Capturing the Shift:
Interviews During Pivotal Covid-19 Debut

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Abstract

During a two-term observational study of my Secondary English Language Arts (ELA) class, I introduced "Surrealism" to the existing curriculum. Jot notes, personal interviews, and a self-study comprised my data strands. The Covid-19 pandemic struck shortly before my scheduled in-person interviews. This uncertainty disrupted my doctoral study plans, but offered a valuable opportunity for critical reflection. The fears and questions prompted by the pandemic were captured in the vulnerable "safe space" of our at-home Zoom interviews. This process thus prompted my contemplation about interviews as a continued method for combatting the stagnancy of educational spaces.

Background

It could be argued that education is an assemblage of interactions constantly in flux. The lack of linear progression and prescriptive nature to teaching and learning is precisely what allows for pause, contemplation, and meaning making. Teachers, therefore, could be understood as changemakers, as well as seasoned "pivoters." These individuals hold the power and responsibility to move their practices according to the needs and developments of their surrounding contexts. There is a degree of vulnerability that also comes with recognizing this pivoting power, which illuminates the inability of a teacher to be the sole arbiter of unmoving knowledge. Rather, the pivoting teacher is a listener who recognizes that learning cannot exist in a vacuum, separate from the arbitrary and exciting human players.

As an English Language Arts (ELA) teacher, I conceptualize these players, including everyone from students and school staff to curriculum developers and policy makers, to be characters. Characters breathe life into plots, and render events into "stories," through their feelings, interactions, and conflicts. The setting is also an important factor, in a story of education or otherwise. The specific pocket of time and space within which a story is housed, has the power to directly affect the narrative flow. I will discuss the power of setting later in this article, by illuminating a topical, ever-evolving global example. Returning to conflict, a necessary element in every narrative arc, it could be argued that stories of education are composed of conflicts; in fact, I would argue them to be a necessity. Sheriff Folarin (2013) noted that, "conflict means collision course; it also refers to opposition to existing view, stand, or position" (p. 2). Within the ELA classroom, a lack of clashing perspectives, be they interpersonal or personal, would likely mean a lack of critical contemplation. While conflict holds a rather loaded significance in society, as well as our everyday vernacular, I personally feel it to be a societal inevitability, and an ingredient for change. Within our daily interactions, for example, many of us attempt to "avoid conflict" in the name of peace and harmony. However, what we may not be asking ourselves in the process of avoiding the

uncomfortable stickiness that comes from any emotional, physical, or conceptual clash, is whether or not we are attempting to maintain the peace, or the status quo.

Therefore, while humans may shy away from conflict, whichever form it may take, as a matter of natural instinct, I ask myself if we are not stalling our stories in the process. To this end, I argue that seasoned teachers hone their specific pivoting power in their ability to recognize the intimate relationship between conflict and life. Teachers need conflict to move our practices forward. This is not to say that we are perpetually pushing for "person vs. person" conflicts in the classroom and would condone bullying and violence as means for pedagogical growth (Folarin, 2013). Rather, conflict in the classroom serves as a combat to stagnancy, and requires students and teachers to stop, think, and ask questions. Essentially, conflicts spark personal reactions in their visceral, relatable nature. These interactions, whether they take the form of characters in conflict within a novel, or battling perspectives of readers in response to the events of the story, cannot be premeditated. This unpredictable nature of education is what renders the curriculum human, and "real," and it could be argued that conflict is what allows this to happen.

