Collaborative Dialogue in a Synchronous CMC Environment? A Look at One Beginning English Teacher's Strategies

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Abstract

This article reports research from an ISTE SigTEL (www.iste.org) award-winning university-secondary school partnership, the Web Pen Pals project, which pairs preservice English teachers in online chat rooms with local middle school students to talk about young adult literature. One goal of teacher preparation programs is to encourage beginning teachers to use technology effectively in their future teaching. A particular goal of the Web Pen Pals project is to encourage beginning English teachers to "take risks" as they consider the role of a form of talk—collaborative dialogue—in academic learning, as well as the use of non-traditional discourse formats that may disrupt recitation patterns. The aim of this article is to summarize findings from a single case analysis of the discourse moves used by a preservice English teacher, Amanda, to facilitate collaborative dialogue about literature with adolescents in a synchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) environment employed in the Web Pen Pals project. Findings suggest collaborative dialogue did occur, and Amanda used discourse moves that seemed to encourage and facilitate such dialogue. However, some opportunities for collaborative dialogue were missed. Implications for preparation of beginning teachers to use CMC are shared.

Introduction

Language cannot be separated from learning (Halliday, 1980). Language researchers have long suggested that talk helps to deepen student understanding and further learning (Gilles & Pierce, 2003); students use sophisticated thinking strategies through talk (Barnes, 1976/1992); and talk becomes more sophisticated as students interact and learn (Britton, 1969/1990). Applebee (1996) envisions English curriculum as "conversation," where the ability to "[reach] consensus and [express] disagreement" "…[formulate] arguments" and "…[provide] evidence" are "culturally constituted tools" students need to participate in "socially constituted traditions of meaning-making" (p. 9). Rex and McEachen (1999) consider whole class discussion the "crucible of social as well as academic inclusion" (p. 70).

It would seem, then, that English and language arts teachers would provide authentic opportunities for students to engage in talk with each other about literature in the classroom. But in the age of NCLB and high-stakes testing, with its emphasis on recall of information, classroom talk about literature—if it occurs at all—often resembles recitation patterns (e.g., Initiate-Respond-Evaluate, or IRE)(Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1988/2001).

Classroom language researchers (e.g., Jordan, 2005) suggest such patterns silence students' voices; communicate to students that texts and teachers are sole knowledge-arbiters; and privilege students who are more articulate about their knowledge and willing to demonstrate their knowledge publicly over others (e.g., women, students too polite to interrupt or disagree, and students with handicaps who cannot verbalize) (Cooper & Selfe, 1990). Christoph and Nystrand (2001) explain that disruption of such recitation patterns will require teachers "take risks inherent in doing something or allowing something…" (p. 252).

One goal of teacher preparation programs is to encourage beginning teachers to use technology effectively in their future teaching. A particular goal of the Web Pen Pals project[1] is to encourage beginning English teachers to "take risks" as they consider the role of a form of talk—collaborative dialogue—in academic learning, as well as the use of non-traditional discourse formats, such as CMC environments, to facilitate such talk.

The aim of this article is to summarize findings from a single case analysis of the discourse moves used by a preservice English teacher, Amanda, to facilitate collaborative dialogue about literature with adolescents in a synchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) environment employed in the Web Pen Pals project. Findings suggest collaborative dialogue did occur, and Amanda used discourse moves that seemed to encourage and facilitate such dialogue. However, some opportunities for collaborative dialogue were missed. Implications for preparation of beginning teachers to use synchronous CMC environments to facilitate dialogue are shared.

Related Literature
Collaborative Dialogue

A socioconstructivist perspective understands dialogue as a communicative process which involves all participants working together to build an interpretive community. In such a community, meanings of texts are jointly constructed, as participants confirm, modify, or abandon their original interpretations through hearing others' viewpoints and referring to others' experiences (Bakhtin, 1981; Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001; Golden, 1986). Researchers suggest co-construction of ideas promotes greater ability for students to apply what they are learning (Chinn, O'Donnell, & Jinks, 2000; Roschelle, 1992).

