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ABSTRACT

A study explored the general patterns of discourse during discussions of literature in secondary classrooms, and investigated teachers' and students' perceptions of the purposes that guide those discussions. Six teacher-researchers each studied one teacher as that teacher taught an instructional unit on a literary text, videotaping class sessions, and interviewing the teacher and several students per class. Interviews were analyzed, and videotaped discussions were coded to distinguish three levels of organization (classroom episode, speaker turn, and communication unit) and to analyze each communication unit for linguistic function, knowledge base, and kind of reasoning. Results indicated that teachers typically saw discussions as serving at least two major purposes--lively interaction, and deep analysis of text--and they saw themselves playing at least two roles which reflected those purposes--facilitators and guides. Analyses of classroom talk suggested that: (1) in terms of quantity, teachers dominated most of the large-group discussions observed, with the floor returned to the teacher after each student's contribution, and with teachers' turns two to five times longer than students' turns; (2) teachers mostly used their turns to inform, question, and respond to students' contributions; (3) students' informative remarks were largely reflective of the kinds of questions teachers asked, and dominated by the description and interpretation of textual information; and (4) teachers used their responses to students' contributions to weave the discussion into a coherent and sustained examination of general topics, controlling the direction, pace, and organization of discussion. (Sixteen tables of data are included, and 19 references are attached.) (SR)

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Patterns of Discourse in Classroom Discussions of Literature

James Marshall
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What are the basic patterns of talk during classroom discussions of literature? What kinds of knowledge do teachers and students draw upon when they use that talk to make sense of the texts they are reading? Though classroom discussions play an important role in the literature curriculum (Squire & Applebee, 1968; Marshall, 1987), there has been surprisingly little study of how such discussions proceed nor why they proceed as they do. This report will describe the patterns of oral discourse in six secondary English classrooms during discussions of literature and will additionally examine the purposes informing the activity from teachers' and students' perspectives.

Research into the language that teachers and students use in analyzing literature seems especially relevant now as work in reading (e.g., Spiro, 1980; Adams & Bruce, 1982; Brown, 1982) and literary theory (e.g., Iser, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1978; Fish, 1980; Mailloux, 1982) has converged on the concept of "constructive processes" in describing the act of reading. Though drawing from a variety of theoretical perspectives, these investigators have each explained the process of reading as an interaction between the language on the page and the purposes, expectations, and prior knowledge of the reader. Given this model, it seems important to ask if and how classroom discussion helps shape reader-text interactions by fostering specific ways of talking and thinking about texts. As Bruner and Olson (1978) have argued, knowledge is acquired through activity; in their aphorism, from sitting on chairs we learn both about "chairs" and about "sitting." By the same token, talking about literature in school may provide students with knowledge about literature. But it will also provide knowledge about the appropriate ways of talking about literature--about the language, questions, and responses that are legitimate or conventional and those that are less so. Classroom discussions of literature, in other words, may represent a tacit curriculum in appropriate modes of literary response--a curriculum about which we know very little.

The two central questions guiding this research then are: 1) what are the general patterns of discourse during discussions of literature in secondary classrooms? and 2) what are teachers' and students' perceptions of the purposes that guide those discussions?

Method

Six teacher-researchers, themselves experienced teachers of literature, each studied one teacher as that teacher taught an instructional unit on a literary text. Prior to the study the teacher-researchers had been active members of workshops sponsored by the National Writing Project and for at least a year had participated in an ongoing seminar that focused on the relationships between writing and literary understanding. The study reported here was in many ways an outgrowth of questions raised by these practicing teachers as they reflected together upon the nature and purposes of classroom discussions of literature.

Participants

Six teachers of English and 67 secondary school students participated in the study. The teachers were selected on the basis of their experience and their reputation as excellent instructors. Though all of the teachers taught a variety of classes, they were each asked to select one class that was primarily involved in the study of literature for the purposes of the research. The student participants were enrolled in the classes chosen by the teachers. A smaller group of students (ranging from two to seven from each class) was selected for case study interviews.

The participants represented four public schools and one private school in the Metropolitan Albany area (two of the teachers worked in the same public school). Of the six classes studied, one was ninth grade, one was eleventh, two were eleventh/twelfth, and two were twelfth. All of the participating students were judged by their teachers to be of generally high academic ability; one of the twelfth grade classes studied was an advanced placement section of English.

Table 1 summarizes the basic information about participants in the study.

Procedures

In order to examine the general patterns of discussion in these six teachers' classrooms, each teacher's class was videotaped during all of the discussions of a single literary text. The videotapes were transcribed and later analyzed for their basic features. In order to explore teachers' and students' purposes during those discussions, each teacher and several students from each class were interviewed to determine their view of how discussions proceed and why they proceed as they do.

Interviews

The six teachers were interviewed outside of class, and while the specific questions in each interview varied depending on the text and the students being taught, all of the teachers were asked to address two basic issues: 1) what were their general purposes in holding discussion? and 2) what roles did they and their students typically play during discussions? The number of interviews held with each teacher ranged from one to ten, depending on scheduling opportunities. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for later analysis.

Several students from each teacher's class were also interviewed for their perception of the purposes and patterns of classroom discussions. The number of students interviewed ranged from two to seven for each class (the seven students participated in a group interview), and the number of separate interviews ranged from one to four for each class, again depending on scheduling opportunities. These interviews were also audiotaped and transcribed for later analysis.

Videotaped Discussions

In an initial meeting with researchers, the six participating teachers each decided upon the literary text that would be the focus of discussion during the videotaping. All of the texts selected were normally taught as part of the literature curriculum in the classes studied and all of the teachers indicated that they would spend several consecutive days discussing them with their students.

Table 1

Information on Participants

Teacher	Grade	Ability Level	Number of Students
Kevin Tucker	11/12	High	11
Karen Phillips	11	High	17
Grace Whitman	9	High	15
Francis Connelly	12	AP	27
Joe Allen	11/12	High	24
Carol Johnson	12 (Private School)	High	12

On the days of the taping, a video camera was positioned as unobtrusively as possible in each room and instruction proceeded as normally as possible. All of the teachers reported that the camera did not greatly affect their own or their students' participation in the discussions.

The number of classes videotaped ranged from three to five for each teacher, depending on the length of time the teacher devoted to the text under study. In the end, 25 separate discussions of literature were transcribed and analyzed. Table 2 summarizes the information about data collection.

Analysis

Interviews

The transcribed interviews with teachers and students were analyzed for perspectives on two basic questions: 1) what are the purposes that drive classroom discussions of literature? and 2) what roles do teachers and students typically play during discussions? To answer these questions, the interviews were studied for themes that seemed common to both teachers and students and for the more specific issues raised by either group. Information from the interviews was then synthesized into a general portrait of the perspectives offered by the participants.

Videotaped Discussions

To examine the basic features of the classroom discussions, a coding system was developed that distinguished three levels of organization (classroom episode, speaker turn, and communication unit), and that analyzed each communication unit for linguistic function, knowledge base, and kind of reasoning. An overview of the system for coding the communication units is provided in the following

Organization of Discussions. In order to mark the boundaries that shape classroom discussions, each transcribed discussion was first segmented at three levels of organization.

> Communication Unit: The basic unit of analysis, communication units have the force of a sentence, though they may be as short as one word (e.g, "yes" or "OK"). They represent an identifiable remark or utterance on a single subject.
>
> Turn: The most obvious boundary in most oral discourse, a turn consists of one or more communication units spoken by a single participant who holds the floor.
>
> Classroom Episode: The largest segment of discourse analyzed in this study, classroom episodes represent a sequence of speaker turns on a single, identifiable topic. To avoid confusion about the duration of episodes, episode boundaries were marked only when one of the participants made an explicit move to do so (e.g., "Let's move on to the next point.").

Two raters independently segmented five randomly chosen transcriptions of discussions, representing 20 percent of the data set, at each of the three levels of organization. Exact agreement between raters on the subsample was 94 percent.

Table 2

Summary of Data Collection

Teacher	Case Study Students	Interviews		Text Studied	Taped Discussions
		Teacher	Student		
Tucker	3	2	2	*Being There*	5
Phillips	7	3	1 (group)	*Ethan Frome*	4
Whitman	3	4	4	*Great Expectations*	5
Connelly	2	8	2	*Grapes of Wrath*	3
Allen	2	1	2	*Antigone*	4
Johnson	2	10	2	*I Heard the Owl Call My Name*	4

The Language of Discussions. In order to examine the linguistic patterns and intellectual content of classroom discussions, each communication unit was coded within one of five basic categories and within one of several sub-categories that allowed a closer analysis of its features. The major categories and their respective sub-categories are explained below.

I. Direct: Any remark (even when it is represented as a question) that intends to move auditors toward an action or to shift the attention of the auditors or the focus on the discussion (e.g., "Let's open to page 97 and read the first paragraph.").

II. Inform: Any statement of fact or opinion whose purpose is to represent what the speaker knows, believes, or thinks about a topic. Reading and quoting from texts are included here.

1. Nature of Remark:

A. Classroom logistics: Refers to the management of classroom activities (e.g., homework assignments, roll, reading completed).

B. Reads or quotes from text.

C. Instructional statements: Refers to the substantive issues under discussion.

If remarks were coded as instructional in focus, they were further analyzed for knowledge source and kind of reasoning.

1) Knowledge Source:

a) Personal/autobiographical (information drawn from the speaker's own experience).

b) Text (information drawn from the text under study).

c) Text-in-context (information about the author of the text, the historical period in which it was written, or its genre).

d) General knowledge (information drawn from the media or contemporary culture that is widely available).

e) Previous class discussions, lectures, or readings.

f) Other.

