before assigning the reading. Brown (2008) notes in her research how lesson begins with teacher using an anecdote, to introduce the lesson on visualization. It is the teacher's story on being good readers that helps students to visualize images from reading material.

## Motivation

As much as teachers may incorporate ideal reading strategies and activities to motivate students to increase knowledge and improve comprehension skills, achievement begins with students believing in their own intellectual abilities to succeed at new reading and comprehension goals (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). Once the belief is ingrained, students naturally implement their personal self-regulatory learning process also known as motivation.

Smith and Wilhelm (2006) conduct a study on male students' apathy in English coursework and reading. During their observation of Latino male students, the researchers learned that the feeling of incompetence occurs when a student does not believe he is capable of achieving a goal. In the following, one male student states his personal experience about lessons on English and poems:

English is about NOTHING! It doesn't help you DO anything. English is about reading poems and telling about rhythm. It's about commas and crap like that for God's sake. What does that have to DO with DOING anything? It's about NOTHING! (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006, p. 25)

It is not poetry or the English class that discourages this student, but the feeling of not knowing how to do it the way teachers' expect.

Delpit (1995) points out that "our educational reforms" (p.96) will continue to spiral into failure if educators continue to leave students out of the learning process. This students' honest response to classroom requirements signifies that he does not want to learn something that does not connect with his personal experiences and what he believes is important to his learning (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). Once Smith and Wilhelm present discussions on leisure activities to the same students, students passionately share interests in hobbies such as writing rap and playing basketball (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). Through selective reading materials, stories that reflect students' interests and values, students learn to bridge prior knowledge to support their literacy development in establishing new reading skills to context.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

Ninth grade students' apathy for reading challenges educators' objective to generate independent thinkers. In the classroom, students reach for state-of-the-art communication devices to receive immediate and current information from friends or Internet chatrooms. Novels, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Frankenstein*, and *Oliver Twist*, classic stories relating to humanity in its various forms, are books teachers hold dear while students perceive them of boring relics. As reading becomes archaic to students, their decision to avoid reading impacts the community.

After four years of high school, graduates enter the business world unprepared. It is unfortunate to read from the National Endowment for the Arts (2007) a report on businesses establishing remedial workshops to teach newly hired employees basic reading analysis and writing skills. As shown in Table 2, adults at the below basic reading level admit low reading skills hinders their job opportunities.

Table 2: Percentage of Adults Who Said Their Reading Skills Limited Their Job Opportunities

Prose Literacy level	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot
Below Basic	30%	13%	22%	35%
Basic	62%	14%	15%	9%
Intermediate	85%	7%	6%	3%
Proficient	96%	2%	1%	1%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center of Education Statistics

In this chapter, methods to support students' cognitive skills will be addressed as specific Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) activities, using key TSI components. Each group control and experimental will read the novel, *Of Mice and Men*, as their primary novel. The objective is to manipulate young readers' senses (sight, sound, and touch) for the purpose of engaging students to generate interest in reading.

#### Type of Research

Methodology selection for a study requires the researcher to consider her level of knowledge on

- Students' motivation for learning;
- Students' knowledge level on subject; and

- Students' attitude and behavior in a classroom setting

Both, qualitative and quantitative methods have valuable contributions and provide different information for studies. But when a researcher immerses herself as an active participant, Kawulich (2005) asserts the qualitative method or participation observation allows researcher to participate in daily routine activities present in classroom. Being part of the study demonstrates the researcher's concern and care for student participants and subject matter.

#### Role of Researcher

The researcher for this study intends to identify the disconnection between the average ninth grade student and reading books. Afterward, the researcher will address strategies to return students to reading for self-gratification and comprehension improvement. Achieving the latter expectation requires an in-depth understanding of students' attraction to technology. According to Erikson (1968), teens between the ages of 12 and 16 years old are looking to identify with a social group for acceptance (as

cited in Santrock, 2005, p. 181). Owning a cell phone or Ipods places students in specific social groups, The Haves and The Have Not's. For teens, connecting with an ideal group of students and displaying the connection by using state-of-the-art communication devices takes precedence over reading and academics (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). At some point, youth will become the working class (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). Without learning how to critically think and communicate to different audiences, the possibility of having a generation of functioning illiterates is high.

### Research Design

The researcher's qualitative study will be conducted to identify the effectiveness of transactional strategies instruction (TSI) and generative themes to motivate students to read more to comprehend better. The first question is:

1. How will generative themes motivate student to read a novel for the purpose of improving reading comprehension?

The purpose of this question is to find out students' meaningful connections in reading *Of Mice and Men*. While

basal readers and school curriculum restrict cultural and social diversity, Shor (1992) contends that generative themes allow students "to launch a discourse rooted in their thought and language" (p.61). By reading novels and reading supplementals, students will apply prior knowledge to subjects and social concerns addressed in the six-week duration of study. Scaffold lessons and activities will encourage participants to explore what they know and develop higher order thinking skills.

The second question is:

2. How will incorporating transactional strategies instruction (TSI) motivate students to read novels to improve reading comprehension?

This question will identify the effectiveness of TSI components: prediction, summary, questioning, visualizing and clarification in relation to helping students develop reading comprehension skills. Both groups will read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck to develop meaningful personal connection with text. Specifically, the experimental group will receive sensory detail activities and lessons requiring students to use their sense of sight, sound, and touch.

Through the application of TSI components, the researcher will observe students' level of engagement in reading the novel and completing lessons.

### Sample Population

Before beginning research study, students from Ms. Thomas' Classroom A and B receive letters of assent and parents receive letters of consent. Both letters outline criteria for participation as follows: a) student must feel comfortable in participating in study; b) parents must agree to child participating in study; and c) study would represent normal, class routines that child is familiar with and understands.

Three ideal students: English Learner, mainstream, and resource represent the student diversity in Ms. Thomas' classes. Control Group A students are as follows: Sergio, fourteen year old English Learner male student; Suzy, fourteen year old White female student; and Jeremy, fourteen year old White male resource student. Experimental Group B students are as follows: Cecilia, fourteen year old English Learner female student; Bobby, a fourteen year old White male student; and Sallie, a fourteen year resource female students.

Each student receives pseudonyms and identification numbers to secure privacy of the students' names and sample work. According to Barbara Young, Ph.D. featured in Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), securing records for human research, requires the implementation of three guidelines:

- 1) Understand concerns about inappropriate access and unauthorized disclosure.
- 2) Have procedures in place to protect the confidentiality of the records while in use and of the information collected.
- 3) Obtain all required approvals (institutional, state, federal, and international, if applicable) prior to conducting the research (Citiprogram, 2007).

Students' coursework lessons, exams, and portfolios for research study are carefully monitored and secured inside a locked file cabinet. All research data and consent and assent letter are kept in a secure filing cabinet off school premises from March 2008 through August 2008. All gathered information is destroyed when the study is completed.

The researcher meets with counseling departments' records keeper and request copies of students' California

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) scores for the year 2007. After careful review of Classrooms A and B students' English-Language Arts scores, students' scores range from 311 to 375 in Basic range on STAR. In control group, STAR scores vary between 289 and 311. Sergio's STAR score is 321. Suzy's STAR score is 311. Jeremy's STAR score is 289. In the experimental group, STAR scores range from 321 to 375. Cecilia's STAR score is 321. Bobby's STAR score is 375. Sallie's STAR score is 314. Both groups A and B fall under the STAR exam category, Basic. Jeremy is the only student under 300.

STAR test give specific scores on students' level of reading comprehension. Majority of student receive poor scores in reading analysis and word recognition. This is valuable information for the researcher. Poor scores in reading analysis as well as word-recognition categories indicate the possibility of students having difficulties in comprehending either the questions to the answers or the multiple-choice answers.

#### Pilot Study

Selecting control and experimental groups for the study requires the researcher to observe several classrooms

before making a final decision. Students from ninth grade English college preparatory classes are observed for motivational and attitudinal behaviors. Each classroom has unique dynamics that influence students' behavior.

As a collective, students in Classroom A remain apathetic to any form of class work or assignments. The group is extremely talkative and antsy. This description of adolescent behavior is supported by human behaviorists. It is during this period of human development Erikson (1968) defines as students seeking approval and acceptance from a peer group which represents a culture of familiarity in peers' behavior and attitudes (as cited in Santrock, 2005, p. 181). The instructor of this study experiences the reality of Erikson's theory when students submit class and homework occasionally or not at all.

Independent reading is losing out to iPods, cellular phones, texting. Moreover, if students are not physically engaged in using media or telephone devices, their thoughts on how devices connect them to friends and social events divert his or her attention, preventing students from focusing on class work. Several students walk into class with headsets and cell phones on their persons, still involved with outside world.

In Classroom B, the behavior and attitude are somewhat similar to Classroom A with the exception of students' work ethic. Students in Classroom B have the same interest and attraction to media communication devices as Classroom A, but their interest is less overt. The difference is recognized in group B's work ethic. Transfer students who begin the school year with one if not two previous teachers before entering Ms. Thomas' class are more engaged in classroom lectures and assignments than Classroom A. Before long, transfer student's listening skills and constant inquiries about lesson's topic influence other students' engagement. Santrock (2005) notes Vygotsky's reference on social constructivism. Students learn to assimilate to collective motivation and behavior.

Classroom C is the final classroom to consider for the study. Classroom C students differ from Classroom A and B students in the respect they attend a remedial reading course. The course READ 180 supports students who read two or more grade levels below ninth grade. The researcher prefers not to select this group for two reasons: 1) Classroom C's cognitive levels had substantial differences to Classroom A and B and 2) Classroom C's demographics are not similar to Classroom A and B. Read 180 course students

are predominately Hispanic male with extreme reading problems beginning with decoding and word recognition. READ 180 students require basic reading skills before fulfilling the researcher's research objective.

#### Data Collection Procedures

To insure confidentiality, the six-week study is conducted in Ms. Thomas' classroom with all students, assenting and regular students. For the duration of the study, assenting students remain unidentified.

Two groups, Classroom A [experimental] and Classroom B [control] receive the novel, *Of Mice and Men*, authored by John Steinbeck. During fifty-five minute sessions, experimental and control groups receive instruction, lessons and assessments. Weekly, control and experimental groups are assigned the following:

- Background handouts on novel's subject and themes. Samples of background information include but not limited to The Great Depression era, migrant workers during the 1930s and human mental retardation.
- New vocabulary terms.
- Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions on new topics,

vocabulary, and handouts.

- Chapter reading in class.
- Complete knowledge and comprehension chapter quizzes.

Assignments are placed in designated portfolios.

The experimental group receives transactional strategies instruction (TSI) as follows:

- Online communication with Nicenet.org.
- PowerPoint presentations featuring individuals living in 1930s.
- Vocabulary discussions and dramatization in class and online.
- Dense questions to post online.
- Journal writing assignments on weekly themes.
- Small group sessions.

#### Data Analysis

Researcher review students' online communication to writing prompts. Students communicate with at least two peers. Some students, depending on the writing prompt step out of comfort zones and communicate with other students.

Researcher searches for students' level of engagement and social connections between students.

Researcher provides PowerPoint presentations for class discussions on individuals featured under specified topics and themes. Students connect a passage or event from the story to a picture, giving a brief explanation for their choice of passage and picture. The activity gives students the opportunity to connect prior knowledge on topic to what they have learned about people living during the 1930s.

Researcher reviews students' journal entries and observes students' ability to transfer prior knowledge to new information on The Great Depression and human struggles. The transference of visual and audio learning on The Great Depression, migrant workers, social roles for men, women and African Americans help researcher determine which TSI supports students' comprehension development. The entries reflect students understanding of characters and relationships occurring in the story.

The researcher spends quality time observing students from both experimental and control groups. Each groups' participation in reading *Of Mice and Men* and completing activities demonstrates students' behavior, interests, attitude, motivation, and involvement. Oral assessments

allow the researcher to receive students' immediate responses to inference and character trait questions. This form of monitor assessment supports special education and English Learners students at learning to respond to one section before moving on to a new chapter.

The researcher will administer a summative assessment to find students' efforts in combining TSI and novel reading. Control group students receive a summative multiple choice worksheet, with two write-in answers. The experimental group receives a journal assignment prior to the summative multiple-choice worksheet assessment. Both groups complete pre- and post tests and the answers for each test determine students' level of meaningful connection to Migrant workers, male and female roles during the 1930s and discussions on racial discrimination. Each groups' assessments are carefully reviewed to determine groups' motivation and interests in reading.

Conducting a study on the concept of whole language learning to motivate students to read depends on the effectiveness of implementing TSI activities. Lessons and activities have been differentiated to determine which reading strategies support students' comprehension. Considering students' level of media stimulation with cell

phones and iPods, in addition, need for social interaction, the following chapter will demonstrate students' attitude and motivation for reading.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

Entering the final stage of public school education requires a struggling reader to move at the same academic pace as other students in the classroom. As simple as this may sound, it is not possible for struggling readers achieve comparable academic progress in literacy development. Factors including student motivation, knowledge level on subjects, and cultural diversity in reading materials prevent struggling readers from feeling a connection to reading. Therefore, students find it difficult to understand grade level content standard requirements. Unfortunately for struggling readers, countless research data confirms high school seniors receives diplomas but are unable to comprehend the written word with proficiency.

Because literacy skills have not been properly addressed before students attend high school, high school teachers encounter years of student's conditioned avoidance in reading and writing. Ninth graders' apathy to reading assignments continues as nonverbal communication. Students

use the silent treatment to manipulate teachers into giving up on students' response. Refusal to answer teacher will eventually force teacher to give answers without student engagement.

Teacher's effort to support struggling readers at improving reading comprehension begins with implementing content standard requirements. Basal readers, selected curriculum resources for the classroom prove to be ineffective for low-income students, students of color and English Learners. Short stories may introduce the idea or subject; however, with struggling readers, developing viable reading strategies is contingent to improving their reading comprehension.

In this study, two groups of students, control group (A) and experimental group (B) complete assignments using specified reading strategies and themes related to the novel, *Of Mice and Men*. The goal is to observe three students from each group and study their behavior and progress at improving their reading and literacy skills through the implementation of generative themes and a series of reading strategies. Under Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI), students will implement reading strategies such as predicting, inquiring,

visualizing, summarizing, and clarifying to support their connection to subjects they know. Through an adapted form of authentic learning, students' will be challenged to increase higher-order thinking through a course of discussions, reading, and activities.

The six-week study addresses the effectiveness of generative themes and TSI to developing struggling readers' reading comprehension. Shor (1992) supports generative themes as the call for connecting students with reading text. With that in mind, the following questions serve as the primary base to this study. The questions are

1. How will generative themes motivate student to read a novel for the purpose of improving reading comprehension?
2. How will incorporating transactional strategies (TSI) motivate students to read novels to improve reading comprehension?

The study begins with an introduction of lesson to control and experimental groups. Each group receives a novel and reading activities, including journaling, weekly quizzes, and vocabulary development to complete formal and summative assessments on students' reading comprehension.

The experimental group, however, is given TSI, in addition to access to an online communication website for student interaction.

## Presentations of the Findings

### Week One:

Author, Novel, and The Great Depression

On Monday, the teacher presents PowerPoint slides on *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. Teacher shares a brief synopsis of novel, not revealing the plot, only sharing the premise: two guys travel together to find work.

Both groups complete reading pre-surveys. Students mark a plus or minus sign to questions such as "How important are friends" or "How offensive is the n-word in a 2008 social setting?" The experimental group shared out one answer before turning in surveys. The control group was not required to share out answers.

The experimental group posted answers to question: Would a true friend tell you the truth? on nicenet.org. A second question was posted: Have you ever been called a bad name? Students responded to at least two peers' answers.

The control group wrote 50-word responses to a specific statement listed on the survey.

On Tuesday, teacher presented another PowerPoint slide on making inferences. Students read a direct quote from Mr. Garavelli, a stonecutter from Barre, Vermont. American Memories provided the following:

It was tough for everybody in the early days. Lots of stonecutters die from the silica. Now they've got new and better equipment; they've all got to use the suction. It helps a lot; but it ain't perfect. Men still die. You bet your life my kid don't go to work in no stoneshed. Silica, that's what kills them.

Everybody who stays in granite, it gets...I don't get so much of it myself. Maybe I'm smart. I don't make so much money, but I don't get so much silica. In my end of the shed there ain't so much dust. I can laugh at the damn granite because it can't touch me. That's me. I ain't got no money, but I ain't got no silica either. My end of the shed don't get so much dust.

It's like a knife, you know, that silica. Like a knife in your chest.

Teacher directed students' attention to bolded words. Using contextual clues, student defined each word.

Both groups received a list of words featured in chapter one. The experimental group selected three words

that they wanted to learn. The teacher selected the final three new terms for the week. In groups of threes, experimental group dramatized the meaning of words, identified parts of speech and definition of each term. As homework, experimental group practiced dramatizing the meaning of each term. The control group had pre-selected terms. Control group received definitions of each term and completed sentences as homework.