Other important forms of narrative conflict, which hold an important place within the ELA classroom, are person vs. environment and person vs. society encounters (Folarin, 2013). While localized conflicts between and within individuals can cause spikes in the flow of a narrative, some disruptions can be triggered by external stimuli. I recall teaching a Grade 8 class early on in my practice about the difference between these two forms of conflict. Students conceptualized environmental conflicts to include tornadoes or mudslides (neither of which were likely to happen in our Montreal context), and societal conflicts to involve dictators and coups d'état (again, not entirely likely). I realize that students don't interact with these forms of conflict as often as they would with the personal or interpersonal iterations (Folarin, 2013). This being said, I feel nobody could have predicted the overwhelming external stimuli of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the narrative (life) shifts that would result from its impact. The pandemic constituted, in my mind, a strong example of a person vs. environment and society conflict, as humans all over the world were shocked into reshaping their ideas of education, work, and life. During the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, I had yet to complete the data collection for my doctoral thesis. My plan was to conduct in-person interviews following a two-term-long in-person observational period. I had been piloting a new form of Surrealism-inspired pedagogies into my Secondary 5 (Grade 11) ELA class, in an attempt to elicit critical thought and contemplation. From my experience, ELA class had become somewhat of a sleepy subject, with students often confusing talking with dialoguing and meaning making. The frustrating part of this exchange, as a teacher, was that students often displayed contemplative power within their informal exchanges, but would not pursue these thoughts further; much less, put them on the page. As a result, ELA became a lofty, somewhat elitist and luxurious subject devoid of any actual "life" substance. I feel my students envisioned the ELA class as a breather space, which allowed them to relax from more cognitively draining subjects such as Mathematics. This is not to say that the students were drawing any more life-to-class connections within their Mathematics studies, but it does speak to the stagnancy of narrative flow within our ELA teaching and learning experiences. I recognized this problem, which subsequently prompted my pursuit of big questions within my doctorate degree. In a sense, this "conflict" between ELA possibilities and realities, or theory and practice, sparked my desire for change. However, within my neat and contained study of change-making possibilities, the

pandemic "setting" forced our world into an all-encompassing state of questioning. From one day to the next, I was teaching my classes from the second bedroom of my condo. I also needed to shift my interviewing method, as I was uncertain about when I would actually share a physical space with my students. I therefore conducted my post-observational phase interviews via Zoom, and in the process, managed to inadvertently capture a pivotal moment of educational change.

Zoom: Electronic Intimate Interview Spaces

At the time of my data collection period, the spring of 2020, the Zoom platform appeared foreign and oddly intimate. I recall being hesitant to opt into our school's initial experimentation of using Google Meet, which would quickly be replaced by Zoom. As we would soon discover, the school recognized the former platform's limitations, and opted to move forward with the latter program in an effort to keep up with the times, and the world. Little did teachers and students know, upon saying our swift goodbyes before March break, that those moments would form the end of our in-person time together. I recall, after moving through several weeks of the strange pandemic teaching and learning experience, quickly shifting my view of online learning platforms; and the students appeared to feel the same. Suddenly, we felt the need to reveal the intimate spaces we had previously housed behind stiff "life" boundaries. Before, work lives and private lives were not to permitted to mix. However, with the introduction of Covid-19 "conflict," I personally found that rule to be dissolved.

After requesting an amendment to my ethics board application, thus receiving approval to shift my platform from in-person interviews to digital, I reached out to my volunteer participants. The interviews, despite taking place via distance, took on an unexpected tone of closeness. Each interview lasted longer than I had originally anticipated, possibly due to our mutual need for connection when navigating the uncertain pandemic circumstances. Zoom therefore served as a visible marker of the unknown times, as a large population of the world was experimenting with the platform in real time. However, Zoom also served as the vessel for connection building, which was suddenly halted due to the global pandemic. Suddenly, physical closeness, body language, and even touch were removed from the teaching and learning process. Especially when my study aimed to explore the collective building of critical ELA experiences, it seemed unnerving that the world could have entered a space where teachers and learners could no longer share a physical room. As my students and I navigated the Zoom animal, learning to conceptualize normalcy from the abnormal, we could not have imagined that this reality would become our new norm for nearly three years to come.

Now, having lived through several iterations of online, hybrid, and in-person returns (with occasional shutdowns), I realize that my interviews captured a unique moment in (global) teaching and learning. While the moment was unique to us, as I spoke with students about ELA teaching, and learning, the "life" outside the classroom walls (which now had become digitized), seemed to permeate the questions in a considerable manner. I had attempted, for years leading up to the study, to bridge the conceptual gap between the classroom space and the students' lived realities. Suddenly, students' lives were being permeated with a unified global unknown, and ELA seemed to serve as an ideal experimental space to contemplate these my(steries/stories). My interviews all started with some initial chatting and odd