2) Kind of Reasoning:

a) Summary/description (statements which focus on the literal features of an experience or text).

b) Interpretation (statements which make an inference about the meaning or significance of information).

c) Evaluation (statements that focus on the quality of an experience or a text).

d) Generalization (statements that move toward theoretical speculation about the nature of characters, authors, and texts).

e) Other.

III. Question: Any verbal or non-verbal gesture that invites or requires a response from an auditor.

1. Nature of Question:

A. Classroom logistics.

B. Instructional focus.

If a question was coded as instructional, it was further analyzed for the knowledge source and level of reasoning it meant to elicit. Definitions for sub-categories are the same as those for informational statements.

1) Knowledge source:

a) Personal/autobiographical.

b) Text.

c) Text-in-context.

d) General knowledge.

e) Previous class discussions/lectures/readings.

f) Other.

2) Kind of Reasoning:

a) Summary/description.

b) Interpretation.

c) Evaluation.

d) Generalization.

e) Other.

IV. Respond: Any verbal or non-verbal gesture that acknowledges, restates, evaluates, or otherwise reacts to the nature, quality, or substance of preceding remarks. Responses clearly focus on the form or substance of the preceding remark itself. Answers to questions are coded in the Inform category. A remark coded as a response to a question would ask for a clarification or explanation of the question itself or would comment on the value of the question.

Nature of Response:

A. Acknowledgement (simple indication that a remark was heard).

B. Restatement (an effort to repeat a previous remark).

C. Positive evaluation (a positive comment on a previous remark).

D. Negative evaluation (a negative comment on a previous remark).

E. Request for explanation/elaboration/clarification (any remark that asks the previous speaker to speak more clearly or at greater length).

F. Elaboration upon a previous remark (any remark that moves beyond a simple restatement of a speaker's contribution by substantively changing the original speaker's language or by offering an interpretation of what the speaker is saying).

G. Other.

V. Other: Any utterance that cannot be coded within one of the four major categories.

Two raters independently coded five randomly chosen transcripts of discussions, representing 20 percent of the data set. Exact agreement between raters was 86 percent for the major categories and 81 percent for the sub-categories. A sample of coded transcript is provided in Appendix A.

Transcriptions

The videotapes were viewed several times in the course of transcription in order to make certain that each speaker's contribution was accurately rendered. In a very few cases, students' contributions could not be heard in spite of repeated efforts to make them out. On these occasions, the student's turn was counted as one communication unit and was coded as Other. Because such inaudible contributions may have sometimes been longer than one unit, the length of students' turns may be very slightly under-represented in the analysis.

On most of the occasions when we had difficulty hearing students, however, we were helped by the teacher who very often repeated students' remarks--especially if those remarks were quietly spoken. We were able to reconstruct many otherwise inaudible contributions in this way.

One full tape (from Phillips' class) was dropped from the analysis because even with repeated viewing and even with the help of Phillips' responses, we were unable to hear the majority of students' contributions. Another tape (from Connelly's class) was dropped from the analysis because the planned discussion was modified into a lecture that lasted the full period The 25 tapes that were analyzed, then, represented classes where virtually all of the participants' contributions could be accurately transcribed and where there was general agreement that a large-group discussion was being held.

Results and Discussion

Interviews

Teachers' Perspectives

In order to determine the teachers' general goals in holding classroom discussions, interviews were examined for teachers' perspectives on the instructional purposes that should inform the discussions and on the roles they felt teachers and students should play during the discussions.

All of the teachers seemed to work from a definition of classroom discussion that emphasized the active participation of students. As Joe Allen put it:

> A classroom discussion in my mind is a class in which the students are reacting to the literature. They are either giving me some kind of feedback in terms of their understanding of the basic technical components or moving into a higher level application of the piece of literature to their own lives or to a deeper understanding of the piece.

The importance of students' reactions was echoed by Francis Connelly:

> It seems (to be) a question and answer period where--I'd never use a whole period for it--but where I start with questions and they respond. Then the responses start to jump around the room where students are jumping in, sometimes without raising their hand, or just responding. Then the question and answer period has turned into a discussion period, and they move back and forth freely between the two. That technique is used a lot.

We should note that though both of these teachers emphasize the centrality of students' response, they also both speak of discussions in two parts: Allen speaks of students "giving feedback (on)...basic technical components" or "moving on to a higher application." Connelly suggests that his discussions begin with "a question and answer period" before "responses start to jump around the room, where students are jumping in, sometimes without raising their hands." While the goal is apparently to move toward the "higher applications" and away from "questions and answers," the teachers suggest that discussions have a structure that includes both kinds of thinking.

Karen Phillips also spoke of discussions as including a movement from one pattern of discourse to another. Asked to finish the phrase, "A good classroom discussion is most like. ", Phillips replied:

> I suppose I could...say it is most like a jam session. I'm not sure that is the right phrase, but you know what I mean. A good classroom discussion is most like an interaction of interested minds on a common topic.

But though the quality of discussions rests on the interaction of the participants, interaction by itself is not enough. The purpose of discussions, she felt, was:

> ...to get the class from their initial, personal responses and questions to the beginnings of an analysis or the beginnings of looking at ways that an analysis can take place. I'm using... the discussion to lead them to find ways to get to a closer analysis of the text.

The goal of discussion for these teachers seems to be two-fold: on the one hand, they would like to move their students toward a deeper and richer analysis of a text, and away from "questions and answers" or the recapitulation of "technical components." At the same time, however, they would like to move the discussion toward the kinds of lively "interaction" described by Phillips and Allen. And the motives informing this goal are sometimes larger than simply wanting to improve students' understanding of literature. As Kevin Tucker put it:

> I think every kid should speak because I want to see them develop confidence in their ability to formulate their ideas verbally, to express those ideas to their peer group....(When you don't speak) you have denied everybody else the opportunity of hearing your perspective, which is your perspective....If there's a truth, it's only after hearing as many of the possible variations that may be present in this group....It's a sort of duty to the group if you are going to have a discussion, it's a duty to the discussion....There's something that you need to know that happens only when a kid contributes to a discussion.

If teachers saw the nature and purpose of classroom discussion as two-fold, they also saw a two-fold role for themselves within those discussions. On the one hand, they saw themselves as "originators" (Francis Connelly), "facilitators" (Grace Whitman), or "catalysts" (Kevin Tucker) Their role is to "get the topic started" (Connelly), "to see that everybody gets a chance to express himself or herself without...monopolizing the conversation" (Whitman), "to (keep) it going and (allow) everyone to get a chance who wants a chance" (Allen). In this view, the role of the teacher is to orchestrate the discussion almost invisibly. In fact, at times teachers stated as a kind of goal their own disappearance from the discussions. "If I do my job well in this course," Kevin Tucker argued, "by the time we reach the last major piece of fiction I shouldn't even have to be in the room." And Grace Whitman suggested that a good classroom discussion would be "student centered...students' would be initiating the questions." Her own role would be simply to "watch it happen."

On the other hand, however, the teachers also recognized that their own role was central As Karen Phillips put it:

> Well, I'm more than a facilitator. I have structured activities so students have a place to begin. I'm very often a collector of their responses to begin with.. .I usually ask a student to write down what's going on around us and I, especially in the initial times of

> chaos--I am the person who makes sure we don't lose things and say, 'OK, everybody, be quiet Chris is going to say that again and Amy you make sure you get it down.' Now that is just when we begin; then I guess I structure the process. We get a whole bunch of ideas down and I say, 'OK Amy, would you go back through and read everything that we have collected and would the rest of you watch for what you think are patterns, what you think is more important than other things to lead our discussion to some kind of analysis.'

The teachers saw part of their role, then, as organizing the potential "chaos" of discussion into coherence. As participants, they must make sure that "things don't get lost" and that the discussion leads to "some kind of analysis."

> Teachers frequently said that they felt responsible for making certain the discussions "led" somewhere or "went" somewhere. As Carol Johnson put it: I think the role of the teacher is to introduce some ideas that are maybe a springboard for some response....however, I do feel sometimes when you feel the discussion is going a bit off track, then it's the responsibility of the teacher to get the students back on track a little bit and maybe that can be done through a simple summary of what's been said and what more has to be sort of explored or discussed.

Francis Connelly echoed these thoughts when he suggested:

> I'm serving to get the topic started. And then somewhat of a guide as the topic flows along, because if they move into what I consider total irrelevancies, then I would move them back.

The teachers saw their role, then, as more than one of maintaining order. Keeping the discussion "on track" and away from "irrelevancies" meant that teachers usually had a sense of what was to be covered in the course of the discussion. Joe Allen suggested:

> I feel there are some important things I want students to see in a piece of literature. So I try to have that mix of their self-discovery of what's important and also the things I want them to find. And so occasionally, I will become more the focus.

The teachers' sense of what students should "see" concerning the text under discussion often played an important part in the roles they saw for themselves. Kevin Tucker, for instance, articulated the general goals for his class this way:

> I guess the ideal that I would like them to walk away with is a sense of how, through...within the last hundred years, from the late eighteen hundreds to the present time, significant writers have used the politics of human relationships to know that and feel comfortable with the notion that there...are no absolutes, which, for high school kids is very often a discomforting feeling rather than a comforting feeling.

Tucker wants his students, understandably, to leave his course with a particular body of knowledge. He wants them to have seen certain trends in the literature they have read, and to feel what he believes is a healthy discomfort about the themes that literature has explored. At the same time, however, as we saw earlier, he wants his students to "develop confidence in their ability to formulate ideas verbally, to express those ideas to their peer group." Like the other teachers interviewed, he has articulated a double purpose for discussions and a dual role for himself.