On Wednesday, The experimental group previewed reading comprehension questions before reading. Each student circled a question to help them focus on reading. The experimental group began reading *Of Mice and Men*. Group selected peers to read character's dialogue with expression. After reading five full pages, students commented on what they learned about characters, plot events and story. The control group read the entire chapter in Red Robin process. One reader randomly selected another student to continue reading.

On Thursday, both groups completed and summarized the chapter. Experimental group worked in groups of three to discuss chapter before writing summaries. Control group wrote individual summaries.

On Friday, each group reviewed notes, summaries, and vocabulary before completing a multiple-choice and essay response quiz. Experimental group worked in small groups with teacher. Both groups received short reading comprehension writing prompt: Compare and contrast George and Lennie's character traits and predict what will happen next in chapter two.

### Week Two:

#### Migration during The Great Depression Era

On Monday, students closed their eyes and listened to authentic 1930s music.

Teacher checked clarification in students' understanding of reading detailed narration and descriptive language. Teacher read the following passage: The day was going fast now. Only the tops of the Galiban flamed with the light of the sun that had gone from the valley, (Steinbeck, 1937). Students rephrased the passage in their own words. Students reviewed pre-selected vocabulary terms. Experimental group selected three additional terms, including "bindle" and "lumbered." Experimental group blogged online and answered questions including "Describe migration in today's life." Control group students reviewed handout and answered question.

On Tuesday, the experimental group watched and listened to two Great Depression survivors, Mrs. Marie Haggerty, a second nursemaid from Worcester, Massachusetts and Mr. Garavelli, a stonecutter from Barre, Vermont.

American Memories provided the following:

If it was a few years ago, it would be awful, - so you see the pension makes a body[sic] independent. I was thinking the other day, if I'd stayed in New Brunswick with my uncle, I would be rich now,[sic] for he told me many times all[sic] the money he had in the box would be mine if I stayed with my aunts,[sic] but that's what it is[sic] to be bull-headed. I suppose if I didn't have to work so hard them[sic] days, I'd still be there. You know, I feel so good at times, I often think I'll answer some of them [sic] ads for a companion. I always liked to travel or take care of people, and I never forgot even [sic] one thing I learned when I was working for rich families. I was sort of a companion,[sic] for I always talked with the women I worked for,[sic] and I've learned a lot since,[sic] and I know I'd make[sic] a good companion for an old lady. You see, when a body[sic] is born right, and acts like 'quality' people, they never

forget it. I've always said ladies and gentlemen are [sic] born, not made[sic]. I'm lively enough for my age, and I[sic] been about[sic] enough to talk on anything,[sic] so I'm thinkin'[sic] of applying for a job. I still have my character reference from Mrs. French, and if I got one from you and Dr. Freeman, I know I could get a good job

Students answered the following question: Figure out the meaning of highlighted words in context. Students read the passage Mr. Garavelli for a second time. American Memories provided the following:

It was tough for everybody in the early days. Lots of stonecutters die from the silica. Now they've got[sic] new and better equipment; they've all got[sic] to use the suction. It helps a lot; but it ain't perfect. Men still die[sic]. You bet your life my kid don't[sic] go[sic] to work in no[sic] stone shed. Silica, that's what kills them. Everybody who stays in granite, it gets...[sic] I don't get so much of it myself. Maybe I'm smart. I don't make so much money, but I don't get so much silica. In[sic] my end of the shed[sic] there ain't[sic] so much dust. I can laugh at the damn granite because it can't touch me. That's

me. I ain't[sic] got no[sic] money, but I ain't[sic] got no[sic] silica either. My end of the shed don't [sic] get so much dust. It's like a knife, you know, [sic] that silica. Like a knife in your chest.

I provided one test question to experimental group: How do George and Slim agree about relationships between men?

Experimental group students received small group support for understanding inferences.

On Wednesday and Thursday, experimental group previewed ten questions before reading chapter two. Students read the questions aloud. Students jotted down one question that seemed interesting. Both groups began reading chapter two. Experimental group read as a group, selecting various students to read specified character parts for expression. Controlled read at individual desks. After reading pages 17 through 25, students received a graphic organizer that includes a brief passage for students to draw conclusions. A sample question: After you read this section, see if you can explain why the character's behavior focused on students' ability to make inferences. Experimental group responded online and control group passed their paper to another student to read and write a response.

Students summarized chapters. Experimental group responded to teacher's prompt question. As homework, experimental group returned to nicenet.org to complete comments.

On Friday, each group reviewed notes, summaries, and vocabulary before completing a multiple-choice and essay response quiz. Both groups received short reading comprehension writing prompt: Compare and contrast George and Lennie's character traits and predict what will happen in the next chapter.

### Week Three:

Social attitude on mentally challenged individuals in the 1939s

On Monday, both groups received a news article on a twelve year old special education student arrested for urinating in a principal's office. Experimental group went to the computer room and shared notes and comments on news article. The control group read another article on a mentally retarded young man. In addition, the control group remained in the classroom and wrote a response on human retardation based on prior knowledge. Teacher provided vocabulary list to students.

On Tuesday, the experimental group interacted with mentally and physically handicapped students on campus. Both experimental group and five guests watched twenty five minutes of the movie Of Mice and Men. Afterward, experimental group and visitors shared out what they enjoyed. The control group reviewed vocabulary and began reading chapter three.

On Wednesday, experimental group provide online summaries on their interaction with guests. In addition, students responded to dense question prompt: Administration abuse or not. Students received vocabulary.

The control group wrote a summary.

On Thursday, control group completed quiz.

On Friday, the experimental group continued reading chapter three.

#### Week Four:

Race Discrimination and Segregation in the 1930s

On Monday, both groups reviewed chapter three and listed descriptive language and sensory details. Students took on the identity of Swamper and Lennie characters and jotted down what they believed each character's idea of happiness. Experimental group completed quiz. Both groups read the newspaper comic strip as shown in Figure 4 and

answered the following: Explain why character acted in that way.



Figure 4. Comic.com Comic Strip

Source: Comics.com © 2008, United States Feature Syndicate Incorporated

On Tuesday, Experimental group went to the computer room and answered writing prompt: The author has a static character, Carlson shoot and kill Candy's dog. The dog symbolized a lifeline to Candy. I think Candy will die.

On Wednesday, experimental group began vocabulary, adding one more word to list. Both groups reviewed quiz questions and selected one question to focus on for the week. Experimental group watched video footage on Clyde "Kingfish" Smith from New York City in 1932. Students read along as they listened to Smith narrate his daily peddling. American Memories provided the following:

When I started peddling that was in 1932, that's when I started singing them. [Heigho?][sic] fish man, bring down you dishpan, that's what started it. 'Fish ain't but five cent a pound'. That 'aint' is the regular dialect. I found the people liked it and it was hard times then, the depression and people can hardly believe fish is five cents a pound, so they started buying. There was quite a few peddlers and somebody had to have something extra to attract the attention. So when I came around, I started making a rhyme, it [was a hit] right away. In the street anything goes. Slap a word in there. The way I was this morning (recording) I was very good. I didn't mess them up. On the street whatever comes to my mind I say it, if I think it will be good. The main idea is when I got something I want to put over I just find something to rhyme with it. And the main requirement for that is mood. You gotta be in the mood. You got to put yourself in it. You've got to feel it. It's got to be more or less an expression, than a routine. Of course sometimes a drink of King Kong (liquor) helps.

Experimental group listed character traits on Kingfish and compared and contrast him to George. Before reading

chapter four, control group received the question: Why does Lennie visit Crooks, when no one is supposed to visit him.

On Thursday, before reading chapter four, experimental group reviewed the question: Why does Lennie visit Crooks, when no one is supposed to visit him? Control group continued silent reading.

Before reading further in chapter four, control group answered the question: Why does Crooks conceal his pleasure with anger when Candy comes into his living space? Students wrote response in journals. By the end of the chapter, experimental group verbalized summaries within groups. Groups of three gave beginning, middle, and end retell on chapter four. The control group summarized the chapter based on group member's responsibility. One student followed primary character in story; another student read for what the problem was in chapter, and the last student related the problem to what happened in previous chapters.

On Thursday, experimental group answered homework question: Why does Lennie visit crooks? The next step to the online assignment was to read two other peers responses and respond. Experimental group reviewed vocabulary online with peers.

On Friday, both groups completed the quiz, answering the prompt question(s). Both groups were asked to reflect on what they found interesting so far about novel, *The Great Depression*, or relationships. Experimental group wrote one student-choice question for at least two students to provide online comments. . Students responded to at least two questions. Control group wrote question inside their journal and passed it to another peer for review and response.

#### Week Five:

#### Achieving Happiness

On Monday, students received a warm up on making inferences. In Steinbeck's (1937), novel, students read the following:

From outside came the clang of horseshoes on the playing pegs and the shouts of men, playing, encouraging, jeering. But in the barn it was quiet and humming and lazy and warm (p.84).

Students answered the following question: What does the passage tell you about the attitude of characters? How does action inside barn differ with the men playing horseshoes?

Experimental and control received new vocabulary terms for chapters five and six. Experimental group reviewed words in groups. Control group defined terms.

Next, students read pages 41 and 58, and answered the following questions: Which passage reflected Lennie's weakness for soft and pretty things?

Students read pages 84 to 90 in chapter five. Both groups wrote predictions for the upcoming events involving Lennie and Curley's Wife. Students wrote their predictions without using novels.

On Tuesday, both groups shared predictions in class. Both groups read the final pages of chapter five. Experimental group verbalized a summary with groups. In addition, the experimental group posted transactional responses online. Control group wrote summaries on chapter five.

On Wednesday, students read and completed chapter six. Students completed a summary on final chapter. Each group gave an honest response to the ending of the novel. What did you expect to happen to Lennie? Why would George decision seem right or wrong?

Experimental group shared journal entries and summaries in groups of threes. Students discussed author's purpose for story's ending. How did ending connect with author's portrayal of The Great Depression and the effects of a person's dreams altered?

On Thursday, both groups reviewed journal entries and notes for vocabulary quiz on chapters four through six.

On Friday, the test will be graded and scored for both groups.

#### Week Six:

##### Individuals Who Lived during The Great Depression

On Monday, experimental group reviewed still shots of Great Depression survivors. Selected music was featured with each still shot. Students searched online for pictures of individuals resembling characters in novel.

On Tuesday, both groups prepared for the final exam. Experimental communicated final dense question writing prompt: Compare Elie to George and Curly to Dr. Mendel. Control group read articles on human retardation, migration, and The Great Depression. Students reviewed vocabulary in groups.

On Wednesday, experimental group played jeopardy, a game posted on wall for whole group participation.

On Thursday, experimental group answered one of two questions online: Would a true friend tell you the truth or Should you take the law into your own hands? Multiple-choice question handouts were given to both groups.

During Week One, Teacher placed a copy of novel at each desk allowing Groups A (control) B (experimental) a chance to view cover and explore text. Some students in both groups appeared disenchanted and quickly dropped copies of novel back onto desktops. Student in both groups found interest in completing survey. The questions on survey asked students to respond to statements related to relationships and social interaction between friends or people of authority. Most students thoroughly answered all ten statements placing either a plus sign for agree or a minus sign for disagree. Several students placed a question mark to indicate doubt about how to respond to a statement. This survey was presented as the novel's prologue. Statements introduced subjects students should expect to read in the novel *Of Mice and Men*.

The experimental group shared out one answer and many had friendly bantering over statement: A true friend will tell you the truth, even when you don't want to hear it. One student wanted to hear answers on statement: The n-word

is more offensive than other racial slurs because of the history of hate behind it. As a whole, both groups murmured the same sentiment, believing the word caused problems between students and with people in general. Several students would not participate in sharing their opinion on this statement.

The experimental group enjoyed the idea of leaving the classroom to work on computers. After explaining the directions to group, majority of students eagerly worked on answering the questions: Would a true friend tell you the truth? Have you ever been called a bad name? Students were not allowed to respond to friend's comments only. When a student avoided the rules he lost assignment credit. Two male students from each group received timeouts from computer room. Their verbal responses to prompt questions caused students distraction.

The control group stayed in class and read a handout on The Great Depression. Many demonstrated minimal interest in topic. In fact, they looked bored. Teacher encouraged students to read in groups. A few gathered with friends, while majority of students ignored the teacher's suggestion.

When the teacher introduced the vocabulary list for the week on PowerPoint, control group's enthusiasm decreased. Even though I told them they would have only seven words, students moaned. Experimental group's attitude was slightly better. Students participated in selecting words for weekly quiz. It became a game with students blurting out preferred terms to learn. But as for acting out vocabulary terms, students' apathy filled the room. Three students stood at the front of the room and giggled, made quick hand gestures for the word bundle and returned to their seats before any student could guess.

### Summary of Transactional Strategies Instruction

#### Week One

During week one, I combined TSI's elements, clarity and inquiry into lesson objectives. Experimental group watched video footage on individuals who lived during The Great Depression. Majority of students listened intently, later commenting on narrator's dialect: Why does he talk so funny? Students either giggled or gave their best Southern drawl, similar to the speakers. When given the question, "What do the words in bold mean in context?" several

students could not answer. Students reviewed passage and listened to the narrator again. By the second time, students marked specified words as having more than one meaning.

Music supported students' ability to visualize the seriousness of social destitution in the 1930s. Students wanted to know why the singers sounded so sad. One boy blurted out, "Tupoc was never happy in his songs."

Students needed clarification with novel's language and words. Cultural differences for English learners hindered students' ability to recognize context meanings of certain words. When English Learner read the word "lumbered," they believed the narrator spoke of wooden planks, not walking heavily. To clarify, I introduced terms featured on specific pages.

Online students' responses to questions had clarity and detail. Students' online communication kept students engaged in answering both questions presented by teacher in class. Varied inferences by other students provided perspectives on the subject students probably did not consider before.

On Friday, small group of students needed clarification on difficult language and passages found in novel.

## Week Two

During Week Two, experimental students still appeared engaged in lesson.

On Monday, the authentic 1930s music surprised students. With eyes closed, students sat with distorted looks on their faces. I asked them to listen to the lyrics.

Before reading the passage on Mrs. Marie Haggerty, experimental group read the question: Figure out the meaning of highlighted words in context. Students looked at specific terms such as "body" bull-"headed", and "lively" to answer question. English Learners believed the word "body" referred to a person physical in nature, not social status. Cecilia guessed at the term "bull-headed" because she heard a teacher use it in class. The term "lively" had students identify the root "live" yet context clues were not identified to find meaning of word. In the second passage on Mr. Garavelli, students made inferences on narrators concern for silica, a dangerous chemical if exposed to people. They also understood that working with "granite" was life-threatening, but a good paying job. When

they read "Maybe I'm smart" student recognized the narrator using the word connotatively, not literal.

He was intelligent enough to value his life more than money. One student believed the stonecutter was not smart. One student believed smart entailed making enough money to buy better looking clothes. Another student believed the stonecutter should risk his health to earn money for his family's needs and welfare.

Students practiced identifying metaphors or words with more than one meaning. It was important to identify English Learners and low readers' strengths in understanding the meaning of words in context. When students read: The day was going fast now. Only the tops of the Galiban flamed with the light of the sun that had gone from the valley, (Steinbeck, 1937), English learners and low readers did not know meaning of "tops" without teacher explanation. This passage described the story setting changing from day to evening. Word and word phrases in the novel were simple to read, yet challenging to understand for English Learners. Other words, such as "bindle" or "lumbered," were difficult for both English Learners and English-speaking students.

Control group continued to reject vocabulary building exercises. Only a handful of students completed the homework. Experimental group's attitude was slightly better. Students participated in selecting words for weekly quiz. But asked to dramatize words, several members opted out. The activity was not successful. Another lesson on making inferences left most experimental students less engaged. One student blurted out, "Are we going to the computer room?" Students' attitude for vocabulary exercise pressured me to change activities. Students eagerly worked online. I read over their shoulders and noticed lengthy responses from some students. English Learners wrote long responses with many grammatical errors, but their idea was fluent.

There was less enthusiasm for end of the week chapter quiz. Students scrambled for last minute cramming.

Through prior knowledge and visualization, male students discussed stonecutter's role as a father and family provider. Some male students believed the man cared for his son, but as a father he had responsibilities. They agreed the stonecutter should risk his life for his family's welfare.

### Week Three

During Week Three, both groups were intrigued with the article on the twelve year old being arrest for urinating in the principal's office. Both groups had lively discussions on how insensitive the principal was in the matter.

On Tuesday, experimental group greeted five special day students class. For nearly twenty five minutes the class watched an adaptation of *Of Mice and Men*. Two of the guests were enthusiastic and talkative during the movie. Students appeared not annoyed and chimed in when guest made comments about characters.

Inquiry or dense questioning allowed experimental group to explore prior knowledge on subject to support their responses online. Dense question prompts: Administration abuse or not? Students' responses were similar in nature. Most answers reflected the following: "I believe administration did abuse their authority."

The dense question and online communication supported students ability to visualize mentally challenged students discriminated. Experimental group's interaction with mentally challenged students allowed them to connect with individuals who are isolated from mainstream students.

Experimental group summarized their experience with Special Day students. In addition, students answered a dense question related to social attitudes and behaviors for mentally challenged individuals. Students responded to the prompt: Administration abuse or not? By giving detailed personal encounters of either defending a special day student on campus or watching someone bully a mentally challenged youth.