technological blunders (signs of the "setting"). The Zoom platform also allowed for our conversations to be recorded, and upon looking back at the exchanges, I marveled at the vulnerability and authenticity that was captured. An outsider may easily have mistaken our exchanges to have taken place between research participants, rather than participants and their principal investigator. The fact that we all wore comfortable sweat clothes and had backdrops of dying houseplants or rogue pets and/or younger siblings, greatly helped in democratizing teacher-student power dynamics (Freire, 2018). In fact, I would argue that this method helped in reconceptualizing my research approach, rendering me a research participant alongside my students, and a learner within the educational experience. It seemed odd to me that by removing ourselves from the school place, all we could seem to think about was a return to school. As previously noted, this global contextual conflict urged my students and me to pause and contemplate. My students would frequently complain about not having time to meet assignment deadlines, whilst negotiating other life concerns such as orthodontist appointments (braces needed to come off before graduation, of course), and social engagements. All of these plans were instantly halted in the spring of 2020, however, and we all found ourselves with nothing but time. With that time, and uncertainty, came a great deal of fear. I could hear the worry through my students' responses, as they wondered about their highly anticipated graduation plans, and whether or not they would receive a real ceremonial end to their high school careers. They wondered about birthday parties and holidays, as well as final exams and Cegep. I feel Covid-19 provided the perfect storm of private and public (narrative) conflicts. While it was difficult to witness the struggles of my students as they navigated this time, I argue that this unexpected external stimulus provided a pivotal opportunity for critical contemplation.

Data Collection: Interviews: Student Voices and a Contemplation of ELA

Prior to leaving my students for the March break, I completed my in-class observational period. During that time, I created jot notes following every class (Vanner, 2020). The notes consisted of small exchanges, group discussions, breakthroughs, and even off-topic discussions about shoes. In short, my jot notes aimed to capture the "life" of our shared ELA experience. However, these notes expressed my voice exclusively, even when recounting the stories of others. I am aware of the fact that interpretation plays a great role in remembering these events, as the occurrences have all been filtered through my memory. The interview portion of my data collection therefore formed an attempt to express students' voices in a more direct manner. Originally, I had prepared interview questions that targeted Surrealism and our specific class goals. However, upon reflection, I revised my questions to focus upon students' general interest levels in ELA. This shift proved to be particularly conducive to our pandemic circumstances and students' engagement with big "life" questions. With open-ended questions, I encouraged students to think about their experiences within ELA, their understanding of the subject and its perceived possibilities, and their personal relationships with the subject.

Conducting Interviews: Ethical Concerns and Shifts in Methods (Covid-19)

As previously noted, my interviews were originally slated to take place at school, following the submission of term two report card grades. It was important to me that the interviews be conducted on a volunteer basis after the submission of grades. I recognized that concepts of voluntariness could arise.

While students could feel pressured into participating to better their grades, they could also feel obligated to participate in my research study by virtue of our teacher-student dynamic. Despite attempting to dismantle traditional power structures within my practice, the reality remains that students exist in a dependent relationship with me, their teacher. Students could thus interpret the choice to participate in my study to constitute an unspoken obligation. I therefore aimed to avoid any undue influence students may have felt in participating within my study. I emphasized that this portion of data collection, like all other portions, was purely inquiry based and that I was interested in learning alongside the students. Following the March break, which marked the end of the second term and would have originally been the beginning of my interview period, the Covid-19 pandemic began. As previously noted, I shifted my entire interview process to our online Zoom platform. While I had initially obtained ethics board approval to conduct my interviews in-person, I requested an amendment to my application when our lockdown began. Upon obtaining my ethics board amendment, students were presented with the opportunity to take part in online interviews. I managed to conduct four sessions, interviewing a total of seven students. Some students opted to run interviews in pairs, while one chose to be interviewed individually. After receiving consent from parents and assent from students to participate in the interviews, I requested revised consent to use our recorded Zoom conversations as backup data to accompany my written interview notes.

During the interviews, which took place during scheduled sessions outside of regular distance learning course hours, I asked students eight interview questions. I attempted to address ELA as a curricular subject and experience, with questions such as, "Think about what you feel is the 'point' of ELA class. Below, check all the categories that you feel apply to the point of ELA." The majority of participants focused upon the utilitarian function of ELA, including developing public speaking skills and learning grammatical efficacy. Imaginative experimentation and building real-world connections did not seem to constitute a goal of ELA, according to my participants. I also asked some questions that were specific to our shared experience, such as, "In English, we focus a lot on storytelling. What do you feel is the story I was attempting to tell this year?" This question garnered a variety of interesting responses, as students pulled from our class discussions about power dynamics to our focus on traditions. Despite perceiving ELA to involve preparation for career-based skills, students also recognized that we had spent our time together deconstructing societal norms. I listed the questions in a Google Doc and created a separate copy for each interview group. I then shared my Zoom screen so that the questions were visible as I read them aloud. For questions with a variety of available choices, such as the question, "Criticality means (check the definition(s) that apply)," I entered the options students chose onto their respective documents. I chose to offer a range of responses for several of my questions, as I recognized students may feel lost with entirely open-ended inquiries. Rather than block critical contemplation due to sheer confusion, I opted to offer some choices in terms of possible contemplative routes. The choices students identified thus served as prompts to fuel critical thinking, as students verbally expanded on their selections of specific options. Their expanded answers were captured both via video and my personal, handwritten interview notes. My decision to offer a variety of options for certain questions was intended to provide students with range in their chosen responses (especially important when it came to defining terms), while also targeting their answers towards specific research interests I developed. Keeping in mind the Zoom platform, I felt that expansion and critical contemplation were necessary for my interviews, as was