That theme of doubleness is perhaps the most central issue to emerge from the interviews with the teachers. On the one hand, teachers are to be merely facilitators; on the other hand, they are to make certain that the discussion "goes somewhere." On the one hand, they are to provide many students with the opportunity to speak; on the other hand, they are to make certain that those students "see" certain things about the literature they have read. On the one hand, discussions are "interactions"; on the other hand, there are occasions in which teachers take students further and deeper into an analysis of the text. Later we will examine how these dual purposes are reflected in the patterns of talk during the discussion. First, however, we will briefly discuss students' perspectives on classroom discussion.

Students' Perspectives

In large measure, the students interviewed described the purposes of discussion and the role of the teacher during discussion in much the same way as their teachers. Lucy, a student in Francis Connelly's class, defined discussions this way:

> I think, um, usually it's the interaction between students and it's also interaction with the teacher. It might be, like just...he'll want to know what our feelings are on something. Like the symbolism in The Grapes of Wrath or...and the people put forth their opinions and their ideas....Usually it's more like people contributing their ideas...their opinions and things like that.

Lucy described the teacher's role as "initiator":

> He would like say something and ask the class what they feel about it. And he would ask us for our opinion, ask us for our ideas, and he might be like an instigator...keep it going, keep the discussion going, and like pursue what we're trying to say. If we're saying something he would like try to go into it deeper....

The purpose of the discussion, from Lucy's perspective, seems clear:

> To promote critical thinking and to follow through with some kind of lesson he has prepared. Or just to find out what we're thinking, and get us to start using our logic and brain power and knowledge a little bit.

But though teachers are "initiators" of discussion, they are also, in the students' view, guides who lead students through the text. Mary, a student in Carol Johnson's class, suggested that Johnson:

> ...is the leader. She's leader of the group and every group needs a leader....I don't think we would just come in and start talking about important parts of the text. She's an expert at this because she's read the text several times and studied it several times and she knows what parts she thinks are important and we would all have conflicting ideas of what would be important if it weren't for her because she keeps us on track.

If the teacher's role is to initiate the discussion and then keep the students "on track," the students' saw their own role as one of thoughtful participation. Sam, a student in Joe Allen's class, described his contributions this way:

> I listen to others' opinions. Hear what's happening. And then if I disagree or have some questions about something, I will ask. That's basically what I do. I try to listen and see what's going on. See what people think. And then I try to relate that to what I think (is) going on. And if I have any questions, I'll ask.

Several students said that they tried to make certain that their contributions would be useful and relevant to the unfolding discussions. Mary, for example, said:

> I keep quiet unless I think I have something really important to say. I think when I do say things...they are well thought out because I don't just talk the whole time. I really think about it and if I say something, I think I usually say it because I think it's something important,...something that no one else has thought of. If I think of something that I think other people probably have thought of, I don't usually say it.

The students, in other words, often felt a responsibility to stay "on track," just as their teachers felt a responsibility to keep them there. Their contributions to the discussions were not, they felt, to be random or repetitive. Their comments were to be relevant to what had already been said, woven into the talk in a way that would be helpful to the other students in class.

The students, like their teachers, then, saw discussions as occasions for the lively exchange of ideas, but also as interactions directed toward particular ends. They felt they had a responsibility to share their views, but they also felt that those views should be expressed in a coherent and helpful way. We will turn now to examine how the intentions of participants were realized in the talk that took place during the classroom discussions of literature.

Structure of Discussions

Length and Organization

The classroom discussions varied considerably in their overall length (as measured by the number of communication units spoken by participants) and in the number of identifiable topics discussed (as measured by the number of episodes per class). The relevant data are summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

The length of discussions ranged from a low of 84 communication units to a high of 473, with a mean length of 264.9 units per class. The number of utterances made by participants during any individual class depended on several factors, including the pace of delivery, the amount of time between speaker turns, and the amount of time teachers wished to devote to large-group discussion on any given day. In the period in which only 84 utterances were transcribed and analyzed, for example, the teacher began class with a large-group discussion,

Table 3

Number of Units Per Class by Teacher

	Class							
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Mean	(SD)
Teacher								
Tucker	368	384	311	435	473	1971	394.2	(55.8)
Philips	219	197	208	126		750	187.5	(36.3)
Whitman	268	108	295	183	449	1303	260.6	(114.9)
Connelly	252	178	352			782	260.7	(73.4)
Allen	197	242	325	84		848	212.0	(87.0)
Johnson	270	295	298	229		1092	273.0	(27.6)
						6746	269.8	(101.0)

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Table 4

Number of Episodes Per Class by Teacher

	Class 1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Teacher						
Tucker	2	2	3	1	2	2.0
Phillips	3	2	2	1		2.0
Whitman	5	2	2	2	2	2.6
Connelly	2	2	2			2.0
Allen	3	3	4	3		3.2
Johnson	4	3	3	2		3.0
TOTAL						2.5

but after 15 minutes broke the students into small groups. Again, only those remarks made by participants during large-group instruction were included in the analysis.

The number of topics addressed during discussions varied from one to five, with a mean of 2.5, but most of the classes, just over half, consisted of two classroom episodes.

Episode boundaries within discussions were always marked by the teacher, usually in the form of a directive or an informative statement addressing classroom logistics. We can see a typical transition from one episode to another in a sequence from Joe Allen's class discussion of Antigone.

Allen and his students began the lesson by reviewing the major characters of the play and recalling some of what they had done the day before ("What's the name of the queen?" Allen asks, "When we talked originally, we said that the relationship of Oedipus to Antigone is what?"). But Allen soon focuses more specifically on the general relationship between men and women in the play and in the society represented by the play.

Allen: In the fighting, the two brothers (Eteocles and Polyneices) encounter each other and, in fact, kill each other in hand-to-hand combat. So we have Eteocles dead, Polyneices dead. Who's going to rule Thebes? Who's going to rule Thebes? Antigone? Ismene?

Student: Creon.

Allen: Creon. Why? Why not the two sisters?

Student: Patriarchal society.

Allen: Sure. It's a patriarchal society. So again, the women are not being valued. So it's the Jocaste motif once again. They're in the background. And so Creon steps in as king, and that's the opening of our play, and that's where we'll start today. Creon as king has made his first decree as new king of Thebes and it has to do with the two brothers. What I'd like to do is read some parts today to get into the story. And so we will start. We'll talk a little about Greek theater as we go along. I'd like you to look for differences and perhaps a modern American play you may be familiar with. As we finish a scene, we'll discuss those differences.

While the new episode actually begins in the middle of Allen's final turn here ("What I'd like to do is read some parts today...."), it seems clear that he has prepared the students for the transition. He opens the class by reminding students of what they already know about the characters, and just before the transition, he recapitulates the relevant information from the discussion that has just ensued ("It's a patriarchal society. So again, the women are not being valued."). In a sense, episode boundaries in these oral discussions served the same function as transitional sentences in written texts. They looked back briefly at what had gone before, and they looked forward to what was to follow.

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Turns

The patterns of turn-taking during the classes observed were comparable in most respects to those reported in earlier studies of classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1988). The average number of turns taken by teachers and students are presented in Table 5, and the average length of turns per speaker is presented in Table 6.

As in earlier studies, the turns here were distributed fairly evenly among teachers and students if students are considered as a group. The average number of turns taken by teachers during discussion ranged from 28.8 to 99.2, with a mean of 60.7. The average number of turns taken by students ranged from 27.7 to 103.9, with a mean of 70.4. In three of the classrooms (Tucker's, Phillips' and Whitman's), teachers and students took on average almost exactly the same number of turns per discussion. In the three remaining classes, students averaged slightly more turns than their teacher during discussions.

The generally even distribution of turns among teachers and students suggests, of course, that in most discussions the floor was returned to the teacher after each student contribution. In those classes where students' turns outnumbered the teacher's turns, students averaged slightly more than one turn for each turn taken by the teacher.

A comparable indication of teachers' and students' relative contributions to discussions is provided by the average length of participants' turns. As summarized in Table 6, teachers' turns averaged from 2.1 to 5.4 communication units in length, with a mean of 3.7, while students' averaged from 1.1 to 1.7 units per turn, with a mean of 1.4. In general, teachers' turns were two to five times longer than students' turns.

We can see one example of these patterns in an excerpt from Kevin Tucker's class discussion of Being There. Tucker began the class by reminding the students of what they had discussed the day before. Today, he wanted to make a transition to a discussion of the institutions with which Kosinski deals in his novel, but before doing so he asks the students to take a close look at the first paragraph of the novel.

Tucker: Now, I just want to take one additional look before I make the transition here to the institutions that Kosinski deals with. To, if you will allow me, the very first page, all right? I'm glad no one said, 'No, I won't allow you.' You're very polite. (I often put emphasis) on beginnings and endings, the first paragraph of a short story, the beginning, the first line of a poem. I'm a Poe-ist in that regard, Edgar Allen Poe's theory about the significance of every word, every line in a short story. The significance of a first line, that it should not be wasted. You don't have that kind of time. And here, rather than just toss this off, not only does the first paragraph often serve to give some kind of focus, but then we end up with another literary technique here. When writers start throwing similes and metaphors at you, boom! Indication! Alert time! You know, he's taking the time to make some form of comparison, either direct or indirect, whatever the case may be. What's he doing in paragraph 1?