Control group response to the report was one of shock. Students appeared upset over administration's decision. When they received additional story on Jerome, a mentally challenged young man accused of killing an elderly man, students reacted with surprise and remorse. The judge sentenced Jerome to death. Students wrote journal responses and shared out to seat neighbors.

Both experimental and control reluctantly worked on vocabulary. It was obvious both groups wanted to continue the discussion on social abuses against the mentally challenged. Students blurted out comments such as "that's crazy," and "so mean..."

By the end of week, both groups were less enthusiastic about vocabulary and weekly quiz. Control group began reading chapter three.

## Week Four

During week four, as a review of novel's theme: reestablishing the American Dream, students reflected on character's traits and author's choice of descriptive language for happiness. This activity encouraged students to connect with the character by focusing on the importance of feeling a sense of happiness. Students reviewed previous chapters to identify varied language and actions that differentiated characters' happiness and personal plans.

The video footage on Kingpin perked up experimental group's attitude for the period. Experimental group identified George as having character traits similar to Clyde. One student said neither character gave up on making it through hard times. Another student believed Clyde's skin color and social status during the 30s probably limited his employment opportunities and income.

Experimental group created questions on establishing self-contentment or happiness reflected in novel. On line, students discussed having happiness or dreams deferred, and yet still believing dreams will soon become realities.

Control group complained over having to read as a group. I allowed them to read alone or with a friend.

This activity worked for some students, not all. Both groups verbally summarized chapter four.

#### Week Five

During Week Five, students appeared alert and energized. One student asked if we would break our routine and visit the computer room early. Considering how I needed the group motivated for two more weeks, I promised we would. Students made good progress on making inferences. They completed another lesson answering questions: What does the passage tell you about the attitude of characters and How does action inside barn differ with the men playing horseshoes? Students answered making inferences exercises without hesitation. Several students raised their hands. One female student identified setting as a nice Sunday routine for the men.

When I asked students to give examples of what makes Lennie happy, many blurted out answers before turning to pre-selected pages, 41 and 58. Once on those pages students listed direct and indirect characterization, giving me a teachable moment on direct and indirect characterization.

Students from both groups shared out predictions after reading pages 84 through 90. Prediction would allow students to reflect on their knowledge of story at this

point. This is most important. Students' answers reflected prior knowledge, what they found most important to them. Several students shared out similar answers.

Students read the final pages of chapter five with energy. Experimental groups designated readers read at a rapid pace. Several times, I asked the reader to slow down. I considered English Learners and low readers' ability to keep up and still comprehend what was read. Students discussed possible events that could happen in the last chapter.

Control group read silently. Many students finished the chapter and began chapter six.

### Week Six

During week six, students applied prior knowledge to complete visual activity. Reviewing PowerPoint images of The Great Depression survivors supported students' review of novel's themes. The selection of music played during the PowerPoint presentation added authenticity to the lesson. Some students could not adapt to instrumental aspect of music. Bobby's previous comments on style of music remained the same. "This is so lame." Several male students chimed in.

Experimental group answered final dense question prompt: Students compared Elie to George and Curley to Dr. Mendel. This activity allowed students to reflect on what they learned in a previous novel, *Night*, by Elie Weisel. Characters from *Night* supported students' direction in defining character's as humane or inhumane. The final prompt: Have you ever had a dream deferred reflected on students' prior knowledge on poem read earlier in the semester. Instructor looked for students' ability to connect literature to literature in the form of a dense question. Students' online responses determined connections.

### Reading Engagement

Initial reading assignment began with a survey. Students accustomed to short, brief reading samples remained focused on assignment. Short survey statements with simple instruction were accepted by all students in both groups.

The students' initial reaction to the novel was not a surprise. Majority of students were not leisure readers; therefore setting a novel at their desks did not impress them. Male students scoffed at the cover and immediately

disengaged. Even after pointing out how the book cover illustration included two male figures, selected male students barely looked at cover; one looked at me the entire time I spoke. For the most part, visuals attracted the selected students' interests. Students commented on who the character might be in relation to novel.

The PowerPoint presentation allowed students to use their sense of sight and sound. Students silently read the passage while listening to the featured survivor. Low readers reluctantly followed along, looking at the screen seemed comfortable for them.

Motivation decreased substantially when several students participated as class readers. Five to six students were selected to read character dialogue. Many students supported the idea of adding drama to the reading of the novel. After reading several pages, Bobby blurted, "I don't like this." Another student chimed in "The voices are confusing me." Overall, students appeared agitated. Students chose strong readers to read the remaining pages of chapter. Students' physical appearance now looked calm and relaxed. I suggested new readers for week two; however, students quickly said Shirley and Susana could continue.

Both students did not mind reading, in fact, Shirley was flattered.

Low readers and English learners' motivation for reading fluctuated. Novel chapter reading with additional supplemental reading normally deterred low readers, but chapter three's theme on mentally challenged individuals engaged low readers and English Learners.

Students read news articles on twelve-year-old arrested for urinating in principal's office. Many students mentioned pre-reading survey questions and held discussions. Cecilia asked if her class would learn more about the mentally challenged. Her mentally challenged brother attended the same school.

Exciting plots mesmerized students. The fight between Curly, the bosses' son and Lennie, the mentally challenged male character engaged many students. Even apathetic readers kept their heads buried in chapter three.

At lunch, two low readers arrived to class early to read on their own. One boy admitted to being a slow reader and asked for help with vocabulary. His literacy skills in making inferences were marginal. His frequent visits allowed me to support him. I permitted the boys to come in as often as they wanted.

## Journals

Students rejected writing as much as reading a novel. But the introduction of electronic communication appealed to students. Writing or verbalizing summaries shifted from individual activity, including journal entries placed on line paper to group activity, involving online website and multiple participants contacting each other. Weekly, students worked online at school or at home. Using nicenet.org website students interacted with each other with broad smiles on their faces. Writing prompts on pre-survey statements initially generated student's first group of responses.

At the beginning, students' responses reflected students' novice status in communication skills. Students wrote social lingo "what up" and "this is so cool" as possible ice breakers before answering writing prompts. Students' comments were brief with numerous encrypted language. After reminding student of my position to grade their assignments for content, clarity, grammar, and spelling, students writing skills improved.

Students' online communication affected other students. Several students used academic language that encouraged other students to use terms such as 'for

example' and minimize repetitive use of "like" and "and" as transitions. Students expressed clear and defined ideas with supportive content. Lower readers, such as Cecilia, eventually practiced writing skills demonstrated by peers, usually Damaris. Students shared a level of respect for each other comments.

As for topics discussed online, a pattern of communication developed at the beginning of the activity that soon morphed. Sensitive topics received multiple responses. One or two students engaged other students to respond to writing prompt or their comments on writing prompt. Students soon stepped out of their comfort zones and communicated with students that were not friends or of the same sex. Students shared honest feeling about subject that most students were afraid to discuss in class. Students one to two word responses gradually lengthened to four sentences or more.

Control group's lack of interaction caused continual loss of motivation. When students completed journal entries, I expected students to share out with a desk neighbor for at least three minutes. Instead, students disconnected from story and assignment. Students quickly shared journal entries to socialize on subjects outside of

chapter completed. Some students snuck out cell phones while one girl asked for a pass to the restroom. Students' automaticity in social behavior normalized the room for them. One student blurted out "We are finished, what's next?"

The same student's journal responses lacked interest in reading or topics. When asked to summarize the Jerome article, Bobby wrote that Jerome should be incarcerated for breaking the law. I believe Bobby's attitude reflected on lack of interaction with peers and use of sensory detail in class. Journal entries began as two to three sentences. By the end of the study, the length of journal entries remained the same.

#### Observations on Students' Ability to Understand Transactional Strategies Instruction

I introduced TSI components each week. Many students were familiar with summarizing and predicting. The first writing assignment proved that students verbalized an understanding of how to write a summary. Sallie shared how story events should be put in order. When asked to retell what happened in chapter one, Sallie began with describing the concluding event in the chapter, giving sporadic

accounts of character's traits. Students raised their hands in disagreement with Sallie. Students briefly summarized chapter one. After working as a group, students submitted their chapter summaries that did not include details, character's names or story setting. Instead of reading a character's name, students wrote the pronoun "they" to refer to one or more characters. Moreover, chapter summaries were two to three sentences at length. Two students used direct quotes as summaries. Jeremy wrote an entire passage from the novel. Jeremy obviously believed the passage had important detail for his summary assignment.

Jeremy and other students looked perplexed when I told them they had to use their words to retell what they read. Their reaction made me believe previous teachers allowed students to copy information for full credit. Using whole instruction, I guided students in using a graphic organizer to set up main idea and details that supported the main idea. Majority of students could not identify main idea, but shared out specific details. I asked students to recall what happened at the beginning of chapter. I asked "What did the narrator mostly talk about?" Students jotted down events that happened between characters. Several students

worked as groups, sharing information to draft a group summary. Collaboration supported majority in understanding the primary components that were necessary for story retell. Each weekly summary showed signs of improvement. .

Students recalled prediction activities practiced in former eighth grade Humanities courses. The ability to make an educated guess on what would happen next did not confuse students. The problem was however, getting students to trust other students and instructor. Although the concept was understood, to predict means to guess, students were concerned about being wrong. Many verbal and written responses on predictions were either blank or "I don't know."

Instructor realized getting students to answer required building student's esteem and confidence levels. Sergio, English Learner, remained silent and would not respond to any whole class questions. He would share his answers during small group instruction and even question events or incidents that occurred in story or supplemental reading materials. Sergio would simply say, "Why do people judge?" His question had me consider how he already predicted people would judge others. Sergio's synthesized

from his prior experiences and knowledge about people and common behaviors, people would judge.

One-on-one contact posed a problem for the majority of students to share predictions. When reflecting on pre-survey, students avoided in-class communication on sensitive subjects such as name-calling and interacting with mentally challenged individuals. The Internet eased students' pressures of having to respond to facial expressions and to give answers that would warrant judgment. Making predictions online removed face to face social awkwardness for shy and unsure students.

Inquiries appeared as student-initiated questions presented online. I gave students dense questions to support their reading and prior knowledge on previous experienced related to novel themes discussed in class. At the beginning of study, students seemed guarded, not willing to form questions. But through dense questions, the ice-breakers, some students used key terms and phrases found in ice-breakers to trigger students' interests. Soon, students formed social and ideological connections with each other. The duration of the study proved successful in helping students to develop sophistication in interacting with peers on a respectable level.

Reading a novel that represented a social era different from students' present knowledge on social conditions and relationships required clarification in two areas. New terms had more than one meaning. It was noted from English Learners' response online that novel's language and specific descriptive terms' literal and figurative meanings confused students. The word "lumbered" described character Lennie's gait. Unsophisticated readers, mostly low readers and English Learners, believed the meaning of the word was wooden planks. These students recognized the root, "lumber" and immediately applied what they knew to the context of the story. Students' application of prior knowledge presented a need to clarify author's use of language to avoid student's confusion of words and context.

New vocabulary for students required creative ways to help with building new knowledge. PowerPoint presentations showing survivors of the Great Depression allowed students to connect a few vocabulary words learned in novel to still shots of individuals. For example, the word "bundle" was featured in a picture. Students looked up the meaning of the term and eventually identified it in the picture. Viewing still shots as a visual activity supported students

in learning the meaning of some vocabulary terms. In addition, early discussions on chapter themes allowed students to connect themes with reading. Online communication noted student references to characters attitudes and behaviors compared to in-class discussions on human cruelty and social prejudices.

#### Evaluation of Individual Student Progress

Previous reading activities and lessons warranted strong consideration in providing novels to students demonstrating abhorrence to reading. During Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) students would not focus on reading. Students whispered, worked on math homework, or doodled inside textbooks. I adjusted SSR to alter student's behavior during reading. Initially, students chose a book and silently read. Instead of giving students choices, the entire class read the same novel. Each day, I provided writing prompt with a specific number of pages to be read. Students read writing prompt before reading the novel. For three weeks, students read for a purpose. Students completed *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury. Before including writing prompts to SSR sessions, majority of students'

achievements in learning content standards suffered. Selected students' motivation for reading short stories and novels teetered on both ends of the spectrum. When the same students received a unit lesson on "The Glass Menagerie" by Tennessee Williams, many grunted and moaned during the lesson. Many students complained about having to read such a boring book. Students had difficulty personally connecting to the story. One student openly called the book stupid. By the end of the unit, one-third of forty copies ended up missing.

Although combining writing and reading adjusted general students' behavior for reading, students' personal connections to story themes were lost. Just reading a novel to fulfill content standards did not assure students' social or personal connections. Without meaningful connections, students' attitude affected their motivation to read.

Attitude which supports motivation was a primary concern. English learners Sergio and Cecilia had low motivation, generally due to low literacy skills caused by language and cultural barriers. Students struggled for years to acquire English for academics progress and social acceptance.

Acquiring English was an unbearable obstacle that must be hurdled for social and literacy growth.

Low readers, Jeremy and Sallie, entered the classroom with previous tales of deficiencies in reading comprehension. These students carried former teacher's opinions, memories of failing and falling behind in learning skills. Jeremy's personality reflected negative feelings about himself and reading. Sallie understood she was behind her peers in learning, but her attitude was positive. She was pleasant and sensitive.

Grade level readers, Bobby and Susy, preferred outside interest than reading in class or at home. Susy enjoyed her friends and cell phone. Reading and sending text messages kept Susy distracted in class. Bobby limited his reading to required assignments. He constantly bragged about his eighth grade STAR test scores. "I did not read not one book and I still got an A in class," he would add.

At the beginning of the study, students automatically looked for the warm up writing prompt. It was a routine they recalled as a normal practice. Reviewing questions before reading provided students a sense of familiarity. The application of new reading strategies and applications upset the flow for some students, causing difficulties in

adjusting to new ways. However, Internet communication and PowerPoint presentations on Great Depression impressed students to stay engaged.

During the study, only a few students' attitude shifted from high motivation to annoyance. Bobby wanted the lesson to end after he finished the novel.

By the end of the study, students' mixed reactions on final story's event left students either bewildered or not affected.

### Sergio

Sergio, a control group student is a fourteen-year-old English Learner, currently in the ninth grade. He lives with both parents. Neither parent speaks English. Sergio interprets for his parents whenever I call his home. Besides supporting his parents with communication, Sergio is the eldest of five children. He must return home after school to watch over young siblings. He enjoys his art class and would prefer sketching out doodles and gang signs in English than read. Sergio prefers making his own decisions about class work and reading. Most of his assignments are late or not submitted.

Sergio began the study with some interest. He completed the pre-survey and participated in sharing out

answers. This surprised me. I watched Sergio work on the survey. He chewed on his pencil and as if with great caution answered the statements. He marked the statement, "Life today is more difficult than it was in the 1930s," with a question mark, unsure about what life was like back then. By the end of the study his final response was disagree. Sergio's final response was related to reading assignments and brief discussions in class.

Sergio's disinterest in reading was apparent. The copy of *Of Mice and Men* had two writing doodles on the inside of the back page before the end of the study. During chapter one reading, Sergio looked straight ahead. The narrator's description for most students diverted students' attention. Sergio response to long descriptions of story setting appeared to bore him. He sat quietly, with his eyes fixated on something. When asked to follow along, he reluctantly picked up his book and flipped one page.

Students participated in reading each chapter. Whenever it was Sergio's turn to read he refused. But by the end of chapter three, Sergio volunteered to read. The fight scene between Curly and Lennie intrigued Sergio. His minimal interest in the novel continued increase with each chapter. By the end of the novel, Sergio read sections of

the last chapter. His fluency skills were average. He finished reading the novel.

Sergio received each work sheet that included transactional strategies instruction components beginning with question, predict, and summarize. Sergio did not write for the first week. When I inquired about the blank area of his worksheet he ignored me. I suggested he write a sentence or two about what he remembered. Without responding, he picked up his pencil and began writing. I reviewed Sergio's entry later that day. He doodled a picture of a person sitting alone. His picture resembled the book cover.

By week two, Sergio wrote one sentence under finding personal connections, not summary. He wrote: My sister and I always fight about the smallest things. But we do agry[agree] with[about] something, but I do it 'cause I care. I asked Sergio if he wanted to write a summary and he said no.

By week three, several students, including Sergio completed summaries immediately. Chapter three included the fight between Curly and Lennie. Sergio wrote: "Some of the people called clues [Curly's] wife cheatin' and then they got in a fight lennie and curle" On the same page, Sergio

wrote: "I have got in fights with my brother he is bigger and fatter he always won." His personal reflection showed clarity and fluency.

By week four, Sergio did not submit an entry. Later that week, he explained how he did not think he could finish the class assignment.

He said the assignments and test were too difficult for him.

By week five, students worked in groups to discuss the chapter. Sergio reluctantly joined a group. In the climax event between Lennie and female character, Sergio explained Lennie accidentally killed Curly's Wife.