As a co-constructed group process, collaborative dialogue should resemble a responsive give-and-take format, as participants fit their discourse actions to the conversational contexts that emerge over the course of discussion (Rex & McEachen, 1999). Thus, true collaborative dialogue should be exploratory and improvisational (Barnes, 1976/1992; Burbules, 1993; Sawyer, 2004), as participants think out loud, "talk through" tentative ideas, and follow each others' sometimes meandering ideas rather than a teacher's or facilitator's preset agenda.

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[1] The Web Pen Pals project won 2nd place in ISTE's 2006 SigTEL Online Learning Award competition. For project description see Groenke and Paulus (2007).

As long-time English educator Leila Christenbury explains, "Few people—students and teacher—actually approach knowledge in an orderly, paced way, moving smoothly…from one level to another" (1994, p. 204). Rather, as participants engage in collaborative dialogue, they may "…reshape an idea in mid-sentence, respond immediately to the hints and doubts of others, and collaborate in shaping meanings they could not hope to reach alone" (Barnes, 1993, p. 15).

But traditional classroom discussion is guided by norms for participation (Cazden, 1988/2001) that work against such exploration and improvisation, as the teacher often determines how talk about literature will go (e.g., recall facts from story vs. share individual interpretations), who will control turn-taking (who speaks when), and who will control setting/changing the topic. The synchronous CMC environment may help to disrupt such norms, however.

Advantages of Synchronous CMC in Discussion Tasks

Traditional discussion norms are harder to establish and control in a synchronous CMC environment, as all participants can offer a comment at any time, without prompting, and thus may change the topic at any time (cf. Groenke, Maples, & Dunlap, 2005; Davidson-Shivers, Muilenberg, & Tanner, 2001; Herring, 1999). In addition, as other researchers suggest (e.g., Kiesler, Siegel, & McGuire, 1984), the synchronous CMC medium is assumed to filter out visual and social cues, which may facilitate empowerment of disadvantaged users. Belcher (1999) reports hearing "confidently self-identified voices—which were never or seldom heard in class" online when she used synchronous CMC in an ESL composition teaching methods course. Perhaps for these reasons CMC has been characterized as an equalizer of participation structures in discussion-based tasks.

Also, unlike asynchronous chat rooms, which tend to be viewed as educational, synchronous chat rooms are viewed as more recreational (Burnett, 2003). Crystal (2001) explains in chat rooms, "Language play is routine…if you are looking for opinions to react to, or want to get one of your own off your chest, it is the ideal place" (2001, p. 169). This has prompted some researchers to advise limiting the use of synchronous formats to purposes requiring a friendly social atmosphere (Maier & Warren, 2000; Poole, 2000), and a friendly, social atmosphere is what the Web Pen Pals project hopes to encourage.

Researchers have found such an atmosphere can foster a sense of community (Duemer et al, 2002) where "communication [seems] to transcend the individual exchange, being more focused on the group…" (Crystal, p. 169), and high levels of engagement and interaction in discussion tasks (e.g., Carico & Logan, 2004; Davidson-Shivers, Muilenberg, & Tanner, 2001).

In addition, the consistent participant reaction and response to ideas (e.g. quick feedback) found in synchronous discussions (Duemer et al, 2002; Wang, 2005) and the lack of time for reflection may encourage students to articulate ideas more precisely (Condon & Cech, 1996) and may foster more engaged discussion. Finally, Cox, Carr, & Hall (2004) suggest synchronous CMC environments may be useful for "mobilizing group production and for a self-documenting record of the collaboration" when learning objectives are clear (p. 192).

Because online environments have the potential to be inquiry-focused, collaborative, and student-centered (Berge, 1997; Bump, 1990), synchronous CMC may offer opportunities for teachers to disrupt traditional recitation patterns and thus promote student-centered collaborative dialogue in school settings. Understanding if CMC can provide a space for teachers and students to co-construct interpretations about literature is one goal of the Web Pen Pals project.