Student: (Inaudible) Comparing people to plants.

Table 5

Mean Number of Turns by Speaker

Teacher	Teacher Mean (SD)	Student Mean (SD)
Tucker (n=655)	69.7 (45.3)	70.0 (40.0)
Phillips (n=223)	28.8 (22.0)	27.7 (20.6)
Whitman (n=833)	99.2 (78.0)	103.9 (78.3)
Connelly (n=244)	37.0 (36.5)	51.9 (31.7)
Allen (n=368)	48.5 (39.0)	61.1 (45.3)
Johnson (n=446)	56.2 (37.8)	58.7 (36.3)
TOTAL (n=2769)	60.7 (52.8)	70.4 (55.1)

Table 6

Mean Length of Turns by Speaker

	Teacher	Student
Teacher	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Tucker (n=655)	4.3 (6.4)	1.7 (1.2)
Phillips (n=223)	5.1 (7.0)	1.4 (1.4)
Whitman (n=833)	2.1 (1.9)	1.1 (0.5)
Connelly (n=244)	5.4 (10.5)	1.4 (1.3)
Allen (n=368)	3.2 (3.0)	1.3 (1.1)
Johnson (n=446)	3.8 (5.5)	1.4 (1.0)
TOTAL (n=2769)	3.7 (5.8)	1.4 (1.0)

Tucker: Comparing people to plants. OK. Using what technique?

Student: Simile.

Tucker: Simile. OK. There's that key word "like" in there. (Reads from text.) OK, in that regard, plants are like people. Are there more, perhaps some ways in which plants are not like people?

Student: They don't have feelings.

Tucker: No feelings. Interesting simile, but to what extent does the simile actually apply? He's given us three specific criterion here....

We will be looking more closely at the qualitative differences between teachers' and students' contributions to discussion in the section which follows, but for the present this excerpt may suggest the strong quantitative differences in those contributions. Tucker speaks more frequently than any individual student; the floor is returned to him after each student's turn. More important, perhaps, his turns are significantly longer than students' turns. Students offer only a sentence, sometimes only a single word, in their turns, while Tucker typically repeats and then elaborates upon what students have said, adding detail and raising related questions. We will turn now to examine more specifically the language and content of participants' contributions to classroom discussion.

The Language of Discussions

General Patterns

In order to determine the basic linguistic patterns of the classroom discussions, each communication unit was coded within one of four major categories: Direct, Inform, Question, and Respond. A fifth category included all remarks that could not be coded within major categories. Table 7 summarizes the relevant data for teachers and students.

As indicated in the table, there were on the average strong differences in the proportion of remarks made by teachers and students within each of the major categories. Across 25 classroom discussions, no student remarks were coded as directive in function, while 9.3 percent of teachers' remarks were so coded. The majority of students' remarks were informative (87.4 percent), while only about half (49.2 percent) of the teachers' remarks were intended to inform. In general, teachers were twice as likely as their students to ask questions when speaking (22.9 percent for teachers; 11.5 percent for students), and were much more likely than their students to respond to a previous contribution (18.6 percent for teachers; less than one percent for students). Less than one percent of teachers' and students' contributions were coded as Other.

These patterns generally held across the teachers, although there was variation within categories. The average percent of directive statements made by teachers ranged from 7.5 percent to 19.3 percent. The percentage of informative statements made by teachers ranged widely, from 20.3 percent to 62.2 percent, but the range for students' informative statements was smaller, varying from 80.0 to 93.2 percent. In the question category, teachers' percentages varied from 12.3 percent to 36.2 percent, while students averaged from 6.2 to 19.6 percent. It

Table 7

General Discourse Function

Percent of Units by Speaker

Classroom	n of units	Direct	Inform	Question	Respond	Other
Tucker						
Teacher	1385	2.1	60.8	19.7	16.9	0.5
Student	586	0.0	86.3	11.6	2.0	0.0
Phillips						
Teacher	602	18.3	42.5	20.1	19.1	0.0
Student	148	0.0	80.4	19.6	0.0	0.0
Whitman						
Teacher	816	7.5	20.3	36.2	36.0	0.0
Student	487	0.0	93.2	6.2	0.0	0.0
Connelly						
Teacher	587	19.3	62.2	12.3	6.3	0.0
Student	200	0.0	80.0	19.5	0.5	0.0
Allen						
Teacher	612	11.1	44.6	28.1	16.2	0.0
Student	236	0.0	88.1	11.0	0.4	0.4
Johnson						
Teacher	757	8.5	57.6	20.3	13.6	0.0
Student	335	0.0	87.8	11.6	0.6	0.0
Average						
Teacher	793	11.1	48.0	22.7	18.0	0.1
Student	332	0.0	86.0	13.2	0.1	0.1

was only in this category, and only in one teacher's class, that the general pattern of teachers and students' remarks did not hold. In Francis Connelly's class, students on the average asked more questions than the teacher (19.5 percent versus 12.3 percent)--a result of the special nature of the discussions Connelly held on the days he was observed (these discussions are examined in Appendix B). Finally, the percentage of teachers' remarks that responded to earlier contributions ranged from 6.3 percent to 36.0 percent; students' responses varied from 0 to 2 percent.

On the average, then, teachers' remarks ranged rather widely across the four language functions, while students' remarks were most frequently informative in purpose. We can see these patterns from a slightly different perspective by examining the proportions of functions served within speakers' turns. Table 8 summarizes the relevant information for teachers and students.

Within any given turn, the teachers were likely to respond to a previous remark (34 percent), make an informative statement (32.2 percent), and ask a question (27.3 percent). The generally similar percentages suggest that teachers addressed these three purposes rather equally when they held the floor; in a way, they constitute the basic, three-part structure of the teachers' turns during discussion. A little over six percent of the time, they would include a directive statement within their turn.

Students' turns, however, were dominated by an informative purpose. Just over 84 percent of their remarks within turns were informative, with most of the remainder (14.7 percent) devoted to asking questions. This pattern is, of course, consonant with the relative brevity of students' turns (just over one remark per turn). When they held the floor students were most likely to make a single informative remark or ask a single question.

We can see an example of these patterns in an excerpt from one of Carol Johnson's discussions of I Heard the Owl Call My Name. For homework, students had generated a list of images from the novel that they found especially powerful. Johnson begins the discussion by asking students to describe those images.

> Johnson: OK, well, we're here to talk about death and life, I suppose, in other ways and other terms, but through Margaret Craven and her voice, and, but we want to play a little bit first, we really want to use some of the images that you generated in your lists last night. So let's begin with those. What are the most powerful images for you in the work and we are, I'm hoping to help you begin to construct a final paper for this work and so that we will be concluded with it by Friday and move on to Ironweed next week, but that's what we're really doing today and we will continue to do a little bit of this on Friday as well in maybe a more structured way on Friday, but give me some of the images that are most vivid for you from this work.

Student: The eyes.

Johnson: The eyes, OK (writes on board).

Table 8

Mean Percent of Discourse Functions Within Turns

Mean Percent (SD)

	Direct		Inform		Question		Respond		Other	
	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student
Teacher										
Tucker	1.5	0.0	34.8	83.6	26.0	13.1	37.6	3.3	0.1	0.0
(n=1971)	(8.2)	(0.0)	(39.8)	(35.3)	(35.0)	(31.2)	(42.3)	(17.7)	(0.1)	(0.0)
Phillips	16.3	0.0	27.9	72.4	17.8	27.6	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
(n=750)	(28.6)	(0.0)	(33.6)	(49.9)	(25.2)	(44.9)	(40.6)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)
Whitman	5.4	0.0	14.9	91.8	31.7	8.3	47.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
(n=1303)	(17.6)	(0.0)	(29.3)	(27.1)	(36.9)	(27.1)	(42.2)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)
Connelly	11.6	0.0	58.8	72.1	17.1	27.2	12.5	0.1	0.0	0.0
(n=787)	(24.3)	(0.0)	(39.6)	(44.4)	(29.4)	(44.0)	(26.7)	(8.5)	(0.0)	(0.0)
Allen	5.3	0.0	35.4	87.4	34.6	11.5	24.7	0.1	0.0	0.5
(n=848)	(17.1)	(0.0)	(38.4)	(31.9)	(36.8)	(30.6)	(36.1)	(7.4)	(0.0)	(7.4)
Johnson	8.6	0.0	38.8	83.7	26.7	15.4	25.9	0.1	0.0	0.0
(n=1902)	(21.6)	(0.0)	(39.4)	(26.7)	(35.7)	(35.9)	(39.1)	(9.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)
TOTAL	6.5	0.0	32.2	84.1	27.3	14.7	34.0	1.2	0.1	0.1
(n=6751)	(19.0)	(0.0)	(38.4)	(35.8)	(35.0)	(34.6)	(40.9)	(10.6)	(2.0)	(2.7)

Student: thought all the elements of nature were really important, but like animals and the foliage and things like that.

Student: Water.

Johnson: All right, let's be specific because it will help in the long run. OK, water. The animals, which ones?

Student: The owl. The fish.

Student: They also talked about the killer whale.

Johnson: The killer whale.

Student: The wolf.

Student: The bear.

Johnson: OK, I'm going to ask you to recall...remember the myths that are attached to those, OK? Maybe we'll go back to those and just, in a short while, but....OK, some other images.

Student: Seasons.

Student: Colors.

Student: Mashed turnips.

Johnson: I hadn't thought about that, it seems to be such a little minor detail, but it's interesting, we can use it. OK, I missed something someone said, religion.

Student: (Inaudible).