By week six, Sergio submitted his final journal entry on the question: Would you take the law in your own hands? His answer was short and reflected happened between Lennie and George. Sergio wrote: "I didn't like it when George killed lennie. Because his friend George [sic] telling him nice things, so lennie will not be tortured."

Sergio completed three quizzes out of five. His average score was 72 percent. Each quiz had at least one writing prompt. Sergio completed writing prompts on chapter four and five. While his multiple-choice answers proved his lack of interest in novel, his written answers proved

personal connections to characters. On the final exam the question: "Should you take the law in your own hands? Sergio responded to character's lack of sympathy for one man losing a friend, Sergio wrote: I didn't like the ending because of the way Carlson just said "hey whants [what] gotten [got] at[in] those guys?"

It was difficult to determine Sergio's skills in making inferences on paper. However, when discussing his summaries with him, Sergio demonstrated an average understanding.

Vocabulary development required Sergio to complete homework and class work review sheets. Sergio's scores on review sheets were low.

### Cecilia

Cecilia from the experimental group is a fourteen year old transfer English Learner, currently in the ninth grade. She lives at home with her mother and three younger sisters. Her mother speaks minimal English. Cecilia's mother works two jobs. Cecilia picks up her young sisters from the neighboring middle and elementary schools every day. She must care for them until her mother comes home. Cecilia, like any high school female student, enjoys talking with her girlfriends. She prefers math and science

classes over English, but understands she needs to improve her reading skills. Cecilia turns in class work and homework on time.

Cecilia transferred to my class a month before project. She began the study with interest and vigor. She completed the pre-survey, but did not share out her answers. Cecilia was still under the new student jitters. She marked the statement, "Life today is more difficult than it was in the 1930s," with minus indicating she disagreed with statement. By the end of the study her final response was disagree. Cecilia's final response was related to reading assignments, supplemental readings, and discussions in class.

Cecilia appeared motivated to read another novel in class. She read *Fahrenheit 451* and completed every class assignment, so I anticipated the same level of interest and work ethic for reading *Of Mice and Men*. During chapter one, Cecilia was one of a few students who agreed that multiple voices made it difficult for her to concentrate on the story being read. Cecilia's nonverbal cue of nodding her head to my question, "Should we try fewer readers?" indicated she agreed with peers. Cecilia sat more relaxed

than before, indicating she was comfortable with the new reading activity.

Cecilia read the additional reading materials, including twelve year old girl arrested for urinating in principal's office. Cecilia's facial expressions revealed remorse and sympathy for the victim. Online communication allowed Cecilia an outlet to express her feelings to other classmates. She placed numerous comments online. Peers responded.

By the end of the fight scene in chapter three, Cecilia requested to read. Her action to volunteer proved she was less jittery about being the new student in class. The class as a whole insisted on its two selected readers to continue reading. When I believed the rejection would bother Cecilia, she turned and looked at me and said, "It's okay." Her attitude about not getting to read did not affect her productivity. Cecilia continued to complete assignments and blog to numerous students. Her motivation to finish the book increased. Cecilia asked to read at lunch. She and another English Learner from control group, requested to read in class during lunch. Unbenounced to both students, they did not know each other's status in my research. Cecilia finished reading the novel.

Cecilia's journal entries were found on nicenet.org. Her entries varied in length. Depending on the subject, her comments would be expressive. She, like most students, felt a strong attachment to chapter three's theme on individuals who were mentally challenged. On the writing prompt: Was Administration's decision to punish a mentally challenged girl for urinating in the principal's office a form of abuse or not?, Cecilia read a response from another student. Her following comment was to Heidi's belief that the girl was scared and accidentally peed. Cecilia wrote: I agree that the authority did over use and [authority] they shouldn't have gotten her in trouble just because she urinated. She did not have any control over her action so they [she] should not be punished.

During week five, Cecilia created an online bond with students she normally did not speak to in class. Cecilia response to the writing prompt: Why is discriminating a person so wrong? connected her to male students she did not communicate with in class. When she wrote: I think discrimination is so wrong because the person who is discriminating another person they don't know how that person feels offended or not. Maybe they have been discriminated themselves and that's why they discriminate

against other people, her answer caused a train reaction. When one student ended her message with "I can't even finish my thought because its just so mean and rude to ever think of putting others down," Cecilia wrote: The reason discrimination is so wrong is because no matter what kind of sex you are or race the people are still people no matter what so just because they are different does [not] mean you can make fun of them.

During week six, Cecilia gave a lengthy response to the final writing prompt: Would a true friend tell the truth? Her answer gave detail on the primary character George and his actions to save his friend from the truth. She wrote: George knew his friend would be hurt by people who think he was the one who killed the girl in the barn. Because Curly was made over having to lose a fight in front of the others George had to do something that would keep Lennie from getting in trouble. Its wrong what he did but he did it to not be mean but to make it easy on his friend. When I asked Cecilia to explain her answer she said George had to protect his friend from harm.

Online journal writing gave Cecilia additional support in writing conventions. Heidi would give her comments such as "Remember to add a period at the end of your sentences."

Students' comments about writing are normally welcomed by students faster than from a teacher.

Cecilia completed three quizzes on time and made up two quizzes after school. Her average score for five quizzes was 78 percent. In her response to final exam's writing prompt: Would a true friend tell the truth? Cecilia's answer demonstrated her ability to draw conclusions or make inferences on understanding George's level of humanity, friendship with Lennie.

Cecilia demonstrated understanding of most of the vocabulary terms including such terms as tenement, stake, bindle, and lumbered.

### Bobby

Bobby from the experimental group is a fourteen year old white male student, currently in the ninth grade. He lives with his father and visits his mother and siblings on the weekends every other week. His father is a prominent community figure. Bobby is boastful. In class, he periodically brags about getting a new phone or heading out to San Diego for the weekends. Bobby's interests are texting from his cell phone, listening to his iPod, and skateboarding with his two friends. He does not turn in class work or homework.

Bobby began the six-week study with low interest. He completed the pre-survey, placing question marks as answers for most of the statements. When asked to share out his answer, he muffled his answer for the statement: "Life today is more difficult than it was in the 1930s." Bobby placed a minus sign on his survey, indicating he disagreed with statement. A male student sitting behind Bobby blurted, "Of course, not for you." By the end of the study Bobby's response on the same question remained the same. Bobby's final response related to his experiences and attitude about personal achievements.

Bobby's motivation for reading was minimal. During class reading sessions, Bobby was caught texting during class reading sessions. The same behavior was witnessed from his cell phone. He committed the same infraction weeks prior to study. To keep him on track, I asked the class to support Bobby's reading engagement by allowing him to read. Students understood my purpose for altering their comfortable reading activity. But, after listening to Bobby stumble over two-syllable words, I noticed class's frustration. Bobby read three times during the duration of the study.

With Bobby turning in his phone at the beginning of class, he read the news article on twelve year old girl arrested for urinating in principal's office without being distracted. Bobby wrote short responses on mental retardation theme. Peers, beside his friend responded to his comments. When Bobby wrote: How would you treat a mentally retarded student?, he received eight responses from six students, two students left more than one comment.

By the end of the fight scene in chapter three, Bobby's motivation for listening to other students' read increased. But his motivation to complete assignments stayed stagnant. When asked to complete lessons at lunch, Bobby promised, but never showed up. Bobby finished reading the novel.

Inside the computer room, Bobby was a ball of energy. I clearly stated the rules for using nicenet.org and communicating with students other than friends. Bobby ignored the rules and lost computer privileges early. When asked if he could follow instructions, Bobby said he would do his best.

By the following week, Bobby's behavior nearly had him removed. I believe he was 'acting out' for having to give up his phone at the beginning of each class.

During week three, Bobby settled down. He quickly sat in front of a computer to give comments on sharing the classroom with mentally challenged students on campus. Bobby wrote: It was cool having those kids in class yesterday. Who could hurt someone because they are physically different? I know its not me. How would you treat a mentally retarded person? Six students responded to his dense question.

Bobby stayed engaged in journaling during week four. This time, his response to the question: "Why is discrimination wrong," Bobby wrote: "I think kids and adults alike are always discriminating each other, because that's how they were raised. Think back to the Civil War, with the African-Americans slaves. Most people who were white were raised to treat African-Americans like dirt, and some still do. Maybe one day discrimination will stop, for a while at least when everyone is treated the same way, as useless garbage. In schools though, I think peer pressure has a role in how people act too."

By week six, there was a change in Bobby's maturity level. I believe his peers perceived him as becoming dimensional. Instead of being the cool guy with great cell phones and ipods, Bobby created a sensitive, caring online

persona. His final response on: Should a guy take the law in his own hands, reflected Bobby's concern for people who are considered less fortunate in social and economic status. When he wrote: Maybe I can do lots of things because I am fortune stable, but money does not give any one the right to hurt another person. Curly was the Bosses son and he hurt others because he was the bosses son. George was right when he killed Lennie before Curly got to him.

Bobby numerous absences at the beginning of the study affected his quiz grades. He partially completed three quizzes. He wrote a fragment answer on quiz one, completed multiple-choice section on quiz two; and answered every question on quiz three. His score on quiz was 73 percent.

In terms of measuring Bobby's comprehension, two answers from chapter three quiz proved Bobby's inability to maintain focus on his reading. On question: What does the farm symbolize?, Bobby wrote: The farm symbolizes hope. The answer could either mean hope to continue working to earn money or hope to achieve their dreams to own a farm. In the second question: "What does Curly think Lennie is smiling at?" Bobby failed to connect Lennie's admiration for the dream and rabbits to Lennie's reason for smiling.

Bobby wrote: Lennie is smiling because everyone is picking on Curly."

Bobby did not submit class work or complete any exams that measured vocabulary development.

As for Internet communication, I was intrigued over Bobby's leadership quality. He addressed discrimination and mistreatment of mentally challenged students. He wrote the following: When he wrote: It was cool having those kids in our class yesterday. Who could hurt someone because they are physically different? I know its not me. How would you treat a mentally retarded person?

### Susy

Susy from control group is a fourteen year old white female student, currently in the ninth grade. She lives at home with both parents and has two siblings. Susy is the youngest in her family. Both parents are self-employed. Susy's interest are cheerleading and spending time shopping with girlfriends. In class, Susy text messages and socializes. When she is not, Susy's completes class work. Homework submissions are sporadic.

Susy's motivation for reading was minimal. During class reading Susy kept her cell phone in her hands. The same behavior was witnessed during previous reading

assignments. When approached and told to put it away, Susy whispered, "But I am not using it right now." Susy had a fixation for her phone that prevented her from not touching it. When I applied the same reading discipline on Susy as I did with another student, it did not work. Susy physically appeared distraught and upset. Her reading quiz scores that averaged 94 percent dropped to 76 percent on her last test.

Susy's motivation for listening to other students' read decreased. Even after the fight scene between Curly and Lennie, Susy stared out into oblivion, appearing forlorn and distant. Susy appeared uncomfortable with having to leave her phone at my desk for the past three days. By day four, she spoke to me after class. She explained that she would never take it out again, she just needed it back. With phone back in her possession, Susy finished reading the novel with energy.

Susy, at first, was unclear about what I expected her to do with the TSI worksheet. After a second explanation, she wrote an answer to the section she understood. Her summary was lengthy. She sequenced the chapter events. Other sections of the worksheet, question, prediction, and reflection were left unanswered. I reminded Susy and the

class of our past reading activity: We read a question before reading. This time, the concept of creating a question became a roadblock for Susy.

On the whiteboard, I wrote three sample questions students could write before reading the chapter. The questions were: What do you find confusing about a character or event between characters? Which character is interesting? Do you have a question for the author? Susy stared at the whiteboard and said, "But I don't have any questions." Her response was not unusual. Several students' sheets remained blank before I modeled and gave examples. Susy copied down a question on the board and continued with her worksheet.

By week three, Susy generated a question for chapter three. She did not fill in the question section until after reading the chapter. She wanted to know what would happen to Lennie? Other students around Susy had the same question. Susy's deep concern for a defenseless character being abused stemmed from two news articles read earlier in the week. Susy read about a girl being arrested for urinating in the principal's office and another article on a mentally retarded young man who was sentenced to death for accidentally playing too rough with a youth under the

age of ten. Her journal entry on chapter three reflected her thoughts on social attitudes against people who are different. She wrote: Lennie did not want to hurt Curly, but Curly was being very mean for taking advantage of someone who was not smart enough to not smile at the wrong time.

During week six, Susy answered the prompt: Would a true friend tell you the truth? She wrote: My friends and I are very close. We tell each other everything, but one time I told my best friend that her best friend lied about going out with her boyfriend. My friend cried. It really hurt her so I believe now that maybe everything should not be told.

Susy completed three out of five quizzes. Her average score for both multiple-choice and essay questions was 89 percent. Because Susy's extracurricular activities, homework and review assignments were sporadic. Regardless of Susy's limited assignments, her vocabulary development reviews proved student's ability to define words through context clues.

### Jeremy

Jeremy from control group is a fourteen year old white male student, currently in the ninth grade. His paternal

grandparents adopted Jeremy at the age of seven. Child welfare authorities deemed his mother unfit to care for Jeremy. Jeremy was held back in second grade for low cognitive skills. He receives special education accommodations, including modified lessons and coursework, extended time to complete class and homework, and study skills class. Jeremy complains and finds English, reading, and writing difficult to achieve. He expresses anger for assignments he does not like and cries when his grade is lower than a C. His interests are football, television, movies, and eating.

Jeremy transferred to my class six weeks before project began. He began the study with low interest and poor attitude. When he received a copy of the pre-survey, he scoffed at it and said, "I am not taking this." When asked for his response to statement: Life today is more difficult than it was in the 1930s, Jeremy sarcastically said, "Life is difficult. You live, you die." By the end of the study Jeremy's survey responses were not answered at the beginning of study. I could not determine if his final responses related to reading assignments and discussions in class or his attitude about reading and English course in general.

Jeremy's motivation and attitude for reading transferred to the study. His interest in reading *Of Mice and Men* was below average. During class reading, Jeremy leaned on his plump arm and fell asleep. When I approached and gently asked him to stay alert, Jeremy grunted, "I'm reading." Jeremy's reading quiz scores determined his level of reading engagement. His scores were between 58 to 65 percent. Most of his weekly quizzes were not completed.

Usually intense conflict scenes would trigger interest and enthusiasm from male students. I asked Jeremy to describe what happened to Lennie in chapter three. Jeremy said, "I don't know." Jeremy continued negative remarks about class and reading before I gave him a time out.

It appeared from test scores that Jeremy's continued to disconnect to reading and lessons.

Jeremy's approach to writing was negative. Taking this into consideration, I reminded Jeremy that he could complete his journal entries over night or submit by the end of the week. His counselor assured me that more time on writing assignments would support Jeremy. I presented something I called a cheat sheet for Jeremy to review. It was a completed worksheet, showing answers for each TSI box.

Jeremy returned by week two with a blank worksheet. He explained that he lost the cheat sheet and did not understand what to do. I suggested he come to class in at lunch for support. He agreed, but failed to follow through.

During week two, Jeremy completed only one section of the worksheet. He wrote an answer under prediction: I think something is going to happen. Remaining sections: summary, questions, reflection, and connect were blank. I contacted Jeremy's counselor, seeking support. She suggested calling his mother. When I spoke to her, she assured me Jeremy's attitude would be new and improved.

By week three, Jeremy completed his journal. Each TSI space had at least three words and no more than ten. When I praised him for this progress, Jeremy remained silent and kept his head buried deep in his chest. Each week, Jeremy submitted journal entries.

During weeks five and six, Jeremy entered my class at lunch. He sat at his desk and pulled out his book. I wanted to approach but his attitude had been so abrasive I decided to keep my distance. Jeremy silently read without asking for assistance in reading or writing.

When he completed the writing prompt for his final exam, his answer was difficult to read. His penmanship was

not legible. Jeremy's behavior and attitude prevented him from supporting his literacy development. He would not ask or accept help from his teacher.

Jeremy was unproductive during the first three weeks of study. His lack of effort to complete quizzes lowered his grade to failing status. After contacting his mother, Jeremy's work ethic improved. On chapters four and five quizzes, Jeremy received an average score of 70 percent.

Jeremy continued to struggle with vocabulary development. Vocabulary review sheets identified his strength in selecting words from context clues. By using word banks, Jeremy answered every question correctly. However, his weakness in transferring his knowledge on making inferences based on social context clues was identified in quiz four. Students referred to passages in chapter to answer questions. In question one: Which is the best definition of the word "mean," Jeremy was expected to reread paragraph three and select the correct answer. Jeremy chose 'medium in size' when the correct answer was 'lacking in kindness.'

### Sallie

Sallie from the experimental group is a fourteen year old white female, currently in the ninth grade. She lives

at home with her father and two siblings. Sallie's father works in construction. Due to his job schedule, Sallie's father drops her off at school early in the morning. Sallie is a pleasant student. She has a learning disability. Her motor skills are under proficient and she needs instructions given to her verbally and in writing. Instructions must be repeated to Sallie to support her comprehension. She receives special education accommodations, including modified lessons and coursework, extended time to complete class and homework, and study skills class. Sallie prefers math class over English. She likes to read, but is embarrassed over reading slower than most students in her English class. Sallie turns in partial class work and homework assignments.