Methodology

A case study approach (Stake, 1995) was used to frame a larger cross-case analysis of three preservice English teachers' questioning strategies in a

Table 1: Questions for Data Analysis

Collaborative dialogue is…	Questions Guiding Analysis	Corresponding Discourse Moves
…pedagogical (e.g., knowledge is co-constructed; divergent points of view shared/encouraged)	Do participants modify (confirm or abandon) original interpretations as individual opinions, ideas are shared? Subquestions: Do participants listen to each other? Do participants share divergent viewpoints? Do participants challenge each others' viewpoints?	–Disclosure –Requests for clarification/elaboration –Affirm others' points –Challenge/counter others' points –Uptake –Use of vocatives –Revoicing
…exploratory and improvisational in nature	Do participants fit discourse actions to conversational contexts? Subquestions: Do all participants raise topics/pose questions? Do participants follow discursions?	–Authentic questions –Uptake –Requests for elaboration/clarification

synchronous CMC environment, as reported in Groenke and Paulus (2007). This article reports research from a single case analysis of what the researcher deems a unique case (Yin, 1994), as Amanda was the only preservice teacher in the study who seemed to successfully facilitate collaborative dialogue with her middle school pals in the synchronous CMC environment.

Supporting the uniqueness of the case is the duration of on-topic episodes in Amanda's chats. A topic was designated whenever at least two or more linked comments about the topic occurred. A topic was considered finished when overt references ceased (Dodson, 2000). The number of turns taken by each preservice teacher in all three chat sessions was not significantly different (the teachers all took about one-third of the total teacher/student turns); however, Amanda's chats displayed the longest on-topic episodes and the fewest topic shifts. The on-topic talk (e.g., book talk) in Amanda's chat rooms averaged about 13 minutes (33%) per chat (average chat time = 40 minutes), as compared to 7-minute and 5-minute average on-topic times in the other two cases. This is significant because, as CMC researchers have noted (Herring, 1999; Crystal, 2001; Lewis, 2005), topics tend to "decay" or shift quickly in CMC environments. That Amanda and her pals sustained on-topic talk for one-third of each chat may indicate participant engagement and commitment to the collaborative discussion task.

In addition, student-elaborated responses to Amanda's questions were more frequent than in the other preservice teachers' chat sessions, with Amanda's student responses averaging 18 words per utterance across the three chats. Crystal (2001) explains most utterances in synchronous chat groups are 5 words or less (p. 157), so the high word count in Amanda's pals' utterances may indicate their engagement and commitment to the discussion task as well. Finally, as reported in Groenke and Paulus (2007), Amanda's use of effective initiation and follow-up questions seemed to encourage development of "group texts," or jointly constructed, on-topic dialogue (Golden, 1986).

Amanda's middle school pals included two females—Sarah and Kendra—and one male, Steve. Amanda's role in the Web Pen Pals project was to serve as a "reading buddy" to her middle school pals, rather than a strict monitor of reading comprehension (Eeds & Wells, 1989).

Data Analysis

For the purposes of this study, the researcher wanted to know what kinds of discourse moves Amanda used in the longest on-topic episodes to encourage and facilitate collaborative dialogue about the young adult novel, *Nothing but the Truth (NBTT)*, (Avi, 1991). The novel tells the stories of Philip and his English teacher, Ms. Narwin. Philip, a high school freshman, wants to be on the track team but is failing English. Philip blames Ms. Narwin for his failure and ultimately brings about her downfall.

The units of analysis were the two longest on-topic episodes, both of which occurred in the second of three chat sessions. This particular chat session lasted 37 minutes. One on-topic episode lasted 14 minutes; another lasted 11 minutes. In addition to the transcript of Amanda's second chat session, data for this study included Amanda's written journal reflections, and the transcript of a 1-hour interview conducted with Amanda when the Web Pen Pals project was completed.

Because the researcher was ultimately interested to learn if collaborative dialogue occurred, the researcher first developed categories for analysis of the two episodes based on Burbules' (1993) rules of dialogue, which define *participation, commitment,* and *reciprocity* as requisite characteristics of collaborative dialogue. The researcher collapsed these characteristics into two categories, *pedagogical* and *exploratory and improvisational*, and then framed questions and subquestions for each category that the researcher used to classify the conversation in the two episodes selected for analysis (see Table 1 for categories and questions used to frame analysis).

Next, because the researcher also wanted to know what kinds of discourse moves might facilitate collaborative dialogue, the researcher coded Amanda's discourse moves in the two episodes, using categories drawn from the literature on teacher/facilitator discourse strategies in both face-to-face classroom and synchronous CMC environments that have been reported to encourage collaborative dialogue. The researcher focused on strategies which seemed to correspond to the two categories of dialogue used as the larger analytic frame. See Table 2 for categories used to analyze Amanda's discourse moves.