Johnson: What was connected with, if religion and ritual go hand in hand in your mind, given particular scenes in the story, what objects symbolized their ritual?

Student: Holding the lamb.

Johnson: Holding the lamb?

Student: Christ.

Johnson: OK, I couldn't remember that. The masks. The picture you're referring to really aren't you? Christ was depicted as holding the lamb, the eyes if I'm remembering correctly from the very beginning of the book. OK, anything else.

Student: (Inaudible)...eagle on it.

Johnson: All right, again, I think all of these perhaps, the objects in the church maybe let's say. OK, that's good. Now would someone do me a favor, please, and copy these down in a list for me so that I can take it away from class today.....

We should note from the start that the purpose of this activity is to generate a list of images, to brainstorm, to get a set of issues on the floor for later discussion. Thus the abbreviated turns taken by students are understandable. But if we consider the excerpt as a whole, we can ask what purposes were served by the contributions of Johnson and her students.

It seems clear that Johnson has provided the context in which the remarks of the students will be meaningful. Almost all of the students' contributions consist of incomplete sentences, nouns without predicates, that can be understood only within the framework that the teacher has constructed. By the very nature of the activity, students are under little obligation to elaborate upon their contributions or to reason further about them. They need only to make their suggestions in the form of informative statements. It is the teacher's role to weave the disparate elements into coherent discourse ("if religion and ritual go hand in hand...what objects symbolized their ritual"), to provide background information ("The masks. The picture you're referring to really, aren't you"), and to set the stage for further discussion ("I'm going to ask you to recall...remember the myths attached to those, OK? Maybe we'll go back to those...in a short while"). To accomplish these multiple tasks, Johnson must sometimes direct ("would someone do me a favor please"), sometimes inform ("Christ was depicted as holding the lamb"), sometimes question ("The animals, which ones?), and sometimes respond ("Holding the lamb?"; "OK, that's good"). In at least one of her turns, we see three purposes working together:

Response: "OK, I couldn't remember that. The masks. The picture you're referring to really, aren't you?"

Inform: "Christ was depicted as holding the lamb, the eyes, at the very beginning of the book."

Question: "OK, anything else?"

During discussions, then, the teachers were called upon to serve several purposes with their language, while students were usually asked only to inform. We will now look more closely at the nature of the informative statements made by teachers and students in the discussions.

Informational Statements

To examine the kinds of information students and teachers exchanged in classroom discussions, each informative remark was first coded for the focus of information: Classroom logistics, Reading or quoting from text, or Instructional focus. Those statements that were coded as instructional were further analyzed for knowledge sources drawn upon and the kind of reasoning employed. Table 9 summarizes the data on the basic focus of the informative statements made by teachers and students.

Table 9

Nature of Information
Percent of Units by Speaker

Classroom	n of units	Logistics	Read	Instructional Focus
Tucker				
Teacher	842	25.1	15.4	59.5
Student	506	6.7	1.4	91.7
Phillips				
Teacher	256	35.2	0.8	64.1
Student	119	8.4	7.6	84.0
Whitman				
Teacher	166	43.4	3.0	53.6
Student	454	6.4	1.5	91.9
Connelly				
Teacher	365	14.5	4.1	81.4
Student	160	7.5	0.0	92.5
Allen				
Teacher	273	40.3	1.5	58.2
Student	208	4.3	1.9	93.8
Johnson				
Teacher	436	30.7	30.5	38.8
Student	294	5.8	2.7	91.5
Average				
Teacher	390	31.5	12.4	58.9
Student	290	6.5	2.0	93.5

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The majority of teachers' and students' statements focused on instructional issues (58.9 percent for teachers; 93.5 percent for students). Teachers were far more likely than students to make statements about classroom logistics (31.5 percent for teachers; 6.5 percent for students), and were more likely to read or quote from the text under discussion (12.4 percent for teachers; 2 percent for students). Given the obligation to orchestrate instruction for their students, it is not surprising that teachers so often addressed logistical issues such as homework and assignments when speaking.

More interesting are the kinds of knowledge teachers and students drew upon when making informative statements about the issues under discussion. Table 10 summarizes the relevant data.

On the average, teachers and students drew most frequently on knowledge about the text during discussions: teachers focused on the text just over 50 percent of the time; students 66 percent of the time. Neither teachers nor students focused often on personal or autobiographical knowledge (5.8 percent for teachers; 8.2 percent for students), although there was some variation here (Allen drew on such knowledge less than one percent of the time, Tucker almost 10 percent, and Johnson's students employed autobiographical knowledge almost 25 percent of the time in their discussions). Teachers were more likely than their students to make statements about the biography of an author or the genre in which the author was working (7.4 percent for teachers; 1.6 percent for students). Teachers were also more likely to make statements that drew on more general sources of knowledge (21.5 percent for teachers; 12.8 percent for students). Finally, teachers more often than students referred to previous instruction (6.2 percent for teachers; 2.8 percent for students).

If participants' statements most frequently focused on the text during discussions, we can additionally ask what kinds of reasoning they employed in making their informative remarks. Table 11 summarizes the data for teachers and students.

In general, teachers were more likely to summarize or describe information than were their students (64 percent for teachers; 39.6 percent for students), while students were more likely to interpret information than were their teachers (43.5 percent for students; 27.9 percent for teachers). Neither group was likely to evaluate (5 percent for teachers; 9.2 percent for students) or to generalize (less than 1 percent for teachers; 1 percent for students). A large proportion (65 percent) of student statements were coded as Other in Francis Connelly's class since he was orchestrating a role playing activity (Appendix B).

Taken together, the analyses of knowledge source and kinds of reasoning in participants' informative statements provide another angle of vision on the teachers' and students' contributions to discussions. Teachers most often offered descriptive statements when they spoke, drawing on the text or more general sources of knowledge, perhaps to set the stage or to provide the context for the interpretive work of the discussion. Students, on the other hand, most often offered those interpretations when they held the floor. Though they also made descriptive statements, usually about the text, the most striking finding here is the relative proportion of descriptive and interpretive statements made by teachers and students during discussion.

We will see some of the reasons for these patterns in the analyses of the questions that teachers and students asked in the course of discussions.

Table 10

Knowledge Source for Informative Statements
Percent of Units by Speaker

Classroom	n of units	Personal	Text	Context	General	Instruction	Other
Tucker							
Teacher	842	9.8	50.4	4.5	29.7	4.9	0.6
Student	506	7.6	77.1	0.4	13.5	0.6	0.8
Phillips							
Teacher	256	6.7	57.9	6.7	5.5	18.9	4.3
Student	119	5.0	82.2	0.0	3.0	5.9	4.0
Whitman							
Teacher	166	3.3	61.1	13.3	10.0	12.2	0.0
Student	454	5.3	79.2	4.5	2.9	8.1	0.0
Connelly							
Teacher	365	0.3	28.3	13.1	19.5	2.4	36.4
Student	160	0.0	13.5	0.0	1.4	0.	85.1
Allen							
Teacher	273	0.6	51.8	4.4	38.8	4.4	0.0
Student	208	1.0	34.9	1.0	63.1	0.0	0.0
Johnson							
Teacher	436	9.5	75.1	6.5	5.8	3.0	0.6
Student	294	24.9	71.4	1.5	0.7	0.7	0.7
Average							
Teacher	390	5.8	50.4	7.4	21.5	6.2	8.5
Student	290	8 2	66.0	1.6	12.8	2.8	8.5

Table 11

Kinds of Reasoning for Informative Statements
Percent of Units by Speaker

Classroom	n of units	Summary	Interpretation	Evaluation	Generalization	Other
Tucker						
Teacher	842	42.4	45.6	5.1	1.6	5.2
Student	506	31.6	59.8	6.5	0.2	1.8
Phillips						
Teacher	256	69.5	25.8	4.9	0.6	1.2
Student	119	40.6	49.5	9.9	0.0	0.0
Whitman						
Teacher	166	74.4	20.0	5.6	0.0	0.0
Student	454	39.5	49.0	11.5	0.0	0.0
Connelly						
Teacher	365	94.9	3.0	0.7	0.3	1.0
Student	160	29.7	2.0	3.4	0.0	64.9
Allen						
Teacher	273	70.6	14.4	13.1	0.0	1.9
Student	208	69.7	10.8	19.0	0.0	0.5
Johnson						
Teacher	436	57.4	40.2	0.6	1.8	0.0
Student	294	36.8	50.6	5.9	6.7	0.0
Average						
Teacher	390	64.0	27.9	5.0	0.1	2.5
Student	290	39.6	43.5	9.2	1.0	6.6

Questions

To determine the kinds of questions asked by participants during discussion, each question was first analyzed for focus: classroom logistics or instructional. Those questions coded as instructional were further analyzed for sources of knowledge and kinds of reasoning elicited. Table 12 summarizes the data for the focus of questions.

The majority of questions asked by teachers and students were directly relevant to the issues under discussion (83.1 percent for teachers; 73.2 percent for students). Students were more likely than teachers to ask about classroom management issues, such as homework (26.8 percent for students; 16.9 percent for teachers).

But if participants' questions were largely instructional in focus, we can additionally examine the sources of knowledge those questions asked auditors to draw upon and the kinds of reasoning they asked auditors to employ. Tables 13 and 14 summarize the relevant data.

On the average, teachers and students were most likely to ask questions that elicited knowledge about the text under discussion (72.9 percent for teachers; 56 percent for students), although the relative proportion of teachers' and students' questions about the text varied from classroom to classroom. In three of the classes (Tucker's, Phillips' and Whitman's) teachers asked proportionally fewer such questions than their students, and in two of the classes (Allen's and Johnson's) students asked proportionally more. Connelly's class again represents a special case (Appendix B).