Sallie began the study with minimal interest. She eagerly completed pre-survey. When students were asked to share out, Sallie raised her hand to respond. She wanted an answer for the statement: States with the death penalty have lower murder rates. I explained that the survey searched for student's opinions and there were no correct or incorrect answers. She looked perplexed. For the statement: Life today is more difficult than it was in the 1930s, Sallie agreed. By the end of the study her final

response was disagree. Susy's final response was related to reading assignments, Internet communication, supplemental reading materials, and discussions in class.

Sallie's motivation for reading was minimal. She liked the ideas of someone else reading. When several students participated as character readers, Sally admitted in private that she did not like the arrangement. Hearing different ways of reading the story confused her. She was glad when her classmates selected two strong readers to read for the class.

Sallie's motivation for listening to other students' read increased after reading chapter three. During small group session for chapter three, Sallie asked about the relationship between Lennie and Curly. She wanted to know if it was possible for people to be so insensitive even in the 1930s. Sallie's focused on relationships between mentally challenged students and "normal" students even when communicating online. By the end of the chapter, Sallie continued to question relationships and human behavior.

Sallie was a sensitive student. Every online correspondence related to discrimination. In her journal, she corresponded with several students about having Special

Day students in class for movie day. Her interest in relationships and judging connected her to other students.

During week three, Sallie responded to the writing prompt: Why is discrimination so wrong? Sallie responded in the following:

I think discrimination is wrong because I believe that no one in this world is better than anyone else. People have they're[sic] own beliefs and disbeliefs and for us to sit back and criticize them is just wrong. When a Latina student responded with the following: I have been through it [discrimination] because of my race and people are always making jokes [sic]so if it hurts me[sic] it will obviously hurt other people... yeah, I agree because everyone gets discriminated in one way or another...we are all human beings and we should treat each other with the same respect...I can't even finish my thought because its[sic] just so mean and rude to ever think of putting others down.

By week four and five, Sallie continued her discourse on love and harmony for all men.

During week six, Sallie answered the writing prompt:

Would a true friend tell you the truth? Her response described herself as being an honest person, but not wanting to hurt anyone by telling them the truth. I asked her to explain what she meant. Sallie replied, "People have character flaws, like in the book." Sallie stated Curly did not know how to be nice. Telling him he wasn't nice would only force him to do what comes natural for him. Sallie believed people had to realize their character flaws before they could change, telling them the truth before self-discovery could cause more harm than good.

Sallie completed four out of five tests. Her combined multiple-choice and essay answer received an average score of 72 percent. I noticed how difficult it was for Sallie to concentrate in class. She would pause every time she noticed a student getting up to turn in their quizzes. By the end of week two, I asked Sallie if she would like to take her tests in another room. She answered yes. Her scored improved. Although Sallie had difficulty in making inferences, she was able to understand surface facts presented in novel. In chapter three, the question: What does George ashamedly confesses to Slim, Sallie wrote: George ashamedly confessed to Slim that one time he was

playing a joke on Lennie, and Lennie almost drowned by being thrown into the water by George.

Sallie completed her online assignments with minimal problems. Online, Sallie's persona of a shy introvert dissipated by week three. Her final exam response received many responses.

For the six-week duration, my study provided different reading strategies to experimental and control. Experimental received sensory detailed activities to support their reading comprehension. I provided lessons to measure students' ability to apply TSI components: questioning, summarizing, clarification, and visualizing to activities involving media technology. Motivation and attitude levels determined students' level of engagement in weekly activities.

Weekly, students' attitude depended on topic and supplemental materials provided. Journal entries occurred weekly with excessive responses to questions from experimental group. Selected students answered and created dense questions, summarized chapters online, visualized human character traits, and clarified in new subjects and difficult language through discussions.

Control group received similar activities, but no media technology. For the duration of the study, control read the novel, wrote in journal, periodically created small groups, and completed quizzes.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

I would like to report immediate success in ninth grade students reading achievement. The outcome, however, confirms what Literacy experts have been preaching for years. Shor (1992), Pressley (2001), and Brantley (2006) recommend that teachers give struggling readers effective reading strategies, engaging reading topics, and time to create meaningful connection with reading materials. With carefully tailored TSI lessons shared by Brown and inquiry lessons observed in Tim's classroom, students willingly take an active role in their learning (Brown, 2008, Smith & Wilhelm, 2006). Somehow the essential components for improving students reading performance falls through the cracks before students reach high school.

As shown in Figure 5, the chart based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) statistics illustrates eight graders' reading progress in 2007.

STATE	2007
Arizona	255
Nevada	252
Hawaii	251
California	251
Mississippi	250

Figure 5: Five States' Eight-Grade Reading Levels at Below Basic

Source: U.S. Department of Education  
 Institute of Education Sciences, National  
 Education Statistics, National Assessment of  
 Educational Progress (NAEP)

According to NAEP, several states including California continue to show no significant progress in improving students' literacy skills. With minimal basic reading scores, eighth graders enter high school with poor literacy skills. As teachers confront the reality of supporting ill-prepared students in mastering ninth grade content standards, teachers either find a way to change their teaching strategies or avoid teaching. Valdes (2005) observes English Secondary Language teachers at Gardena Middle School choosing the latter when confronted with immigrant students with low functioning English Language

skills. Rather than opt not to teach struggling readers, Graves (2002) believes teachers need to change how they teach to support rapid changes taking place in society. With constant exposure to new technology, students are naturally moving to the pace set by societal standards (Graves, 2002). Teachers must adopt new ideas conducive to maintaining learning in the classroom.

Current classroom standards of teaching, textbook assignments and rote reading lessons, continue to demonstrate ineffectiveness at supporting students' literacy skills. After reviewing the California Standards Test (CST), English and Language Arts report, ninth grade students Basic score of 29 percent drops five points from eighth graders' STAR score in the same category. In 2006, ninth graders' Basic score of 28 percent drops seven points from eighth grade students' score in the same category (California Department of Education, 2008).

Students' success in developing literacy skills and grade-level reading could be as simple as picking up book after school for leisure time. However, youth's obsession with media technology prevents young people from settling down on the couch to explore classic literature by Thoreau, Wright, or Dickenson. Erikson (1968) would relate youth

obsession with media technology as a natural response for teenagers. Adolescent development involves hormonal changes that cause emotional urges (as cited in Santrok, 2005). Because adolescence is the time for shaping one's identity, students gravitate to socially acceptable ways to connect with peers (as cited in Santrok, 2005). Instead of reading a book, young people seek a human connection through hand-held cell phones, brief text-messages, and colorful streamline Internet videos available anytime and anywhere (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). This generation of students' sense of sight, touch, sound are over stimulated, making it almost impossible for a young person to sit down and read.

As new wave of technology generates innovative ways for consumers to read short cryptic messages, the concept of whole language and reading novels become archaic. As a result, students' ability to demonstrate reading success remains underdeveloped. As shown in Figure 6, twelve graders' average reading score steadily drops from 1992 to 2005.

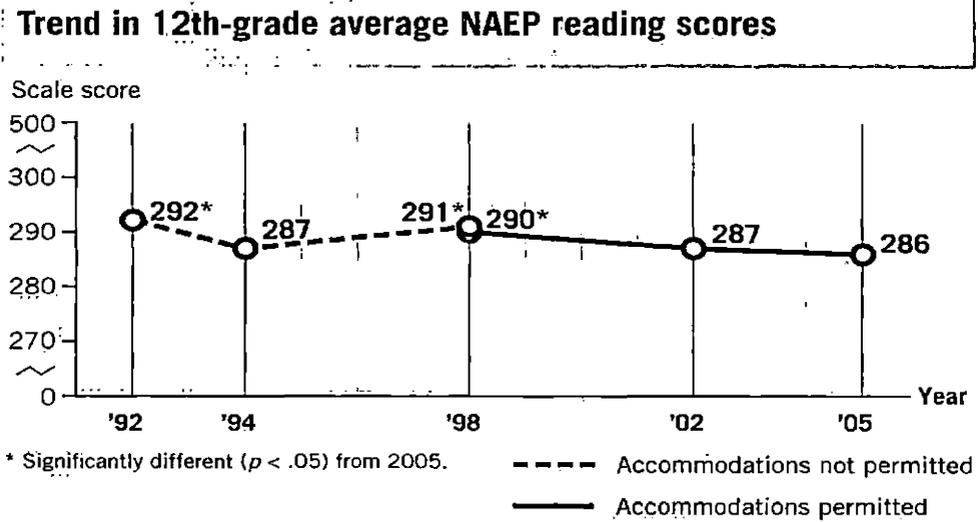


Figure 6: Trend in Twelfth-Grade Average National Assessment for Educational Progress Reading Score

Source: National Assessment for Educational Progress

Reaching success begins with students' motivation. Experts believe students' motivation depends on teachers' understanding on what to teach and how to keep students engaged. Ideally, giving students' general freedom to incorporate what they know determines students' level of engagement and eventually motivation for learning. When I add media technology to reading and writing lessons, the level of motivation for the activity substantially increases. Nowhere am I suggesting students' reading skills

improve after a six-week study. The change in students' behavior demonstrates engagement, motivation to participate in activities.

### Research Questions and Hypothesis

I address two questions in the study: 1) How will generative themes motivate students to read a novel for the purpose of improving reading comprehension? and 2) How will incorporating transactional strategies instruction (TSI) motivate students to read novels? The two target questions generate additional questions: "Will students find a connection to novel selected for the study?" and "Is the 1930 era too outdated for today's pop culture generation?"

Understanding the majority of students in my class are apathetic readers, I select Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* to encourage students to read. With only 108 pages, students are able to explore the entire novel's various themes: Pursuit to happiness, discrimination of race and mental handicap, social and family hardships. Several students connect to one or more messages described in the novel. Students appear disjointed at the novel's era, but as time progresses, supplemental materials and sensory-oriented activities overshadow the novel's 1930 setting.

Because students use additional stimulants (iPods, cell phones, and the Internet) daily, media devices manipulate students into expecting immediate gratification through sight, sound, and touch. When it does not happen, their aircraft or motivation for reading loses altitude right away. Each time I confiscate Jeremy and Susy's cell phones to redirect their attention to the lesson at hand, each student loses interest in instruction and class work.

During week one, the control group (Sergio, Susy and Jeremy) receives surveys, instructing them to give an honest response to each statement. The surveys' statements relate to the novel's themes on social behaviors and opinions. By week six, I return the original surveys to students, requesting post responses to the same set of statements. Students' pre and post answers vary. For example, when answering the statement: "Sometimes a person has to break the law to make sure justice is served," Sergio and Susy, initially place a question mark as their pre-answer response. The middle-of-the-road response confirms students' dilemma in abiding to the law or wanting to know why the law may be broken. By the final week, answers shift to plus signs, indicating students agree with the statement. When I ask students to explain the change in

their answers, all students refer to friendship bounds. Sergio states, "You watch over your friends, don't let noone hurt them." Susy answer are similar to Sergio's.

Jeremy gives disturbing responses to both statements. He has no remorse for either Lennie, the mentally challenged character accused of murdering Curly's wife or the 12-year-old mentally challenged individual who nervously urinates in the principal's office. Because Jeremy does not interact with mentally challenged students, his attitude about them is based on lack of knowledge on the subject and his insensitivity to mentally-challenged individuals.

The control group receives traditional teacher instructions: daily anticipatory set, group reading, homework, and quizzes. Course reading includes the novel and supplemental. Student interaction with this group is minimal. Students complete individual coursework unless given instructions to work with a peer. Minimal interaction causes students' classroom attitude to shift between content to discontent. Even though some old behaviors and attitudes transition to the study, the level of engagement and reading success are determined by students' values for interaction and activities. One student, Jeremy,

occasionally blurts out negative remarks regarding the novel and assignments. When he or other students are not slumping in their chairs and fingering the pages in search for the last page to each chapter, Jeremy watches the clock. Jeremy's nonverbal cues indicate his disinterest in the lesson.

The control group's nonverbal cues indicate minimal interest in novel. Early in the study, however, students appear not engaged and restless. Sergio is not interested in reading, Susy types text messages in class, and Jeremy expresses anger through speech or facial expressions. I am not surprised over students' reaction to the first three pages of the novel. Steinbeck uses descriptive language to describe the setting and the characters. Because the beginning of the story lacks sensationalism and suspense, students disengage from reading and lesson. Steinbeck's way of introducing the characters George and Lennie literally bores the students. The control group avoid reading or following along while other students read the first few pages of the novel. Once the story shifts from exposition to character conflicts, students' interest increases.

Physical and verbal conflicts between characters motivate students to participate in reading chapters three, four and six.

Most students respond to the classroom structure by following teacher's instructions. Suzy works diligently to understand lessons. When she asks for help, often the instructor encourages her to take class work home as homework. Susy's Individual Education Program (IEP) instructions entitle her to receive additional time to complete class work. With extra time, she is able to complete most questions on her own. Susy initiates her learning while Sergio and Jeremy stay off task. During reading sessions, Jeremy and Sergio reluctantly avoid group reading. Several times, both students refuse to read their sections of the story. These male students' low motivation causes their progress in completing class and homework. Any reading or writing assignment remains difficult for Sergio and Jeremy to complete.

Attitude and lack of motivation minimizes both students progress. Sergio, mostly a loner, quietly doodles when he is not answering a few assignment questions or written responses. Jeremy verbalizes his resentment to read the novel or supplemental or complete daily lessons.

Jeremy's attitude makes it difficult for instructor to support him. Because test results are the determining factor for measuring Jeremy and Sergio's progress in reading comprehension, incomplete lessons prevent me from learning whether either Jeremy or Sergio are comprehending what the chapters read in class.

Experimental students' pre and post marks for the statement: "A true friend will tell you the truth, even when you don't want to hear it," are plus signs, the same response given at the beginning of the survey. Again, students value honesty and trust between friends. Bobby, from the experimental group response to another statement regarding punishment for a crime is surprising. His pre response supports punishing anyone who breaks the law. He believes Lennie should die for accidentally ending Curly Wife's life. However, Bobby's sensitivity for mentally challenged individuals changes after his reading of additional reports and interacting with special day students. His post answer and verbal response shows compassion and sympathy for the mentally and physically challenged individuals.

Through the application of media devices including online communication website, PowerPoint presentations,

music, and video clips, the experimental groups' motivation increases. The combination of technology and peer interaction increases student engagement. In fact, peer interaction during the third and fourth week, improves. Students' comfort zones widen and several students begin to interact with other students who are outside their friend zone. Classroom discussions on the mentally challenged twelve-year-old student encourage experimental group students to interconnect their values and opinions about someone else.

Implementing five TSI components to weekly lessons would not support students' literacy development. Too much, too soon results in a decrease in student engagement. However, by combining TSI components in a weekly lesson, students practice two reading strategies that naturally bring a sense of balance in their learning. Visualization and student-generated questions work jointly in weekly lessons. The sense of sight encourages students to question unfamiliar words, phrases, events, and human behaviors and attitudes. Another combination, visualization and clarification, again encourages students to analyze and evaluate language, images or discussions. Weekly, students receive dense questions provided by the instructor. Online,

students answer dense questions and student-generated questions. Responses are examples of students developing critical thinking skills. Students begin to move beyond Bloom's Taxonomy of comprehension and knowledge levels to master skills in synthesis, analysis and evaluation.

Students approach the online activity as a fun outlet and spend the first week typing irrelevant responses to writing prompt. Two students lose computer privileges for the remaining week. Majority of students the consequences as real and avoid making mistakes.

By the second week, online communication allows students to remove insecurities in sharing their thoughts with other students. Cecilia and Sallie, two very shy students, work diligently at answering writing prompts and dense questions. Cecilia's syntax and sequencing of ideas improves. As for Sallie, the online student forum supports her need to share her opinion. Sallie's passionate response to protecting the mentally challenged students encourages feedback from students outside her circle of friends. Bobby who rarely communicates with Sallie sends her several comments regarding social discrimination and attitude against people of color and mentally and physically handicapped.

Weekly writing prompts on chapter themes provide an avenue for critical thinking for students. Cecilia begins her online journaling with minimal participation. In theory, English Learners are self-conscious about their writing skills and wait for other students to take the lead while they follow. After reviewing the communication between other students, Cecilia's participation increases. By the third week, Cecilia initiates correspondence on the subject of discrimination against mentally challenged individuals and receives several comments. In a private email, Cecilia shares with her instructor, a fact on her brother. Cecilia's has a mentally challenged brother attending the same high school as she. I encourage Cecilia to share this information with other students, but she refuses. Her reluctance to expose her brother to discrimination is supported by Erikson's (1968) theory on young people needing to maintain relationships (as cited in Santrok, 2005). Revealing the truth may jeopardize Cecilia's developing relationships based on commonality. Cecilia continues to share her thoughts on social discrimination with students she, before the study, she rarely interacts with on campus.