Findings and Discussion

This single-case analysis explores the discourse moves one preservice English teacher, Amanda, used to facilitate collaborative dialogue about literature with middle school students in a synchronous CMC environment. This section is organized around the two categories of collaborative dialogue, *pedagogical* and *exploratory and improvisational* used in the analysis (see Table 1), as these categories apply to the conversation and Amanda's discourse moves. Findings show collaborative dialogue did occur, and Amanda used discourse moves that seemed to encourage and facilitate such dialogue. However, some opportunities for collaborative dialogue were missed. To illustrate, excerpts from the two analyzed episodes are shared.

Dialogue is pedagogical. For collaborative dialogue about a literary work to be pedagogical, participants must modify their original interpretations. This occurred in the two episodes analyzed for the purposes of this paper. Corresponding discourse moves used to facilitate this process included *revoicing, uptake, counter* and *challenge* questions, and *disclosure*. These moves were often used in conjunction with each other, rather than in isolation.

As example, in the first excerpt (see Example 1, p. 44), Amanda uses all of the strategies to facilitate collaborative dialogue, and effects a change in her own original interpretations.

Prior to the excerpt, Amanda asked what age reader the author, Avi, might have had in mind when he wrote *NBTT*. Kendra first offered up the response of ages "12–19," and up to this point Sarah and Kendra have been offering rationales to support this response, namely that older

Table 2: Categories Used in Analysis of Discourse Moves

Discourse move	Definition	Rationale
Authentic initiation	Ask a question with no predetermined answer	Allows for range of responses; can include requests for clarification/ elaboration; signals to students teacher is interested in what they think; invites students to contribute new ideas to discussion (Christoph & Nystrand, 2001; Nystrand, 1997; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991)
Counter	State an opinion or ask a question containing an alternative line of argument	Students make greater conceptual progress during learning when they encounter and must respond to alternative perspectives; questions calling for alternative opinions promote open-ended discussion; such questions promote critical thinking and engagement in discussion (Walker, 2004 ; Bridges, 1988; Chan et al, 1997; Kruger & Tomasello, 1986)
Challenge	Ask a question to elicit a defense of a line of argument	
Uptake	Inquire into something a student contributes to the discussion	Signifies the importance of and legitimizes student contributions, and encourages student-centered participation (Christoph & Nystrand, 2001; Nystrand, 1997; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991)
Revoice	Reutter another's speech through repetition, expansion, rephrasing, and reporting	Legitimizes student contributions; creates opportunities for active student engagement in discussion process (Forman & Ansell, 2002; O'Connor & Michaels, 1993)
Disclose	Share personal feelings, ideas, motivations and underlying goals	Communicates sense of commitment and reciprocity to dialogue task (e.g., participants will do what they ask others to do); communicates presence and engagement in task (Burbules, 1993; Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 2001)
Use of vocatives	Use another's name in comment	Indicates a sense of group commitment; communicates presence and engagement in task (Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 2001)
Request for elaboration	Elicit more information about a student response to teacher-posed question	Helps to scaffold student reasoning, giving students more control over what they say; signals to students teacher is interested in what they think (Chinn, Anderson & Waggoner, 2001)

readers—because they are not in school—may not be able to relate to the story as well as younger readers. Steve has affirmed their points, but remains tentative.

In the excerpt, Amanda *takes up* Kendra's answer of "12–19" (line 102), and perhaps because she wants to encourage her pals to consider the idea that older readers may appreciate the story—*revoices* their argument, asking "so this book is only for people 12–19" (line 102), and "is this what u three r telling me" (line 104).