Participants were less likely to ask questions that drew upon personal knowledge (4.8 for teachers; 2.4 percent for students), knowledge about context (2.8 percent for teachers; 1.2 percent for students), general knowledge (12.1 percent for teachers; 17.5 percent for students), or forms of knowledge not represented in the analysis and coded as Other (5.9 percent for teachers; 22.9 percent for students). Again, however, these general averages mask some variation within individual classrooms. (In Allen's class, for example, almost 72 percent of the students' questions were framed to elicit general knowledge, while in Connelly's classroom, students' questions during the role playing exercise were all coded as Other.)

As indicated in Table 14, the kinds of reasoning elicited by participants' questions were largely summary and interpretation; 37.4 percent of the teachers' questions and just over 50 percent of the students' questions were coded as summary, while 53.5 percent of the teachers' questions and 39.8 percent of the students' questions were coded as interpretive. Taken together, these two categories represented over 80 percent of the questions asked by both teachers and students, and the general pattern held across each of the classrooms studied.

General Patterns of Statements and Questions

With these trends before us, it is now possible to examine more specifically the kinds of contributions made by the teachers and students during the classroom discussions. We can contrast, for example, the patterns in sources of knowledge and kinds of reasoning for both statements made and questions asked by participants in the course of those discussions. Table 15 summarizes these contrasts.

Table 12

Focus of Questions
Percent of Units by Speaker

Classroom	n of units	Logistics	Instruction
Tucker			
Teacher	273	26.7	73.2
Student	68	14.7	85.3
Phillips			
Teacher	121	28.9	71.1
Student	29	17.2	82.8
Whitman			
Teacher	295	4.1	95.9
Student	30	43.3	56.7
Connelly			
Teacher	72	11.1	88.9
Student	39	7.7	92.3
Allen			
Teacher	172	20.3	79.7
Student	26	19.2	80.8
Johnson			
Teacher	154	13.6	86.4
Student	39	66.7	33.3
Average			
Teacher	181	16.9	83.1
Student	39	26.8	73.2

Table 13

Knowledge Source for Instructional Questions
Percent of Units by Speaker

Classroom	n of units	Personal	Text	Context	General	Other
Tucker						
Teacher	204	4.4	70.1	0.5	23.5	1.5
Student	56	1.8	78.6	0.0	19.6	0.0
Phillips						
Teacher	84	0.0	89.3	1.2	1.2	3.6
Student	24	0.0	91.7	0.0	8.3	0.0
Whitman						
Teacher	283	2.8	79.5	7.4	4.2	6.0
Student	16	0.0	87.5	6.3	0.0	6.3
Connelly						
Teacher	64	0.0	43.8	10.9	4.7	40.6
Student	36	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Allen						
Teacher	136	1.5	61.8	0.7	35.3	0.7
Student	21	0.0	23.8	4.8	71.4	0.0
Johnson						
Teacher	132	12.9	78.0	0.8	0.0	2.3
Student	13	23.1	61.5	0.0	7.7	9.7
Average						
Teacher	151	4.8	72.9	2.8	12.1	5.9
Student	28	2.4	56.0	1.2	17.5	22.9

Table 14

Kinds of Reasoning for Instructional Questions
Percent of Units by Speaker

Classroom	n of units	Summary	Interpretation	Evaluation	Generalization	Other
Tucker						
Teacher	204	16.7	77.9	2 4	0.0	2 9
Student	56	19.6	67.8	5 3	3.5	3.5
Phillips						
Teacher	84	21.4	60.7	17 6	0.0	0.0
Student	24	33 3	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Whitman						
Teacher	283	39.6	55.5	4.9	0 0	0.0
Student	16	37 5	56.2	6.2	0 0	0 0
Connelly						
Teacher	64	93 7	6.3	0 0	0 0	0 0
Student	36	100 0	0 0	0.0	0 0	0 0
Allen						
Teacher	136	51 5	27 9	19.8	0 0	0 1
Student	21	76.2	4.8	14 3	0 0	4 8
Johnson						
Teacher	132	33.3	56 1	6 1	4 5	0 0
Student	13	53 8	15 4	7.6	23 1	0 0
Average						
Teacher	151	37.4	53.5	7 6	0.1	0 1
Student	28	50.1	39.8	4.8	3 0	1 2

Table 15

Comparison of Knowledge Source and Kind of Reasoning for Teachers' and Students' Statements and Questions

Percent

	Informative Statements		Questions	
	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student
Knowledge Source				
Personal	5.8	8.2	4.8	2.4
Text	50.4	66.0	72.9	56.0
Context	7.4	1.6	2.8	1.2
General	21.5	12.8	12.1	17.5
Kind of Reasoning				
Summary	64.0	39.6	37.4	50.1
Interpretation	27.9	43.5	53.4	39.8
Evaluation	5.0	9.2	7.6	4.8
Generalization	0.1	1.0	0.1	3.0

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Perhaps the most obvious finding here is that the pattern of students' informative remarks reflects quite closely the pattern of teachers' questions. Teachers' questions were largely focused on the text (almost 73 percent), and students' statements were generally focused on the text (66 percent). 37.4 percent of teachers' questions asked for description or summary, and 39.6 percent of the students' remarks were descriptive in nature. 53.4 percent of teachers' questions asked for interpretation, and 43.5 percent of the students' remarks were interpretive. While these general averages again mask individual variation, and while such data do not indicate that the teachers' questions completely controlled the nature of student answers, the trend, at least, seems clear: students' informative remarks in these discussions were reflective of, and often shaped by, the questions asked by teachers. Whatever else teachers' questions may have done, they seem to have established a framework that encouraged particular forms of language and particular ways of considering the texts under discussion.

A second general pattern here provides further suggestions on how those frameworks were constructed. If we contrast teachers' informative statements with their questions, we see that though teachers drew on textual knowledge just 50 percent of the time in their statements, they elicited textual knowledge over 70 percent of the time in their questions. And while they drew on general sources of knowledge over 20 percent of the time in their statements, they elicited answers that drew on such knowledge just 12 percent of the time in their questions. On the other hand, teachers were more likely to describe than to interpret in making statements (over 60 percent versus under 30 percent), but they were more likely to elicit interpretive answers than descriptive answers when asking questions (53.4 percent versus 37.4 percent). In short, the basic pattern appears to be one of teachers using their statements to provide a descriptive background or context, drawing on textual or general knowledge, and then asking interpretive questions. Students, in their statements, most often provided the interpretive answers to those questions.

We can see more clearly how teachers made descriptive statements to provide a background in this excerpt from Francis Connelly's class discussion of The Grapes of Wrath (a discussion that took place before the role-playing exercise discussed in Appendix B) Participants here are discussing the character of Jim Casey.

Connelly: Who's the first one who sees (Casey). Through whose eyes do we meet him?

Student: (Inaudible) Tom Joad.

Connelly: Through Tom Joad, the main character. So through Tom we meet the preacher. And they talk. What do you know about the preacher? Maybe I shouldn't call him that. Why not? Why shouldn't I call him the preacher?

Student: He has strange ideas.

Connelly. He has strange ideas, a little strange.

Even though Connelly asks two questions in this exchange, we can already see how he uses his turns to flesh out the students' responses, providing more descriptive detail than the students offer. Tom Joad, for example, becomes "Tom Joad, the main character." A little later, Connelly continues to ask questions about Casey:

Connelly: He says I'm not a preacher any more. Don't regard me as one. Why not?

Student: (Inaudible).

Connelly: He what?

Student: Because he's been with women and....

Connelly: Because he sleeps with women, he thinks he's, he thinks he's a hypocrite to say he's a minister or preacher. OK, that's a bit of it. What else? He doesn't want people to regard him as a minister. How do you find that out about him?

Student: He said it.

Connelly: He said it. 'I don't wanna be a preacher. Not a preacher any more.' Tom said, 'I remember you. You're the preacher man. You used to visit town when I was a boy, giv'n those hell-fire sermons in the tent. Got everybody jumpin' up and down. Said Alleluia! I been saved! or I'm a sinner. Come up front and be baptized with your sins.' In the front of the...Where did he baptize them?

Student: In the church.

Connelly: Not in the church. In the ditch by the side of the road. Where there'd be some water, you know, caught from the rain. It's not exactly an area of lakes and rivers where he is. He baptized them in a ditch by the side of the road. Yes? And he had a good crowd of them. But he stopped doing that now, he explains to Tom, because there was some hypocrisy in it, he felt. There was something that wasn't right. And yet he still, he talked a lot, didn't he? He talks a great deal. He's the first one to say that. 'Oh yea, I talk a lot. I'm not a preacher any more, but I still talk a lot.' Now what else does he do around the store besides talking? We meet him several times sitting behind the house while there was a meeting. What was he doing? All by his lonesome, he thinks. He's thinking. 'I was thinking, I was puzzling it out. I was thinkin' about it.' Time and again that refrain comes back to us. Um, what's his name, that preacher?

Though Connelly asks few questions here, the general pattern of his turns seems clear. He is, in a sense, retelling part of the story--the part relevant to the character the class is discussing. He quotes from the text and summarizes the narrative in ways that contextualize the discussion. The students' statements, while few, are woven into that context, becoming a part of the summary that Connelly himself is providing.

However, teachers did more than inform and question in the course of discussions. A sizable proportion of their remarks (almost 20 percent) were intended to respond to the contributions of students. We will turn now to the analysis of those responses.