specificity and focus. By offering students some options with which to build their responses, my hope was to make transparent what I was asking them, but also fuel their critical thinking in those directions. The sessions lasted between 30 to 60 minutes and were conducted in a casual manner that was designed to encourage critical contemplation and sharing.

Data Analysis: Interview Notes and Student Interview Google Docs

When approaching my interview notes and the Google Docs with students' recorded choices for answers, I employed an adapted version of Carl Rhodes' (2000) ghostwriting strategy. I watched the recorded Zoom interviews and analyzed them alongside my written interview notes and my participants' respective interview Google Docs. Rhodes (2000) noted that when creating his autobiographical-style account of a subject, he produced his text shortly after his interview. In my case, I had a year of temporal distance between conducting the interviews and creating my ghostwritten accounts. For this reason, it was important for me to view my video recordings and experience the interviews for a second time. I then, as with my observation notes, extracted common themes and threads of inquiry and developed a narrative structure for the content. Rhodes (2000) discussed determining salient points that resonated from the interview, and forming a narrative stemming from those points. When viewing my interview recordings, I took observational notes before producing mini narrative accounts. Rhodes (2000) noted that, "a key part of the ghostwriting practice [is] to 'regenre' the story from that of an interview conversation to that of a conventional written narrative" (p. 517). As a number of casual thoughts and musings were raised in my interviews in response to my prompts on ELA, I aimed to restructure the flow of these interviews to form interactions between my participants. My aim was to render myself a Rhodes (2000) ghost and remove my physical presence from the interactions. As three sets of interviews took place in pairs, I chose to (re)construct exchanges between the participants based on the thoughts they expressed to me. The only exception was my third interview, which took place individually. For this narrative, I chose to assume the presence of the participant and my narrative constituted reflective, personal contemplation. Rhodes (2000) articulated that a researcher should work mainly from memory when constructing a narrative account from interviews. The interview notes and Google Docs were therefore used to verify structure and content. My adaptation of the technique was intended to create succinct accounts of the interview interactions with which I could more easily work and form my larger narrative account following analysis. The ghostwriting approach shows how removing myself from the interview process could refocus the "voice" of the perspectives expressed, while also illuminating my role in shaping these responses (p. 517). This was once again an exercise in subjective interpretation, as I gleaned from the interviews what I felt to be significant, thus rendering the raw interview data (Zoom recordings) into concise bodies of text. I created stories from the commentaries of my students, which contained logical flow and organization. I would later work exclusively with these mini write-ups as I moved forward with my data analysis.

In addition to offering a moment of reflective exchange, the interviews allowed for honest and personal accounts of our shared teaching and learning experience. While my questions focused on ELA, including our goals, responsibilities, and possibilities, our conversations merged into considerations of identity and personal values. As previously noted, many of my participants prioritized the technical components of