Weekly, the experimental group receives PowerPoint

presentations. Slide shows and audio recording on individuals living during the 1930s provides authenticity to the lesson. Students listen to music sung by individuals enduring drastic social and geographic changes. Cecilia tells the instructor in private how her family relocates several times before settling in Palm Desert. From the instructor's perspective, this is good news. Cecilia empathizes with migrant's hardships. Her social connections to individuals unknown to her shows Cecilia's ability to synthesize her family's experiences in finding a permanent home to the Great Depression migrant workers living from camp to camp (Christensen, 2000). The activities and reading the novel allows Cecilia to make a personal connection with literature. Besides Cecilia, several students personally connect with either a weekly theme or activity.

Bobby and Sallie do not verbalize personal connections to instructor or during whole group discussions. Instead, Bobby writes passionately about the importance of abolishing discrimination. His concern about social injustices is referenced by Christensen (2000) as creating a connection to "the other" (p.134) person whom, Bobby in this case, appears "to have little in common" (p.134).

Suzy's willingness to journal and express her thoughts on the mistreatment of the mentally challenged students on campus is a form of embracing another person's life to become a "we" society (Christensen, 2000). Each time, Sallie watches video footage on social discrimination, she questions individuals who choose to discriminate a person or group. Her questions generate responses from numerous students, allowing students to think collectively about the mistreatment of others. Sallie's simple questions motivate students to share out personal experiences and opinions on the subject.

Auditory distractions cause students to lose focus. The slightest noise alerts Sallie, Cecilia, and, Bobby to disengage in reading. Realizing students' extreme sensitivity to sound and sight, I implement TSI components to operate as a way to redirect students' focus. Three students receive a combination of TSI and media technology. Cecilia, Bobby, and Sallie watch video footage of individual survivors of The Great Depression individuals and listen to authentic folklore music representing social hardship of the era. Weekly computer visits allow students to generate questions to interact with peers online.

In addition, students download images of 1930 era survivors and share their opinions on what they have learned.

Observations on reading the novel are rewarding in both groups. The experimental group (Cecilia, Bobby, and Sallie) prove novel and writing prompts are essential tools for completing the novel. Cecilia improves her vocabulary and writing mechanics, while Bobby reads the remaining chapters, not for the teacher, but for himself. Bobby, as well as, Sallie responds to mental retardation and discrimination with genuine interests. Specific questions on "How would you treat a mentally challenged student?" motivate students to read. When I ask small group students to predict the novel's upcoming sequence of events, Cecilia and Bobby perceive Lennie as the main character who will face another problem. These students demonstrate their ability to transfer prior knowledge on character's traits to what will happen next in the novel.

#### Weekly Quizzes Results

In a six-week study on whole language instruction and TSI as supportive strategies, test scores for every student under the experimental group vary. Cecilia, the English Learner, benefits from weekly communication with her peers; thus supporting her at answering quiz questions correctly.

The most prominent problem with Cecilia's quiz scores is understanding vocabulary. Most terms from the novel are uncommon in mainstream communication. She needs time to understand the meaning of words in given text.

Under Appendix O, experimental and control group tests scores give results for tests 1 through 4. Possible correct answers on each test are eight.

The multiple-choice questions generally note students' ability to apply the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy's higher order of thinking. Each student provides answers revealing their level of knowledge of the characters and events occurring in the story. Three students: Cecilia, Sergio and Jeremy have difficulty with vocabulary questions.

The significant indicator to reading comprehension is students' ability to demonstrate a connection to reading through their writing. The last column gives a writing score. Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to analyze text, transfer prior knowledge to new information, and find a meaningful connection with literature. The plus sign indicates students' efforts to demonstrate success in all three areas; the minus sign

indicates student demonstrating 1 out of 3 of instructor's expectations.

The writing samples, varying in length and depth, demonstrate students understanding of character analysis between characters and character's thoughts and actions. Each group even demonstrated an understanding of making inferences, using context clues. While some students show progress in answering questions on quizzes most students are apathetic to learning. An alternative weekly worksheet is created to support student reading comprehension.

Realizing motivation determines students' learning, a fill-in-the-blank plot worksheet is provided to apathetic students. As shown in Figure 7, students received comprehension lesson which allowed Sergio and Jeremy to participate in class. Students read the summary passage on the chapter and fills in the blanks to demonstrate their levels of knowledge and understanding of the story.

Directions: Enter your answers in the gaps. Make sure the words are spelled correctly.

bus      dress      George      George      guilty      job  
 Lennie      Lennie      Lennie      mice      rabbits      rabbits

ranch      River      river      Soledad      Weed

The chapter begins with an introduction to George and \_\_\_\_\_ who are walking single file next to the Salinas \_\_\_\_\_ to the town of \_\_\_\_\_ where their new \_\_\_\_\_ awaits them. They had to run away from their last job in the town of \_\_\_\_\_ because Lennie got into some trouble by touching a girl's \_\_\_\_\_. In this chapter we learn that \_\_\_\_\_ is mentally disabled. He likes to imitate \_\_\_\_\_; he can't remember most things that he has been told, except the story about the \_\_\_\_\_; and he loves to pet soft things like \_\_\_\_\_--even if they are dead. \_\_\_\_\_ looks after \_\_\_\_\_, but he gets irritated with Lennie at times. He tells Lennie how much easier his life would be without Lennie but then seems to feel \_\_\_\_\_ for saying so and changes his tone to tell Lennie that he doesn't really mean it. George and Lennie are walking through the brush beside the \_\_\_\_\_ to get to their new job because the \_\_\_\_\_ driver dropped them off too early--miles away from their final destination. They decide that instead of getting to the \_\_\_\_\_ that evening like they were supposed to, they will rest for the night and get there in the morning. Before they eat their dinner and go to sleep that night, Lennie asks George to tell him about the \_\_\_\_\_. George tells Lennie all about their dream to own their own ranch and "live of the fatta the lan." And Lennie gets to tend the rabbits on that ranch.

Figure 7: Fill-in-the-Blank Summary on Story Chapter

Source: Mr. Lettiere's English on the Web English  
 9..Reading and Writing

Jeremy, Sergio, and Susy complete the weekly extra credit worksheet. Sergio and Susy complete the worksheet with a minimum of five to seven errors. Jeremy, on the other hand, submits an incomplete worksheet for credit. When given an opportunity to finish class work at home, Jeremy muffles a negative response on how the work is too difficult for him. Jeremy is given an opportunity to receive additional support at lunch. At lunch, he arrives only to sit alone and read.

The summative assessment is multiple-choice. Most students are conditioned through annual standardized and district mandated testing to expect multiple-choice assessments. Multiple-choice questions encourage control and experimental students to believe they are capable of getting a 50 percent chance of passing the test. The feeling of familiarity reduces students' anxiety. The summative assessment results vary with students and groups.

#### Conclusion

The study determines the effectiveness of TSI, reading strategies and generative themes at improving students reading comprehension. The first question: "How will generative themes motivate students to read a novel for the purpose of improving reading comprehension?" is determined by students' online responses to student and teacher-generated questions and whole class discussions on individuals who lived during The Great Depression. In the second question: "How will incorporating transactional strategies instruction (TSI) motivate students to read novels to improve reading comprehension?" is determined by students' level of engagement in learning. Teachers list of dense questions exposes students familiar and unfamiliar

perspectives on social interest and issues. Several students' (i.e. Cecilia, Sallie, and Bobby) interaction reveals a change in students' attitude about learning. Cecilia, Sallie, and Bobby apply TSI and their knowledge on social concerns as honest connections, indicating a level of engagement in lessons. Students demonstrate their empowerment in learning and desiring to increase their knowledge base on specific subjects.

#### Recommendations

A six-week study on teaching whole language instruction with TSI provides ample time for completing a short novel. As for students achieving mastery in applying the five TSI components: predicting, inquiring, visualizing, summarizing, and clarifying to reading, it would require a teacher to organize lessons, targeting each component for maximum student understanding. Developing struggling readers, including English Learners and at-risk students, reading skills through TSI lessons requires time, six months to a year. Brown (2008) affirms that it takes at least a year to create a successful TSI learning environment. If given the opportunity, to achieve Brown's success, an English teacher would need to create a ninth

grade reading and writing lesson with the support of two core subject instructors. With the support of additional instructors, an ideal lesson would incorporate generative themes to address students' knowledge base and competence in areas of interest. The combination of core teachers' pedagogy would support students' engagement in lesson. Students would identify what they know within segments of the lesson. The increasing student engagement in reading lessons would increase students' level of motivation for reading. At some point, students would establish comfort zones in reading novels. Overall, the barriers to learning are soon removed when students begin to build meaningful connections to what they are reading.

APPENDIX A  
PARTICIPANT ASSENT LETTER

APPENDIX A

**California State University, San Bernardino Institutional  
Review Board  
Assent of Child to Participate in Research**

**Name of Study:**

*Developing Students' Reading Comprehension Through Whole  
Language and Reading Strategies*

**Brief Description of Study:**

Your English teacher will conduct a research study on students' ability to understand reading. The study will begin March 3 and end April 15, 2008. You will be instructed to read *Of Mice and Men* and you're a John Steinbeck novel about two migrant workers finding jobs at a farm. During this study, you will be asked to follow the same classroom procedures which include: SSR, Warm Up, Homework Review, and Lesson. Twice a week, you will privately discuss your reading progress with your teacher. Your teacher will ask you to answer questions very similar to what she normally expects from the entire class. After you finish reading the book, you will receive a test that will show what you have learned from reading the novel.

---

(Name of child) has agreed to participate in the  
above named research study.

---

Child's Signature Date

---

Signature of Parent Date

---

Investigator Signature Date

APPENDIX B  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER

## APPENDIX B

February 13, 2008

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As part of my Master's Degree, in Reading and Language Arts, I am conducting a research project on "*Developing Students' Reading Comprehension Through Whole Language and Reading Strategies*." I request permission for your child to participate in the five week research study. During the duration of the study, I will implement reading skills strategies to help your child demonstrate understanding of text.

Your child will be randomly assigned to one of two groups: Group A or Group B. Group A's lessons and instruction will resemble daily expectations and not change. Group B's lessons will differ in which reading intervention strategies will be included. By the end of the research study, if your child participated in Group A, he or she will be informed of the intervention reading strategies implemented in Group B's lessons and instruction. If proven effective and supportive, the tested reading interventions will be made available to your child in upcoming lessons.

Lessons prior to study have indicated students' difficulties in applying reading strategies to enhance reading comprehension. During each lesson, I will explain lesson objectives and purpose. For example, when I teach transactional strategies for prediction, students will learn how to guess characters next action or upcoming events by referring to character traits and previous plot events. If your child is a special needs student or an English Learner, he or she may require additional support in reading novel and understanding lesson expectations. May this be the case, small group instruction and extra copies of the novel will be available to support your child.

Each group will participate in reading *Of Mice and Men* combined with reading activities. The research study will be explained in terms that your child can understand. The

reading selection for the project includes detailed characters and plot events that will motivate your child to participate in reading novel. However, any child who expresses a disinterest in participating as a selected student for the study will be removed immediately. In addition to your child's participation, I will need to look at the school's records to obtain your child's birth date and reading comprehension scores on 2006-07 California STAR exam.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect class procedures, curriculum, or your child's grade. If you request a different lesson for your child during the study, it will be arranged. At the conclusion of the study, a summary of group A and B's results will be made available to all interested parents and students. I will thoroughly explain the results to each research study participant in confidence. Research participants will review and compare early and final lessons on their reading comprehension progress.

There are two copies of this letter. After signing them, keep one copy for your records and return the other one to your child's school. Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me at (760) 862-4300 or email me at [zelda.thomas@dsusd.us](mailto:zelda.thomas@dsusd.us). Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Zelda M. Thomas  
California State University, San Bernardino Master's  
Program Candidate

**This study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at California State University, San Bernardino. You may contact the CSUSB-IRB if you have questions or concerns about your child's rights as a research participant at (951) 537-7588 or [mgillesp@csusb.edu](mailto:mgillesp@csusb.edu)**

Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your child participate in this project below. After signing your name, return this sheet to your child's school.

I DO grant permission for my child to participate in Ms. Thomas' research project.

I DO NOT grant permission for my child to participate in Ms. Thomas' research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/GuardianSignature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

APPENDIX C  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER IN SPANISH

## APPENDIX C

13 de febrero del 2008

Estimados Padres o Tutores:

Como parte de mi Maestria en Lectura y Artes en Lenguaje, estoy conduciendo un proyecto de investigacion en el "Desarrollo de la Comprension de los Estudiantes Sobre las Estrategias en este estudio de investigacion de cinco semanas. Durante este estudio, yo voy a implementar las estrategias de lectura para ayudar a su hijo/hija que demuestre la comprension del texto.

Su hijo/hija sera seleccionado al azar y se le asignara uno de los dos grupos. Grupo A o Grupo B. Las lecciones, instrucciones, y expectativas del Grupo A seran iguales y no tendran cambios. Las lecciones del Grupo B seran diferentes en las instrucciones y estrategias de intervencion seran incluidas. Para el final del estudio, si su hijo/hija participa en el Grupo, el/ella se le informara de la intervencion en las estrategias de lectura que fueron implementadas en las lecciones e instrucciones del Grupo B. Si se prueban efectivas y con apoyo, las intervenciones que fueron probadas seran disponibles a su hijo/hija en las siguientes lecciones.

Las lecciones previas al estudio han indicado las dificultades de los estudiantes en aplicar las estrategias en la comprension de lectura. Durante cada leccion, yo explicare los objetivos y propósitos. Por ejemplo, cuando yo enseno las estrategias de 'transactional' de prediccion, los estudiantes aprenderan como predecir las acciones siguientes de los personajes o los eventos que siguen basandose en las caracteristicas de los personajes o los eventos del trama. Si su hijo tiene necesidades especiales, o esta aprendiendo ingles, el o ella puede necesitar mas apoyo en la lectura de la novela y la expectativa. Si este es el caso, instruccion en grupos pequenos y copias extras seran proporcionadas a su hijo/hija para su apoyo.

Cada grupo va a participar en la lectura de Of Mice and Men combinada con otras actividades de lectura. El estudio de investigacion sera explicado en terminos que su hijo/hija

pueda entender. La selección de lectura para el proyecto incluye personajes y eventos del trama explícitos que van a motivar a su hijo/hija a participar en lectura de la novela. Sin embargo, si algún estudiante que exprese el desinterés en participar como un seleccionado del estudio será removido inmediatamente. Incluyendo la participación de su hijo/hija, yo necesito mirar los archivos para obtener la fecha de nacimiento y los puntos de los Exámenes de California Star de 2006-07

Participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Su decisión si su hijo/hija participa o no, no afectará los procedimientos de la clase, currículo, o las calificaciones. Si usted pide una lección diferente durante el estudio, eso se puede arreglar. A la conclusión del estudio, un resumen de los resultados del grupo A o B serán proporcionados a todos los padres y adultos que estén interesados. Yo les explicaré detalladamente los resultados de los participantes de la investigación repasarán y van a comparar el progreso del principio y al término de las lecciones de comprensión en la lectura.

Hay dos copias de esta carta. Después que las haya firmado, quédese con una copia para sus registros y la otra devuélvala a la escuela de su hijo/hija. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta y desea más información, por favor hableme al (760) 862-4300 o por correo electrónico a [Zelda.thomas@dsusd.us](mailto:Zelda.thomas@dsusd.us).

Gracias por adelantado por su cooperación y apoyo.

Sinceramente,  
Zelda Thomas

APPENDIX D  
LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

February 12, 2008  
Mr. Patrick Walsh, Principal  
Palm Desert High School  
43-777 Phyllis Jackson  
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Dear Mr. Walsh:

Currently, I am completing the final stage of the Reading and Language Arts Master' program at California State University, San Bernardino. For several weeks, I will conduct a research study *Developing Students Comprehension Through Whole Language* on six ninth grade students. I will closely monitor six students' reading and writing and their application of reading strategies to improve reading comprehension. Selected students from periods three and five will be closely monitored for the study

I would appreciate your informed review and approval of the study. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at [Zelda.thomas@dsusd.us](mailto:Zelda.thomas@dsusd.us). I will serve as the contact person for this project. I look forward to your comments and approval.

Sincerely,

Zelda Thomas  
Master's candidate for Reading & Language Arts  
California State University, San Bernardino

APPENDIX E  
ONLINE INSTRUCTIONS

APPENDIX E

Pre-test on Of Mice and Men  
 Anticipation/Reaction Guide  
**Online Communication on Nicenet.org**

**Directions:** You are responsible for writing a 50+ initial response to one statement listed on pre-test. It is your responsibility to register on Nicenet.org (online communication website for teachers and students) and submit your response. To receive a weekly grade, you must do the following:

**Every Week: March - April**

Write one 50-word response to a topic:

5 points

Read and reply to three different topics. Need 50+ word responses for each topic: 15 points

Read response to your thread and write a 50+ word response.

Plus add a question 20 points

Total=

40 points

**Your grade will be posted on line**

**NOTE:** Do not type foul language or derogatory statements.

No second chances! No exceptions!

Alternate terms and phrases are colored or n-word; B-word; Heck; and Sauce bucket.

Breaking this rule would result in receiving textbook and workbook lessons until April 15, 2008.