Responses

Students' responses were so few in number (less than one percent of their total remarks) that they were not analyzed further. Teachers' responses were coded within seven categories. Table 16 summarizes the relevant data.

Perhaps the most surprising trend here is how seldom teachers' responses directly evaluated the quality of their students' contributions. Earlier studies of classroom discourse (e.g., Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1987) (studies largely conducted in elementary classrooms) had found such evaluative responses pervasive--part of a typical three-turn sequence of teacher question/student answer/teacher evaluation. In the discussions examined here, however, teachers' evaluations comprised less than 15 percent of the total responses.

More typical of teachers' responses in these discussions was an effort to restate what students had said. Such restatements comprised about 35 percent of the total responses. Other kinds of response occurred with generally equal frequency: acknowledgement, 13.6 percent; evaluation, 14.5 percent; requests for explanation or clarification, 16.1 percent, and efforts to elaborate upon students' contributions, 19.2 percent.

Taken as a whole, this pattern of teacher response helps complete the portrait of teachers' and students' contributions that has thus far emerged. The teachers' responses pulled students' remarks into the ongoing discourse. By acknowledging them, repeating them, or elaborating upon them, teachers wove the varying statements and questions offered by students into a coherent oral "text" whose organization might quickly break down were it not for the explicit, transitional purpose served by the responses.

We can see this transitional purpose more clearly in several responses offered by teachers in the discussions. The first is from Grace Whitman's class discussion of Great Expectations:

Student. It's hard to read for Pip, because most of the time Pip is talking in the narrative. Like if you go through the narrative that what he's saying and you've got to pick a couple of words that he's saying.

Whitman: I gave you a hard task, didn't I? A kind of dramatic scene where they didn't show Pip's words in exact quotations. He uses what we call an indirect statement, 'I said that,' and you have to do the transposing. And I realize that's a real challenge. We'll see how you got that worked today.

Here Whitman uses a student's particular problem as an opportunity to teach something about narrative. She introduces the notion of indirect statements in narrative at the same time she validates the difficulty of the student's task. We can see another variation on the pattern in the following excerpt from Kevin Tucker's discussion of Being There.

Table 16

Nature of Teacher Response

Percent of Units

Teacher	n of units	Acknowledge	Restate	Positive	Negative	Ask for Explanation	Elaboration	Other
Tucker	234	35.5	14.5	18.8	0.0	14.1	17.1	0.0
Phillips	115	4.3	28.7	23.5	1.7	20.9	19.1	1.7
Whitman	294	3.4	55.4	3.1	1.0	17.7	19.9	0.0
Connelly	37	5.4	45.9	8.1	2.7	10.8	27.0	0.0
Allen	99	17.2	36.4	17.2	1.0	12.1	16.2	0.0
Johnson	103	2.9	26.2	27.2	0.0	16.5	23.3	3.9
TOTAL	147	13.6	35.1	4.5	0.1	16.1	19.2	0.1

Student: So that is why he focuses almost entirely on the television because that's his only link to the outside? To things that....

Tucker: Does that seem reasonable?

Student: Yeah. But would the Old Man force that, not force, but...brought that about?

Tucker: If he continued to reinforce the idea in Chance's mind over all these years, and he started when he was at his most impressionable, what else is...is he to know if he has no other contact? And he lives in that dark fear that if he does anything else he'll be sent away. The words of the Old Man. I'm curious about one thing, though. Did you give any thought at all, out of curiosity, to the whole coming of Chance here? And what special interest the Old Man would have even to keep him on?

By providing a more elaborated version of a student's hypothesis about the Old Man here, Tucker not only clarifies the student's statement, he deepens its potential implications. In a sense, he interprets what the student is saying and then restates it in a way that allows him to ask the next question. A comparable pattern obtains in Allen's discussion of Antigone.

Allen: What happened to Jocaste?

Students: (in unison) She killed herself.

Allen: All she does is exit, goes to her room, and commits suicide. No focus on the woman. The focus is on the man throughout the myth....For a while, the throne is passed to Creon, but our obvious questions would revolve around what characters?

Student: The kids.

Allen: Exactly what happens to Polyneices, Eteocles, Ismene, and Antigone? After all, they are the royal family that has encountered this bizarre situation that their father is also their brother and they are suddenly bereft of their mother....Creon steps in to take over for a while, but the wishes of his sons would inherit the throne. We must be talking about what kind of society?

Students: (in unison) Patriarchal.

Allen: Sure, patriarchal. The sons automatically inherit from the father.

Here Allen's response expands upon her students' one-word answers, providing a more developed background for the story. The responses let students know that their answers were acceptable, but they also used the answers as a point of departure for more teaching--in this case, as an opportunity to offer more detail about the characters and events in the

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In each of these excerpts, we can see one dimension of the roles generally assumed by teachers and students during discussions. In every case a student's remark was attended to, repeated or elaborated upon, and then made a part of the ongoing discussion. In each case, the teacher's response served at least two functions: it acknowledged the student's contribution as legitimate and helpful, but it also used the student's contribution as an occasion for more elaborated exposition. And it was the teacher's elaborated version of the student's remarks that became a transition to the next issue to be discussed.

The patterns of teachers' and students' contributions to the classroom discussions are complex, but several trends seem clear. It is to a more general examination of those trends that we will now turn.

General Discussion and Conclusion

The analyses reported here had two major purposes: 1) to examine teachers' and students' perspectives on the purposes served by classroom discussions and on the roles they respectively played during discussions, and 2) to examine the patterns of talk during classroom discussion, and more especially to analyze the kinds of knowledge that participants used and produced in the course of discussions. Several general patterns emerged from the study. These can be summarized as follows:

1) Teachers typically saw discussions as serving at least two major purposes and they saw themselves playing in discussions at least two roles which reflected those purposes. On the one hand, teachers felt discussions were an opportunity for "interaction," a chance for students' "self discovery," a time when "responses start to jump around the room." Given this goal, teachers were most likely to see themselves as "moderators" or "facilitators," making certain that everyone gets a chance to speak and maintaining an almost invisible presence. As Kevin Tucker put it, "If I do my job well,...by the time we reach the last major piece of fiction, I shouldn't even have to be in the room."

On the other hand, though, teachers also felt that discussions should "go somewhere," should stay "on track" and away from "irrelevancies." Given this goal, teachers were most likely to see themselves as "guides" who "structure" response in ways that lead to a deeper analysis of the text. They would ask questions that would help their students "see" certain things about a text or "take away" certain kinds of knowledge. This stated purpose suggests that the teachers might always have "to be in the room," for it is their knowledge and expertise that shapes, guides, and structures the discourse toward the ends they have set for the class.

Students in large measure shared their teachers' sense that the purpose of discussion was two-fold and that the role of the teacher was both to elicit and orchestrate their own contributions. The students felt that they should respond, but that they should do so in a relevant way: it was not enough simply to say what they thought; they had to blend their responses into the patterns and opportunities presented by the discussion at any given time.

How were the intentions of participants realized in the discussions themselves? The analyses of classroom talk suggested the following patterns:

2) In terms of the sheer quantity of talk, teachers dominated most of the large-group discussions we observed. On the average, the floor was returned to the teacher after each student's contribution, and, again on the average, teachers' turns were two to five times longer than students' turns.

3) Teachers used their turns for a number of purposes. At times they directed or explicitly orchestrated classroom activities, but most of the time they informed, questioned, and responded to students' contributions in about equal measure. Students, on the other hand, usually made about one remark per turn, and that remark was almost always informative in purpose.

4) Students' informative remarks were largely reflective of the kinds of questions teachers asked, and both questions and statements were dominated by the description and interpretation of textual information.

5) Teachers used their responses to students' contributions to weave the discussion as a whole into a coherent and sustained examination of two or three general topics. Students' contributions were not generally evaluated individually as answers to specific questions, as in a recitation. Rather, those contributions were most often repeated, questioned, or elaborated upon in ways that pulled them into the ongoing discussion. The discussions stayed "on track" largely because teachers used their responses to students' remarks as occasions for making transitions from one turn to another, from one question to another. It was the teacher, finally, who controlled the direction, the pace, and the organization in most of the discussions we observed.

In a very important sense, these patterns are not surprising. On the one hand, virtually every previous study of classroom discourse (e.g., Bellack et al., 1966; Barnes, 1969; Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1988) has documented the controlling features of teacher talk and the sheer quantity of that talk during most classroom discussions. If anything, the results from this study suggest a shift away from the "persistence of the recitation" (Hoetker & Ahlbrand, 1969) as a central pattern of classroom discourse, for here teachers seldom asked purely factual questions and seldom simply evaluated their students' answers.

On the other hand, we should not be surprised by the centrality of questions and remarks that focused on the text under study and that emphasized the description and interpretation of that text. Purves (1981) has documented the persistence of an "academic" approach to literature in American high schools, and the long-standing influence of the New Criticism (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 1972) and the long-standing strategy of "close reading" as an instructional tool (Culler, 1981) suggest that we would probably find comparable patterns in many literature classrooms. Indeed, given the intelligence with which the teachers in this study articulated their goals for discussion, it is likely that the classes we observed were representative of some of the best instruction in literature to be found.

But those classes were representative of a certain kind of instruction, and the patterns we found there are surprising, and to that extent troubling, only when we consider some of the goals and purposes the teachers themselves expressed. We seldom, for example, found evidence that discussions were moving toward a point where teachers could remove themselves, disappear, and "watch it happen." We seldom saw evidence that students were moving much beyond answering their teachers' questions (however carefully those questions may have been framed).