ELA, involving rules and structures. All of the interviewees, with the exception of two, were native English speakers, reflecting that they had "less to learn" within the ELA classroom. The perspective that ELA holds less importance for societal preparation, as opposed to Science or Mathematics, was a common perspective within our responses. I wonder whether or not this "misunderstanding" (or perhaps a misalignment) of ELA's purpose and potential contributed to students' lack of criticality within our classes. Similar to our seemingly "low-stakes" in-class discussions, students offered a variety of critical opinions within our interviews; thus, they inadvertently fulfilled a goal of ELA. Returning to the "setting" of our story, feelings of uncertainty were also present throughout my interviews. While these emotions were likely prompted by the unknowns of the Covid-19 pandemic, I noticed my students using our ELA-based interviews as an opportunity to muse, share, and commiserate about their looming fears. I frequently referred, within our interviews and our in-class conversations, to "the real world." Now, all of a sudden, students were collectively faced with the realities of the previously hypothetical world outside of the classroom. With the last days of high school on the horizon, I noticed a degree of anxiousness with regard to leaving the comforts of the school place (even if it had become virtual). I then wondered whether or not the students' conceptual misalignment, with regard to the aims of ELA, was an act of self-preservation. ELA embodies the real world, but until the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted a number of students' routines, the challenges of that world could more easily be avoided. Perhaps students' choices to focus on grammar and rules could reflect a desire to render ELA concrete; and, as previously noted, avoid conflictual stickiness. The fact that there are few "correct" answers in ELA could seem exciting, but also daunting, especially when everything students had taken for granted had suddenly, with the pandemic, been rendered unstable.

Student Interviews

The following four passages form my interview mini write-ups. All of the students' names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

INTERVIEW 1:

"Jacques, what is the real world?" Braden had wondered why his English teacher had gone on and on for an entire year harping on about the real world, using air quotations and pointing out the window when referencing "pertinent" material from the class. "Braden, the real world is not something that an English teacher needs to teach me about." Jacques decided to emphasize his point by placing a mask on mid-conversation, perhaps to offer an air of emphasis to his philosophical stance. "In English class we talk about the real world," Jacques said, echoing Braden's personal thoughts, "but we don't learn about social skills. I just pick those up and I don't need English class to teach me those." "Okay, then why are we here?" Braden hesitated before placing his suitcase-style backpack on the desk. "To start to become critical, I guess, and creative. That's what the teacher says at least. I don't know, I'm not really creative every day. Or critical." "What does that mean though?" Braden was hugging his backpack now, "Like showing someone they're wrong? I don't really think about that all the time." "Me neither," Jacques responded, "maybe I just don't put in the effort. I know I should, but I need to feel like the teacher cares too, you know? I didn't enjoy a lot of English classes because the teacher didn't care about getting to

know us." "Like last year? Funny, I liked that class. I guess it depends on the person." Braden started to unpack his suitcase to get ready for class. "I'm still not sure what we're supposed to learn here though. We keep talking about things being normal and not normal, but why do I need to know that?" Jacques sighed and removes his mask. "I don't know, maybe that's the point. Maybe the point is to expand, not to be taught." "Oh." Braden said, looking out the window.

INTERVIEW 2:

"Scarlett, pay attention! You'll need this for the real world!" "But we're not in the real world yet, Vicky! That won't come till after university!" Scarlett was gazing out the window as Vicky frantically recorded notes. "Scarlett, we're going to be in the real world soon, like when we start working will need to *talk* professionally and not make mistakes with grammar! We'll be doing that our whole lives!" "But this is just a fun activity, Vicky, it's not like it's public speaking." "That doesn't matter, we can still learn something that will help us later." Scarlett resumed her daydreaming. "Vicky, when we're in the real world, we'll need to pay for our food, but what about people who can't pay? Food is just normal for us, but there are homeless people who can't eat." Vicky stopped notetaking to consider her friend's reflection. "I guess that's their normal. It's horrible, but we are lucky, so I guess it's kind of normal to be lucky." "But it's not normal for anyone to not eat!" Scarlett's strong sense of sympathy had surfaced. "We're supposed to be preparing for the real world, even if we're not going to be in it for a long time, but when we do go there, it won't ever look like it does for those people. That's their real world and it's sad." "Yeah, I don't know." Vicky paused, "I guess I take a lot of things for granted in my life, it just *is*." "I just don't really understand what I'm supposed to be doing." Scarlett expressed, slightly concerned. "For the assignment?" Vicky began handing over her detailed notes. "No." Scarlett shook her head, "When I get into the real world. I don't even know what that will look like. We all experience the world differently and my real world is going to be different than yours, so how do I prepare, here in English class?" Vicky had stopped typing. "I'm not sure. I guess we can just try to get something from all of this. At least we know that grammar is important in all real worlds so we can focus on that."