Remember, your teacher has access to every thread and message.

How to register on Nicenet.org:

Select	STUDENT
Click	JOIN A CLASS
Type in Class Key	3K37K6U43 (capitalize letters)
Complete registration	<b>Username:</b>
	<b>Password:</b>
Fill in	First Name (give real name)
	Last Name (give real name)
Palm Desert High categories	
	Home

	<b>Conferencing (this is where you pick topics)</b>
	Link Sharing
	Documents
	Class Schedule
	Class Members
<b>Personal Messages</b>	
	View (off limit)
	Send (off limit)
<b>Classes</b>	
	Join
	<b>Create (create a new topic from list here)</b>
	Drop

APPENDIX F  
WHAT IS MAKING INFERENCES

## APPENDIX F

### Week Two: What is inference?

Have a look at this passage:

"The men walked down the streets to the mine with their heads bent close to their chests. In groups of five or six they scurried on. It was impossible to recognize individuals from the small gaps between their caps, pulled down over their eyes, and the tightly bound scarves tied tightly over the bottom half of their faces".

Now answer this question:

What was the weather like as the men walked to the mine? You should have been able to work out that it was very cold and windy. You probably arrived at this answer because you associated hats pulled down and scarves with winter or cold weather at least. You know from personal experience people keep their heads down when walking against the wind and the author gave you another clue with the word "scurried" which suggests the men were hurrying to reach their destination. To tackle this question you have used the skill of **inferring**. This is sometimes called 'reading between the lines'. Writers expect you to use this skill to get the most out of any piece of reading. So, to really **understand** a piece of reading you need to be like Sherlock Holmes and be a first class detective!

### **Inference**

Inference can be used in several ways to help you respond fully to a piece of reading.

- You can infer a general fact or a precise piece of information.
- You can infer emotions and feelings of characters in passage.
- You can infer information about the author - his/her opinions, feelings, point of view.
- 

To infer successfully you can:

- Work out answer from clues or references in the text.
- Work out answer from the **connotations** of words used in text.

- Match something in the text to your own understanding or experience or knowledge to come up with the correct answer.

•  
**Types of Inferences Skilled Readers Use**

Skilled readers . . .

1. Recognize the antecedents for pronouns (text)
2. Figure out the meaning of unknown words from context clues
3. Figure out the grammatical function of an unknown words
4. Understand intonation of characters' words (text)
5. Identify characters' beliefs, personalities, and motivations (text and students' reading specific character, sensory detail)
6. Understand characters' relationships to one another (text)
7. Provide details about the setting (text)
8. Provide explanations for events or ideas that are presented in the text (text)
9. Offer details for events or their own explanations of the events
10. Understand the author's view of the world (visuals and audio sensory detail)
11. Recognize the author's biases
12. Relate what is happening in the text to their own knowledge of the world (visuals and audio sensory detail)
13. Offer conclusions from facts presented in the text

APPENDIX G  
THE GREAT DEPRESSION

## APPENDIX G

### **The Great Depression**

The Great Depression was a worldwide economic decline in 1930's. It was the most difficult and longest period of unemployment and low business activity in modern times. The Depression began in October 1929, when the stock values dropped very quickly. Many stockholders lost large amounts of money. Banks, factories, and stores closed and left millions of Americans jobless and penniless. Most families had to depend on charity to provide food.

When the Depression began Herbert Hoover was the President and in 1932 Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President. Roosevelt's reforms gave the Government more power and helped ease the depression.

The Depression caused a very sharp decrease in world trade because each country raised taxes on imported goods trying to help their own industries. The depression caused some countries to change their type of government and their leader.

The stock market crash occurred from 1925 to 1929. During this period the price of common stocks on the New York Stock Exchange more than doubled. When stock values rose it encouraged many people to buy stocks hoping to make large profits following the future price increases.

Black Thursday was Oct 24, 1929 when the stock values dropped. The Friday and Saturday after Black Thursday stock prices remained steady. On Monday stock prices fell once again. By Tuesday, October 29, the stockholders panicked and began to sell a record of 16,410,030 shares of stock.

Millions of Americans suffered from a disease caused by malnutrition. People lost their homes because they didn't have enough money to pay their mortgage. In 1932 at least 200,000 young people and 25,000 families roamed through the country looking for food, clothing, shelter, and a job.

The Great Depression had many effects on the United States. It produced new laws that gave the government far more power than at any time in the history of our nation. It

changed the American society's outlook toward life.

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Remembrances of Diann Boehm's father :

He was only 2 years old when the depression hit but the depression didn't just take place in one year...it took years and years to recover...so his whole childhood was affected. Everyone was...it was a different world...(these are his words) He should have grown up in a middle class farming family. Instead it was a struggle... People went hungry it was touch...there was killing of cattle. Potatoes were burned in order to raise prices...and people would line up at the soup kitchen in order to be fed.

He did not like Roosevelt. He felt Roosevelt took advantage of the situation for his own political needs. Christmas was celebrated at the church. No Christmas trees. You got your present after the sermon. Everyone brought food and made the spirit of Christmas happen for the kids. I never had a Christmas tree til I met your mom and she never knew there was a depression when she was growing up in Pennsylvania.

When he was older he worked with his dad on the Roosevelt WPA 51 days of work then off for 2 months. He was 3 years old when they left Kansas...farm...and moved to Oklahoma.

The Dust was incredible...and everyone knew hunger more than a full tummy. When he was 16 and 17 he worked at the Tribune as a Fly boy and made \$17.00 a week...room and Board was \$7.00 and he had some money left over for the movies. He wanted to be in the movies more than anything and be a singer.

(I do know for a fact he was so good looking back then and He sang like Bing Crosby. When I was little I would sit on his knee at Christmas and he would sing "White Christmas" for me)

He wanted so much to have the money to go to Hollywood and try to make it...but as he said...duty called...the war started...the government knew we needed to be in the war in order to create jobs...He believes like many Americans in his time...that the government heard the warnings about

Pearl Harbor and ignored them in order to regain economic recovery. He says they don't tell you that in History books...but if you heard the average person speak in those days you would know it was true. It was better to loose 100 thousand of our kids and enter a war for the economic recovery...Politics....He went on to say...as He entered the WOW and fought... it was the most devastating thing to experience...Your friends dying right next to you.

When he returned home....His mom did not recognize him. When he left he was undernourished...he had not even gone thru poverty...when he came back he was well fed...and he came back 6 foot 1 inch....Tall and handsome... He picked up his mom who was only 4"11 and wore platform heels all the time...and she began screaming....he said he had to rattle off all kinds of memories before he could be let back into the house.

(That was pretty funny don't you think.)

He did not get to finish high school because of the days.

He is amazed how people have it so easy and don't appreciate all they have. If he had one wish...it would be to be an extra in a movie.

APPENDIX H  
THE MIGRANT EXPERIENCE

APPENDIX H  
The Migrant Experience

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A complex set of interacting forces both economic and ecological brought the migrant workers documented in this ethnographic collection to California. Following World War I, a recession led to a drop in the market price of farm crops and caused Great Plains farmers to increase their productivity through mechanization and the cultivation of more land. This increase in farming activity required an increase in spending that caused many farmers to become financially overextended. The stock market crash in 1929 only served to exacerbate this already tenuous economic situation. Many independent farmers lost their farms when banks came to collect on their notes, while tenant farmers were turned out when economic pressure was brought to bear on large landholders. The attempts of these displaced agricultural workers to find other work were met with frustration due to a 30 percent unemployment rate.

At the same time, the increase in farming activity placed greater strain on the land. As the naturally occurring grasslands of the southern Great Plains were replaced with cultivated fields, the rich soil lost its ability to retain moisture and nutrients and began to erode. Soil conservation practices were not widely employed by farmers during this era, so when a seven-year drought began in 1931, followed by the coming of dust storms in 1932, many of the farms literally dried up and blew away creating what became known as the "Dust Bowl." Driven by the Great Depression, drought, and dust storms, thousands of farmers packed up their families and made the difficult journey to California where they hoped to find work. Along with their meager belongings, the Dust Bowl refugees brought with them their inherited cultural expressions. It is this heritage that Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin captured on their



**Frank and Myra Pipkin  
being recorded by Charles  
L. Todd at Shafter FSA  
Camp, Shafter,  
California, 1941. Photo  
by Robert Hemmig.**

documentation expedition to migrant work camps and other sites throughout California.

Why did so many of the refugees pin their hopes for a better life on California? One reason was that the state's mild climate allowed for a long growing season and a diversity of crops with staggered planting and harvesting cycles. For people whose lives had revolved around farming, this seemed like an ideal place to look for work. Popular songs and stories, circulating in oral tradition for decades (for more on this topic see "The Recording of Folk Music in Northern California" by Sidney Robertson Cowell), exaggerated these attributes, depicting California as a veritable promised land. In addition, flyers advertising a need for farm workers in the Southwest were distributed in areas hard hit by unemployment. An example of such a flyer, publicizing a need for cotton pickers in Arizona, is contained in Charles Todd's scrapbook. Finally, the country's major east-west thoroughfare, U.S. Highway 66 -- also known as "Route 66," "The Mother Road," "The Main Street of America," and "Will Rogers Highway" -- abetted the westward flight of the migrants. A trip of such length was not undertaken lightly in this pre-interstate era, and Highway 66 provided a direct route from the Dust Bowl region to an area just south of the Central Valley of California.



Myra Pipkin, age 46,  
holding grandchild,  
Shafter FSA Camp,  
Shafter, California,

1941. Photo by Robert Hemmig.

Although the Dust Bowl included many Great Plains states, the migrants were generically known as "Okies," referring to the approximately 20 percent who were from Oklahoma. The migrants represented in Voices from the Dust Bowl came primarily from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri. Most were of Anglo-American descent with family and cultural roots in the poor rural South. In the homes they left, few had been accustomed to living with modern conveniences such as electricity and indoor plumbing. The bulk of the people Todd and Sonkin interviewed shared conservative religious and political beliefs and were ethnocentric in their attitude toward other ethnic/cultural groups, with whom they had had little contact prior to their arrival in California. Such attitudes sometimes led to the use of derogatory language and negative stereotyping of cultural outsiders. Voices from the Dust Bowl illustrates certain universals of human experience: the trauma of dislocation from one's roots and homeplace; the tenacity of a community's shared culture; and the solidarity within and friction among folk groups. Such intergroup tension is further illustrated in this presentation by contemporary urban journalists' portrayals of rural life, California farmers' attitudes toward both Mexican and "Okie" workers, and discriminatory attitudes toward migrant workers in general. Todd and Sonkin also held recording sessions with a few Mexican migrants living in the El Rio Farm Security Administration (FSA) camp. Unfortunately, the glass-based acetate discs on which the Spanish-language musical performances were recorded did not survive. However, photos from El Rio and interviews with Jose Flores and Augustus Martinez provide a glimpse into the lives and culture of non-Anglo farm workers. This material illustrates that Mexican immigrants had long been an integral part of agricultural production in the United States and were not newcomers on the scene even in 1940. In fact, when the Dust Bowl families arrived in California looking for work, the majority of migrant farm laborers were either Latino or Asian, particularly of Mexican and Filipino descent. Voices from the Dust Bowl is particularly relevant for us today since it demonstrates that living and working conditions of agricultural migrant laborers have changed little in the intervening half century.

California was emphatically not the promised land of the migrants' dreams. Although the weather was comparatively balmy and farmers' fields were bountiful with produce, Californians also felt the effects of the Depression. Local and state infrastructures were already overburdened, and the steady stream of newly arriving migrants was more than the system could bear. After struggling to make it to California, many found themselves turned away at its borders. Those who did cross over into California found that the available labor pool was vastly disproportionate to the number of job openings that could be filled. Migrants who found employment soon learned that this surfeit of workers caused a significant reduction in the going wage rate. Even with an entire family working, migrants could not support themselves on these low wages. Many set up camps along irrigation ditches in the farmers' fields. These "ditchbank" camps fostered poor sanitary conditions and created a public health problem. Arrival in California did not put an end to the migrants' travels. Their lives were characterized by transience. In an attempt to maintain a steady income, workers had to follow the harvest around the state. When potatoes were ready to be picked, the migrants needed to be where the potatoes were. The same principle applied to harvesting cotton, lemons, oranges, peas, and other crops. For this reason, migrant populations were most dense in agricultural centers. The territory covered by Todd and Sonkin in this project ranged from as far south as El Rio, just north of Oxnard, to as far north as Yuba City, north of Sacramento. Much of the documentation was concentrated in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Arvin Migratory Labor Camp was the first federally operated camp opened by the FSA in 1937 and the starting point of the Todd/Sonkin expedition. The camps were intended to resolve poor sanitation and public health problems, as well as to mitigate the burden placed on state



**Children of Mexican migrant workers posing at entrance to El Rio FSA Camp, El Rio, California, 1941. Photo by Robert Hemmig.**

and local infrastructures. The FSA camps also furnished the migrants with a safe space in which to retire from the discrimination that plagued them and in which to practice their culture and rekindle a sense of community. Although each camp had a small staff of administrators, much of the responsibility for daily operations and governance devolved to the campers themselves. Civil activities were carried out through camp councils and camp courts. Proceedings of council meetings and court sessions can be found among the audio files in this online presentation. Project fieldnotes provide further information about the composition, operation, and context of these bodies as well as details about camp occupancy and organization.

When they were not working or looking for work, or tending to the civil and domestic operations of the camp, the migrants found time to engage in recreational activities. Singing and making music took place both in private living quarters and in public spaces. The music performed by the migrants came from a number of different sources. The majority of pieces belong to the Anglo-Celtic ballad tradition. Songs such as "Barbara Allen", "The Brown Girl", "Nine Little Devils", "Father Rumble", "Lloyd Bateman", "Pretty Molly", and "Little Mohee" all reflect this tradition. Gospel and popular music are other sources from which migrants took their inspiration. The minstrel stage, tin pan alley, early country, and cowboy music were all popular music sources that fed the performers' repertoires. The works of the Carter Family, Jimmy Rodgers, and Gene Autry were particular favorites of the migrants. Although all the music in this collection gives us a sense of the informants' cultural milieu, those pieces that document the migrant experience are especially poignant. Songs like Jack Bryant's "Sunny Cal" and Mary Sullivan's ballads "A Traveler's Line" and "Sunny California" all speak of hardship, disappointment, and a deeply cherished wish to return home.



Men in recreation hall at Tulare FSA Camp, Visalia, California, 1940. Photo by Arthur Rothstein, Farm Security Administration.

In addition to songs and instrumental music, the migrants enjoyed dancing and play-party activities (singing games accompanied by dance-like movements). Included in this online presentation are square dance calls, such as "Soldier's Joy" and "Sally Goodin", and play-party rhymes like "Skip to My Lou" and "Old Joe Clark."

Newsletters produced by camp residents provided additional details about camp social life and recreational activities. As World War II wore on, the state of the economy, both in California and across the

nation, improved dramatically as the defense industry geared up to meet the needs of the war effort. Many of the migrants went off to fight in the war. Those who were left behind took advantage of the job opportunities that had become available in West Coast shipyards and defense plants. As a result of this more stable lifestyle, numerous Dust Bowl refugees put down new roots in California soil, where their descendants reside to this day. Voices from the Dust Bowl provides a glimpse into the everyday life and cultural expression of a group of people living through a particularly difficult period in American history. Charles L. Todd's articles "The Okies Search for a Lost Frontier" and "Trampling out the Vintage: Farm Security Camps Provide the Imperial Valley Migrants with a Home and a Hope" give an overview of the historical, economic, and social context in which this collection was created.

APPENDIX I  
NEWS ARTICLE

APPENDIX I

News Article

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(AP) DANVILLE, Pa.— A 12-year-old special education student was charged with disorderly conduct after authorities said she deliberately wet her pants at school.

The girl's mother said she urinated only because the principal frightened her.

The mother said in Thursday's Press Enterprise that the incident occurred last month, after the girl, classmates and teachers ate a holiday lunch at Danville Middle School.

The girl was told to go to the kitchen to wash some pots and pans, but refused, wet her pants after teachers summoned Principal Kevin Duckworth, the mother said.

The newspaper withheld the names of the girl and her mother.

Police Chief Eric Gill said school officials were at "wit's end" with the girl, and they believe her actions were deliberate.

Duckworth did not return calls for comment. School Superintendent Steve Keifer said only that police are generally called in only after "all other alternatives are exhausted."

Police told the girl's parents they could probably avoid a fine if they agree to have the girl do community service.

In my opinion, I agree/disagree with writer # \_\_\_\_\_

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**Directions: Select one random opinion on the news article and give a thorough explanation for supporting or not supporting the writer.**

6. I'll say that this story just shows the lack of compassion and of knowledge. Now I can understand ok it's kinda gross she wet her pants but if she's afraid of the guy there's a reason for it and I can't see how this could be seen as disorderly conduct. If she is truly mentally challenged then that should be taken into account as her brain would not be fully developed to the level of someone her chronological age. I find it extremely distasteful and also absurd to charge the girl with anything as 1) It's a school, unless she did something that was against the law (ie pulled a gun or something) why get the police involved and 2) She only wet her pants after being confronted by someone that her parents admit she is afraid of and I don't know about anyone else here but if I had the mind of say a 5 year old and someone starts yelling at me and 185hreatening me with police and whatnot I'd probably wet me pants too.