Rather, the general pattern seemed to be one of students' contributing to an interpretive agenda implied by those questions. Their responses tended to be relatively brief and unelaborated; their questions relatively few. Both individually and as a group, they cooperated with the teacher in organizing and sustaining an examination of the text, but the direction and content of that examination was usually in the teacher's control. The students' role was to help develop an interpretation, rarely to construct or defend an interpretation of their own. While the goal expressed by teachers was to help students toward a point where they could individually develop a reasoned response to the text, we saw in the classrooms we observed few occasions where students could practice such interpretive skills--at least during large-group discussions.

That last qualification is a reminder that the questions addressed in this study represent only a small number of the issues that must be examined if we are to know more about the language teachers and students use to discuss literature. Those issues include:

1) *The patterns of talk during small group discussions of literature.* Clearly there will be a shift in roles when no teacher is present to guide the discourse in specific directions. How is that shift reflected in the quantity and quality of student talk about the text under study?

2) *The patterns of talk in classrooms representing a range of grade and ability levels.* There was little variety in the classrooms we studied here. All of them included students of a generally high academic ability; all but one included students who were in the last two years of secondary school. And yet the curriculum in literature stretches arguably from the elementary school years into students' experience in college, and it is often designed for students who will not go on to college at all. What are the shifts in teachers' and students' contributions to discussion as we move across ability levels and across grade levels? Are there changes in the nature of classroom talk that reflect changes in the kinds of text studied?

3) *The relationship of classroom discussion to school writing.* If it is the case that large-group discussion provides few opportunities for students to construct and elaborate upon their own interpretations of literature, does writing provide a more practical way of accomplishing that task? Do teachers and students view writing as an occasion for such independent analysis or is it an extension of classroom talk--another opportunity for students to answer their teachers' questions?

It is only by answering these and related questions, of course, that we can begin to address still larger issues: What does it mean to know a literary text? What does it mean to teach it? Such questions shape our continuing research agenda.

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APPENDIX A

Sample of Coded Transcript

An excerpt from Joe Allen's second class discussion of Antigone:

Allen: What's the name of the queen? (Question/Text/Describe)

Student: Jocaste. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Allen: I notice that you didn't have her name on the board yesterday on the list of women you admire. (Inform/Previous class/Describe)

As you look at this story, Jocaste is widowed. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Her first husband had been king of Thebes. (Inform/Text/Describe)

She loses him. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Oedipus shows up in town. (Inform/Text/Describe)

She marries him. (Inform/Text/Describe)

They have no children. (Inform/Text/Describe)

And as a result, does anyone remember what happens to the town? (Question/Text/Describe)

Student: They have problems. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Allen: Yes, all of a sudden the gods seem to be punishing them because he has married his mother. (Respond/Elaboration)

And so Jocaste is the mother of Oedipus. (Inform/Text/Describe)

According to legend, they have four children. (Inform/Context/Describe)

Do we have that on the sheet? (Question/Logistics)

Students: Yes (in unison). (Inform/Logistics)
Allen: Antigone, Ismene, Polyneices, and Eteocles, that's four George. (Inform/Context/Describe)

When we talked about that originally, we said that the relationship of Oedipus to Antigone is what? (Question/Previous class/Describe)

Student: Brother. (Inform/Previous class/Describe)

Allen: And? (Question/Previous class/Describe)

Student: Father. (Inform/Previous class/Describe)

Allen: So we have this perverse relationship, in that, Oedipus is the father of Antigone, Ismene, Polyneices, Etocles, and is also their brother since Jocaste is his mother as well as theirs. (Inform/Text/Describe)

In the whole story, the only thing we hear about Jocaste is that she married Oedipus. (Inform/Text/Describe)

She had the children. (Inform/Text/Describe)

And then when they find out the truth, the focus is on Oedipus. (Inform/Text/Describe)

What happened to him? (Question/Text/Describe)

Student: He gouged out his eyes (in unison). (Inform/Text/Describe)

Allen: What happened to Jocaste? (Question/Text/Describe)

Student: She killed herself (in unison). (Inform/Text/Describe)

Allen: All she does is exit, goes to her room and commits suicide. (Respond/Elaboration)

No focus on the woman. (Inform/Text/Describe)

The focus is on the man throughout the myth. (Inform/Text/Describe)

In the play we are going to start today, we are going to take a look at people who are going to pick up the pieces now that Jocaste is dead and Oedipus has gouged out his eyes and handed over the throne. (Inform/Text/Describe)

For awhile the throne is passed on to Creon. (Inform/Text/Describe)

But our obvious questions would revolve around what character? (Question/Text/Interpret)

Student: The kids. (Inform/Text/Interpret)

Allen: Exactly what happens to Polyneices, Eteocles, Ismene, and Antigone? (Respond/Elaboration)

After all, they are the royal family that has encountered his bizarre situation--that their father is also their brother and they are suddenly bereft of their mother. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Oedipus does leave town. (Inform/Text/Describe)

And he wanders for the rest of his life to atone for what he has done. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Creon steps in to take over for awhile. (Inform/Text/Describe)

But the wishes of his sons would inherit the throne. (Inform/Text/Describe)

We must be talking about what kind of society? (Question/Text/Interpretation).

Students: Patriarchal (in unison). (Inform/Text/Interpretation)

Allen: Sure, patriarchal. (Respond/Restatement)

The sons automatically inherit from the father (Respond/Elaboration)

The problem is being twins, they can't decide who should rule. (Inform/Text/Describe)

They come up with a compromise. (Inform/Text/Describe)

They will rule on alternate years. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Eteocles will be king for a year and then he will step down and give the throne to Polyneices. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Can you see a problem with that kind of arrangement? (Question/Text/Interpret)

Sound like a reasonable solution? (Question/Text/Interpret)

Student: They may have different ideas. (Inform/Text/Interpret)

Allen: OK, if they have different philosophies of government, that's going to be difficult for the kingdom. (Respond/Elaborate)

Since it is a patriarchal kingdom, they will follow the will of the leader. (Inform/Text/Describe)

I mean, we do it theoretically every four years, so it's possible. (Inform/General/Describe)

Any other problems? (Question/Text/Interpret)

Student. One of them could be power hungry? (Inform/Text/Interpret)

Allen: Yes, and that's what happens. (Respond/Restatement)

As Kathy said, one of them could be power hungry. (Respond/Restatement)

Eteocles decides at the end of the year he doesn't want to step down. (Inform/Text/Describe).

He liked being king. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Doesn't want to wait a whole year, so he refuses. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Tells Polyneices, "Too bad, I'm king." (Inform/Text/Describe)

"Try and do something about it." (Inform/Text/Describe)

Polyneices does. (Inform/Text/Describe)

He raises an army, goes to Argos, and brings the army back against Thebes to take the throne which is rightfully his. (Inform/Text/Describe)

In the fighting, the two brothers encounter each other and in fact, kill each other in hand-to-hand combat. (Inform/Text/Describe)

So we have Eteocles dead, Polyneices dead. (Inform/Text/Describe)

Who's going to rule Thebes? (Question/Text/Interpret)

Who's going to rule Thebes? Antigone? Ismene? (Question/Text/Interpret)

Student: Creon. (Inform/Text/Interpret)

Allen: Creon. Why, Joe? (Respond/Request for Elaboration)

Why not the two sisters? (Question/Text/Interpret)

They're in the.... (Uncoded)

Student: Patriarchal society. (Inform/Text/Interpret)

Allen: Sure, it's a patriarchal society.... (Respond/Restatement)

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APPENDIX B

Patterns in Francis Connelly's Classroom Discussions

In order to help students understand the plight of the Joad family in The Grapes of Wrath, Francis Connelly employed two role playing activities that the coding system was not designed to analyze. In the first activity, students were to assume that they were, like the Joads, about to begin a journey to California. Connelly asked them to list the personal possessions they would take with them, and to "sell" their other possessions to a group of "buyers" that Connelly designated from the class. In the second activity, they were to take on the role of a character from the novel and engage in a hypothetical conversation with another student, who was taking on another role. Here is one simulated conversation between two students portraying Ma and Pa Joad:

Ma: Tell me, how are you and Al holdin' up with that there car?

Pa: Well, the car's doin' OK. We'll be lucky if we have enough gas to get to California though. It'll be rough. We should make it though.

Ma: Do you think it's gonna take us all the way to California?

Pa: I don't know. We'll have to make some stops along the way, and we'll have to pick up some extra gas. The engine's holdin' out OK, though. It's gonna be tough with all the people in the car. It'll be heavy. How's ah, everybody holdin' up. I heard Rosasharon's havin' a pretty tough time.

Ma: Yea, well, she's worried about her baby, but she'll be all right.

Pa: Well, that's good. I know Pa's holdin' up OK. He's gonna be a big help to us on the trip because Al and I could hold it up, we thought.

Ma: Yeah. He's workin' hard. Everybody's workin' hard together. We all have to get to California.

Pa: Ya know, Mrs. Wilson doesn't look too good back there.

Ma: Well, we'll see what we can do about her. I've been talkin' to her, and she's not feelin' very well, but we'll see what we can do.

Pa: Well, how are you holdin' up? I haven't heard or talked to you about...

Ma: I'm, I'm doin' fine. The kids are good. I'm takin' care of the kids and everybody's holdin' their own, pullin' their weight, and we'll get to California.

Pa: Well, that's good....

Because of the special, hypothetical nature of these activities, it was impossible to code statements and questions within the major categories provided by the system of analysis. Thus, the statements made and questions asked during the role playing activities were coded as Other.