INTERVIEW 3:

Gregory sighed as he examined his schedule. "English. It's fine, it is what it is." It wasn't so much that Gregory disliked the subject, but he saw little utility in English class, seeing as he was fluent in the language. "I'm not even planning on being a writer." He thought to himself. "Why will I need this in the future?" He scanned the board, pausing on the terms "analysis" and "connections." "Can't you do English without analysis and connection building?" He wondered, "It won't be as interesting, but it would still work." As the teacher spoke, Gregory felt a small wave of tension rise in his chest. He was reviewing the feedback on a recent submission. He knew that in resisting critique, he was limiting his own ability to be critical and by extension, creative. It just wasn't easy to see his work littered with comments when he felt he had put forth a decent effort. It wasn't that hard, it was just writing, and he did it well. Isn't that the point? Gregory felt slightly disconnected from his submission, despite the teacher having stressed the relevance of its "human-centered" themes. "Where are the humans in this class?" Gregory thought to himself again. He wished English would focus more on how humans actually communicated and

behaved. He concluded he could do that in Ethics class, but couldn't the system just do away with English then? Gregory felt his naturally skeptical nature caused him to take English class (and everything else) with a grain of salt. He then stopped upon one of the teacher's comments: "Great critical perspective!" "Was I being critical? I was just breaking apart what I saw. I didn't really say anything new; I just questioned what's already there. Maybe *that's* the real point. I'm still not sure."

INTERVIEW 4:

"Shawn, do you agree with what he just said?" Sookie's attention had been sparked by her classmate's presentation on a particularly touching societal norm. "No, I don't." Shawn whispered, "But it's not really my place to say anything. We don't come from here, so maybe it's a question of culture." "Yes, but our own culture isn't normal either." Sookie whispered back, "At least not according to me. It's like we're living outside of both cultures. I don't even know what's supposed to be considered normal." Shawn stopped and contemplated the girls' shared debacle. She had been doing a great deal of reflection recently, in the process of negotiating her new home and, at the same time, observing her familiar context from across the ocean. "I guess some groups of people can benefit from norms but the same norms can harm those who stand outside of them." Shawn stopped and continued to glance around her class, noticing the somewhat monotonal cultural representation. "Doesn't that mean we will never be normal?" Sookie responded, somewhat concerned. "No," Shawn offered softly. "We are normal in some ways and not normal in others. It's not as simple as we learn about in books, real people don't look like that. I mean, that's part of it, but it's not the full story." Sookie sat silently. Shawn's reflections had spurred her own set of questions in her mind, as she began noticing the convergences and contradictions between her ideas of normality and her personal practices. She wondered if she lacked the words to express her questions to others, or the analytical skills to build and develop these questions; or, perhaps she required more cultural leverage to take a stand. Either way, she was beginning to think much of the "real world" around her was not normal, but she also recognized her own comfort in this abnormality. Perhaps it would be easier to just stay silent.

Concluding Thoughts: Interviews as Discovery

Following the interview collection period, as well as the data analysis period, I have begun to examine my entire study experience afresh. I wonder if students would still have asked big questions and engaged in vulnerable, critical thought, were we not to have been struck with a global pandemic. I wonder, as well, whether I would have recognized the richness of students' reflections and queries, were I not to have conducted interviews in this manner. I also question my method and ask myself how the process could have been different were it not to have been so oddly intimate (from a distance). It is highly atypical for teachers and students to see into one another's homes, in the comforts of their own respective spaces, asking big questions while sitting with mugs of tea and bowls of breakfast cereal at odd hours of the day. In a way, I feel these interviews allowed for a shift in my own teaching and learning, as I discovered an essential component of the education process; that being the symbiotic and fluid nature of the teacher-student relationship. While I believe the global pandemic served as the external stimulus, or "narrative

conflict," which I previously deemed necessary to disrupt the status quo of our everyday educational experiences, I feel my interviews allowed me to capture this pivot. Essentially, the world was pivoting on a monumental scale, as every level of society was affected by the enormity of this unprecedented conflict. However, as I firmly believe ELA and all levels of education offer a microcosmic window onto the outside world, the personal, human-centered shifts were what captured my attention. I argue that the conflict of the pandemic thrust my student-characters into a setting of self-discovery, which thus fueled an exciting and powerful narrative. I wonder, therefore, if interviews could find their place in our everyday teaching, beyond situations of Covid-19. Perhaps the check-in opportunities my interviews offered me could be of use in capturing a whole myriad of other pivotal moments. It is possible that the intimacy of small, teacher-student interactions, and a round of "meaty" questions on the table, could aid in connecting school spaces and students' lived realities far beyond the singular pivotal moment in question.

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