7. What happened to a parent-teacher conference, calling the parents to report misbehavior, or suspending a student? Because I don't know all the facts, even if the 12 year old mentally-challenged girl did intentionally wet herself, calling the police to charge her with disorderly conduct is quite extreme and out-of-line for the school's administration; they should have first contacted the parents to report an issue.

<p>8. It was probably necessary to expel the student. I think it's funny that people assume because the girl is handicapped it's impossible for her to be able to control her own bladder. The kid is probably immature to the point that she pees herself in protest of punishment. The principal should just sue the parents for dumping their kid into a public school for day care. I never agreed with public schools being forced to take in handicapped children. Special needs students should have a separate school with it's own budget. Otherwise they just steal money from the regular students programs.</p>	<p>9. It's this utter stupidity, insensitivity and complete lack of common sense that our children perceive, learn from and re enact. Next time you are scratching your head over the latest school shooting give this a thought.</p>
<p>10. I think this is getting closer to the core of an even bigger issue: special students and public education just don't mix. I mean, for some parents it's the best they can do... but the state of affairs is just sad. For a mentally challenged person to actually FEAR being approached by the principal is scary in itself.</p>	

Reminds me of my old high school--the special ed teachers would have their classes clean up rooms and wipe desks at the end of the day. Christ, don't they hire custodians to do that stuff? To them it's probably not that bad, but to me it just seems like public degradation. All because the students actually feared what the teachers would do if they didn't comply.

APPENDIX J  
MENTAL RETARDATION

## APPENDIX J

### **Mental Retardation**

January 2004

Directions: Write 20 questions and answers on mental retardation.

### **Matthew's Story**

Matt is 15 years old. Because Matt has mental retardation, he has been receiving special education services since elementary school. These services have helped him tremendously, because they are designed to fit his special learning needs. Last year he started high school. He, his family, and the school took a good hard look at what he wants to do when secondary school is over. Does he want more education? A job? Does he have the skills he needs to live on his own?

Answering these questions has helped Matt and the school plan for the future. He's always been interested in the outdoors, in plants, and especially in trees. He knows all the tree names and can recognize them by their leaves and bark. So this year he's learning about jobs like forestry, landscaping, and grounds maintenance. Next year he hopes to get a part-time job. He's learning to use public transportation, so he'll be able to get to and from the job. Having mental retardation makes it harder for Matt to learn new things. He needs things to be very concrete. But he's determined. He wants to work outside, maybe in the park service or in a greenhouse, and he's getting ready!

### **What is Mental Retardation?**

Mental retardation is a term used when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of him or herself, and social skills. These limitations will cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child. Children with mental retardation may take longer to learn to speak, walk, and take care of their personal needs such as dressing or eating. They are likely to have trouble learning in school. They will learn, but it will take them longer. There may be some things they cannot learn.

### **What Causes Mental Retardation?**

Doctors have found many causes of mental retardation. The most common are:

- *Genetic conditions.* Sometimes mental retardation is caused by abnormal genes inherited from parents, errors when genes combine, or other reasons. Examples of genetic conditions are Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome, and phenylketonuria (PKU).
- *Problems during pregnancy.* Mental retardation can result when the baby does not develop inside the mother properly. For example, there may be a problem with the way the baby's cells divide as it grows. A woman who drinks alcohol or gets an infection like rubella during pregnancy may also have a baby with mental retardation.
- *Problems at birth.* If a baby has problems during labor and birth, such as not getting enough oxygen, he or she may have mental retardation.
- *Health problems.* Diseases like whooping cough, the measles, or meningitis can cause mental retardation. Mental retardation can also be caused by extreme malnutrition (not eating right), not getting enough medical care, or by being exposed to poisons like lead or mercury.

Mental retardation is not a disease. You can't catch mental retardation from anyone. Mental retardation is also not a type of mental illness, like depression. There is no cure for mental retardation. However, most children with mental retardation can learn to do many things. It just takes them more time and effort than other children.

### **How is Mental Retardation Diagnosed?**

Mental retardation is diagnosed by looking at two main things. These are:

- the ability of a person's brain to learn, think, solve problems, and make sense of the world (called IQ or intellectual functioning); and
- whether the person has the skills he or she needs to live independently (called adaptive behavior, or adaptive functioning).

Intellectual functioning, or IQ, is usually measured by a test called an IQ test. The average score is 100. People scoring below 70 to 75 are thought to have mental

retardation. To measure adaptive behavior, professionals look at what a child can do in comparison to other children of his or her age. Certain skills are important to adaptive behavior. These are:

- daily living skills, such as getting dressed, going to the bathroom, and feeding one's self;
- communication skills, such as understanding what is said and being able to answer;
- social skills with peers, family members, adults, and others.

To diagnose mental retardation, professionals look at the person's mental abilities (IQ) and his or her adaptive skills. Both of these are highlighted in the definition of mental retardation provided between the lines below. This definition comes from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA is the federal law that guides how schools provide early intervention and special education and related services to children with disabilities.

Providing services to help individuals with mental retardation has led to a new understanding of how we define mental retardation. After the initial diagnosis of mental retardation is made, we look at a person's strengths and weaknesses. We also look at how much support or help the person needs to get along at home, in school, and in the community. This approach gives a realistic picture of each individual. It also recognizes that the "picture" can change. As the person grows and learns, his or her ability to get along in the world grows as well.

#### **How Common is Mental Retardation?**

As many as 3 out of every 100 people in the country have mental retardation (The Arc, 2001). Nearly 613,000 children ages 6 to 21 have some level of mental retardation and need special education in school (*Twenty-fourth Annual Report to Congress*, U.S. Department of Education, 2002). In fact, 1 out of every 10 children who need special education has some form of mental retardation.

#### **What Are the Signs of Mental Retardation?**

There are many signs of mental retardation. For example, children with mental retardation may:

- sit up, crawl, or walk later than other children;

- learn to talk later, or have trouble speaking,
- find it hard to remember things,
- not understand how to pay for things,
- have trouble understanding social rules,
- have trouble seeing the consequences of their actions,
- have trouble solving problems, and/or
- have trouble thinking logically.

About 87% of people with mental retardation will only be a little slower than average in learning new information and skills. When they are children, their limitations may not be obvious. They may not even be diagnosed as having mental retardation until they get to school. As they become adults, many people with mild retardation can live independently. Other people may not even consider them as having mental retardation.

The remaining 13% of people with mental retardation score below 50 on IQ tests. These people will have more difficulty in school, at home, and in the community. A person with more severe retardation will need more intensive support his or her entire life. Every child with mental retardation is able to learn, develop, and grow. With help, all children with mental retardation can live a satisfying life.

APPENDIX K

JEROME BOWDEN, MENTALLY CHALLENGED MAN

## APPENDIX K

### Jerome Bowden

Jerome Bowden was a small, undernourished twenty-four-year-old when he was accused of robbing and murdering a fifty-five-year-old Georgia woman and badly beating her bedridden mother. Bowden's I.Q. was measured at 59, and he could not count to ten. His mental age was approximately nine. Neighbors described Bowden "soft-spoken, pleasant, optimistic, and always smiling." One neighbor said: "Before I knew [Bowden], I heard boys talking about him in the neighborhood, calling him crazy and retarded. **People used to tease him**, but it didn't seem to bother him. He didn't understand. **He thought they were paying him a compliment....** He would get lost and wander around for a long time.... One time he took some money from [his employer], but it seems like someone may have put him up to it, because he didn't seem to know what he was doing. He didn't try to hide it. I don't think he meant to keep it. I think maybe he just forgot to turn it in, because he was just standing around with it in his pocket when they came looking for it. This is why I don't think he made the decision by himself. He was easily influenced by others." Bowden's sister, Josephine, recalled that "Jerome's mind just used to come and go." Once, while mowing his sister's lawn, the mower ran out of gas; Bowden filled the gas tank with water, then wandered off. When he was not working, Bowden would often just sit on his bed and rock himself back and forth for hours on end.

When Jerome Bowden heard from his sister that the police had been looking for him, he went to them to find out how he could help. They confronted him about the crime, and he denied any involvement, but eventually he broke down, confessed, and signed a written statement acknowledging his guilt. James Graves, a sixteen-year-old boy, implicated Bowden in the crime; beyond Graves's statement and Bowden's confession, no physical evidence linked Bowden directly to the crime, although a great deal of evidence incriminated Graves.

Bowden denied that he had played a role in the murder. When asked why he had made a false confession, Bowden struggled to find an answer: "Well, that I don't know. Only thing

that I knew, since Detective Myles had told me this here.... Had told me about could help me, that he could, you know, which I knew that confessing to something you didn't take part in was-if you confess to something that you didn't do, as if you did it, because you are saying that you did." Apparently Detective Myles promised Bowden that he would help him stay out of the electric chair if he confessed. When his clemency attorney later asked him if he had even read his "confession" before signing it, Bowden said, "I tried."

Although Jerome Bowden could hardly read and could not count to ten, his trial lawyers did not raise his retardation during his defense. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to death. When the state granted a last-minute, ninety-day stay of execution to have his mental capacity evaluated, Bowden's lawyers rushed to his cell with the news, but Bowden did not understand the meaning of a "stay." He asked his attorney if the stay meant he could watch television that night. "Jerome has no real concept of death," his attorney ruefully concluded.

During the stay of execution, Irwin Knopf, a psychologist from Emory University, gave Bowden another I.Q. test at the request of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles. This time Bowden scored 65, higher than on his previous tests but still clearly within the definition of mental retardation. Knopf nonetheless concluded that Bowden was not sufficiently disabled to merit clemency.

Bowden's lawyers were devastated. Bowden, in contrast, was proud of his performance on the I.Q. test: "I tried real hard," he told his lawyers. "I did the best I could." Relying entirely on Knopf's test, the State Board of Pardons and Paroles refused to grant clemency for Jerome Bowden. Bowden was "scared," his lawyers said, but he told an interviewer that he was "going off to live on a little cloud," and he hoped a guard who had befriended him "would live on a cloud near him someday."

Despite a public outcry, Bowden was executed on June 4, 1986. The public outcry surrounding his execution led Georgia to become the first state in the U.S. to prohibit the execution of people with mental retardation.<sup>147</sup>

APPENDIX L  
DENSE QUESTIONING LIST

APPENDIX L

Dense Questioning  
Of Mice and Men

Type of Question	Description	Questions Generated
Text	Information found in the text	<i>Who is the narrator of the story?</i>
Reader	Reader's experience, values, and ideas	<i>Have you ever had a dream deferred? Have you ever shared a class with a mentally challenged student? Do you have a family member that is mentally challenged?</i>
World or Other Literature	Knowledge of history, other cultures, other literature	<i>What other character—in a book or movie—would you compare Lennie or Curley to?</i>
Text / Reader	Combines knowledge of text with knowledge of history and other cultures	<i>What characteristics do you share with George?</i>
Text / Other Literature	Combines knowledge of text with knowledge of other pieces of literature	<i>How does George's relationship with Lennie compare with Elie and his father?</i>
Reader / World	Combines knowledge of reader's own experiences with knowledge of other culture and	<i>In what ways is social attitude about women and Blacks in other countries similar to American's? In what ways are they different?</i>

	peoples	
Reader / Other Literature	Combines knowledge of reader's own experiences with other pieces of literature	<i>In what ways are you similar to and/or different from George and Elie?</i>
Dense question	Combines knowledge of all three areas into one "dense question"	<i>Why does Crooks, Curley's wife, and Lennie feel alienated from other characters? How is that related to what many people of today's society feel? Include in your answer a discussion of the extent to which you do or don't share these same feelings and why.</i>

APPENDIX M  
TRANSACTIONAL READING JOURNAL

## APPENDIX M

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period/Block: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Transactional Reading Journal**

**Directions:** The writing you will do for this text is of a more personal nature than we have done on previous texts. You are to create five well-crafted and polished journal entries. Each entry includes 5 to 7 terms from vocabulary. The following is a list of possibilities or suggestions, but by no means is it exhaustive; let your imaginations go wild!

The journal entries must cover the *entire* book; they should be spread evenly in relation to the beginning, middle and end of the novel. They should also reflect a variety of the choices listed below. A *minimum of three should be based on writer's craft* (the first bulleted item), but the remaining seven choices are up to you.

**Fully examine and explain a particular piece of the writer's craft; you may want to consider any one of the following and explain how it underscores one of the motifs or themes of the book: metaphor, foreshadowing, symbolism, characterization, structure, hyperbole, imagery, diction, voice, drawing conclusions/making inferences, etc.**

- a. Create a piece of writing that describes and explains a personal reaction to a character, place or event in the text.
- b. Write a fictional letter to one or more of the characters or create a letter written from one character in the novel to another that expresses some unspoken feelings or thoughts.
- c. React, respond and explicate a "five star quote" of your choice. A "five star quote" is a quote that "jumps off the page" at you for any number of reasons. It may be aphoristic, profound, humorous, universal, or any reason you choose.

For clarity, you must include the entire quote somewhere in the entry.

- d. Create an original piece of writing that is inspired by the novel; it may be a poem, short story, short drama or section of dialogue, advertisement, review, etc. (only **one** of this type of entry is allowed)
- e. Choose a pivotal point in the novel's plot and rewrite the outcome of a particular event as well as the characters' motivations, actions and reactions. It is important to focus on one small section; keep it focused and detailed. (As an addendum, you may want to provide an explanation of how it would affect the novel's direction and/or outcome.)
- f. Create a question that the novel has raised for you and then answer that question in your journal entry. Create an essential question for the text and write a justification and possible answer after completion of your reading.
- g. Create an original piece of art for one of your entries. Some possibilities could include: a drawing, a painting, a sculpture, a dance, a musical score/composition, a collage, etc. (only **one** of this type of entry is allowed)
- h. Create a correspondence between one of the characters in this novel and a character from one of the other pieces of literature that we read this year.
- i. Create a collection of artifacts (in a box) for one of the characters in the book; attach a written rationale for your choice to each item. (The total of the written rationales should be roughly equivalent to the two-page minimum.)
- j. Choose a minimum of four characters from the novel and find fitting song lyrics for each one of them. Scan or type out the song lyrics and annotate the lyrics for writer's craft as well as

an explanation as to why you chose that particular song for the character. Burn a CD of the songs and create a CD cover that illustrates a major motif or theme of the text.

- k. Create a "conversation across time" by having one of the characters in the text dialogue with a fictional or nonfiction persona from another time period/century.
- l. Make a prediction early in the book. Revisit the prediction after finishing the book. Compare and contrast your prediction with the ending. To what extent was your prediction satisfied and why?
- m. Create a short list of enduring understandings that emerge as you read. Use evidence from the book to support your claims about the enduring understandings you take away from the book. How will these understandings shape decisions you will make in the future? How should these understandings shape our society?
- n. Create a new kind of journal entry, write a description of it, then complete the entry. Your entry could become a model for future entries.

APPENDIX N  
PRE AND POST TEST SURVEY

## APPENDIX N

### Of Mice and Men

#### Anticipation/Reaction Guide

**Part I Directions:** Before reading *Of Mice and Men*, in the "Before" column, respond to each statement by putting a plus sign (+) if you agree with it, a minus sign (-) if you disagree, and a question mark (?) if you are unsure of your belief.

**Part II Directions:** For one of the statements below, respond in your journal (200+ words) as to why you have the belief you do. Then, copy and paste your response on our If someone responds to it, they may earn up to 10 points extra credit. Extra credit points both depend on the quality and quantity of the response.

**Part III Directions:** After reading *Of Mice and Men* in the "After" column respond again to the statements. Then, reply in your journal (400+ words) to a statement where your belief changed since reading the book. If not, write about a different statement than you responded to in Part II. Once again, post your journal on our message board.

#### Statements

1. People that are poor should rely on their friends, family, or church for help, not the government. A true friend will tell you the truth, even when you don't want to hear it.
2. The n-word is more offensive than other racial slurs because of the history of hate behind it.
3. Women today are more often treated by men as equals rather than objects.
4. When people are a victim of a crime, they should be able to take the law into their own hands.
5. States with the death penalty have lower murder rates.
6. The best place for justice to be determined is in a court of law.
7. Being rich is more important than having close friends.
8. Sometimes a person has to break the law to make sure justice is served.
9. Life today is more difficult than it was in the 1930s.

APPENDIX O  
EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS'  
QUIZ SCORES

APPENDIX O

Group	Student	Quiz 1 8/8	Quiz 2 8/8	Quiz 3 8/8	Quiz 4 8/8	Writing Response
Experimental, English Learner	Cecilia	7	6	7	7	++
Control, English Learner	Sergio	5	5	6	7	-
Experimental, Mainstream	Bobby	5	Absent	5	7	+
Control, Mainstream	Susy	Absent	4	6	7	-
Experimental, Special Needs	Sallie	5	5	6	7	+
Control, Special Needs	Jeremy	2	4	5	5	-

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