Example 1: Excerpt From Episode 1 In Chat 2

Line #	Speaker	Turn	Move Type
102	Amanda	so this book is only for people 12-19	Uptake + Revoice
104	Amanda	is this what u three r telling me	Revoice
113	Kendra	yep	
114	Amanda	so this book can only relate wth readers b/n the ages 12-19??	Revoice
115	Amanda	this is what im getting	Revoice
116	Kendra	yep	
117	Steve	maybe	
118	Sarah	it can relate to older ppl but not as many	
119	Amanda	well im 22 and i related to both philip and narwin	Counter + Disclose
120	Amanda	what does that say	Challenge
121	Sarah	b/c u r still in school	
127	Amanda	ok then what about the older people in my class who r in their 40s and related to it	Challenge
128	Sarah	u read the book knowing that u would have to talk bout it w/ 8th graders	
139	Amanda	Great job guys u r making great points	Affirm

Example 2: Excerpt From Episode 2 In Chat 2

Line #	Speaker	Turn	Move type
193	Amanda	would his dad have let him, do u think?	Challenge
195	Kendra	no	
196	Steve	at the end the whole story was mixed up	
197	Sarah	yea if he would have really put his foot down he would have let him	
198	Amanda	i disagree sarah	Disclose + vocative
199	Steve	maybe	
200	Sarah	how	
201	Kendra	cause since he couldn't stand up to his boss he was going to stand up to a helpless teacher	
202	Amanda	i think no matter what his dad would have had it his way or no way	Disclose
204	Sarah	but it was [Philip's] story in the first place	
206	Sarah	r u saying the dad wanted the publicity?	
207	Sarah	y	
210	Amanda	right	Affirm
212	Amanda	i felt his dad was trying to live his younger life through Philip	Disclose
213	Sarah	yea	
216	Kendra	he wanted to not feel run over by his boss	
217	Kendra	true amanda	
218	Sarah	he is telling him to stand up and he won't do it for his boss	

O'Connor and Michaels (1993) explain *revoicing* involves the reuttering of another person's speech through repetition, expansion, rephrasing, and reporting. Forman and Ansell (2002) explain revoicing allows "the listener to reframe the speaker's utterance in a way that can be evaluated by the original speaker as well as other listeners" and O'Connor and Michaels explain when the discourse marker "so" is used, "a slot is…opened up for a turn transition at the end of that utterance. The preferred sequence is that the utterer of the original utterance can give assent or can contradict" (p. 323).

Kendra holds on to the student-held idea that the book is better suited for younger readers (line 113), and again Amanda *revoices* (lines 114, 115). Kendra continues to hold her opinion (line 116), and Steve provides a tentative "maybe" (line 117). Sarah continues to hold her opinion, too, but is willing to say some "older ppl" may "relate," "but not as many" (line 118). Amanda *counters* (line 119) and *challenges* (lines 120, 127) their ideas, but Sarah *counters* back (lines 121, 128), providing a strong rationale for why Amanda's belief about older readers may be what it is—that she is studying to be a teacher and she read the book knowing she would be discussing it with adolescents (line 128).

Ultimately Sarah and Kendra contribute a sophisticated understanding of the role a reader's purpose and context (e.g. age, experiences, etc.) plays in the level of engagement between a reader and a text, and interpretation of that text. Amanda later commends the students for their "great points" (line 139). That Amanda's original beliefs about Avi's intended audience for *NBTT* were challenged and modified as a result of this collaborative back-and-forth becomes evident in Amanda's journal, where she wrote that she had "not thought of this," and [Sarah and Kendra's] ability to "back up their points" "surprised" her.

Modification of original ideas and interpretations can be seen in another excerpt taken from the second, 11-minute episode (see Example 2), where Amanda employs *challenge* questions and *disclosure* to facilitate the dialogue. Amanda has asked what Philip should have done in the story to take responsibility for his actions, and Kendra and Sarah have offered that he should have stood up to his father.

Here, Amanda—perhaps encouraging the students to reflect more deeply on the issue—*takes up* Kendra's and Sarah's comments (line 190) that Philip should have taken responsibility and stood up to his dad, but *challenges* their comments with another question: "Would his dad have let him, do u think?" (line 193):

Kendra immediately answers "no" (line 195), and when Sarah answers with a conditional affirmative (line 197), Amanda *discloses* her opinion—that she disagrees (line 198). This prompts Sarah to ask Amanda "how," (line 200), and Kendra jumps in with her rationale (line 201), (which communicates her alignment with Amanda). Amanda then provides a different rationale (line 202).

Sarah now has two interpretations to consider. She counters both Kendra and Amanda (line 204), and then requests clarification on their points (line 206). Amanda affirms and elaborates her point, *disclosing* her opinion about Philip's dad (lines 210, 212). Kendra elaborates her point (line 216), and affirms Amanda's comment, using the teacher's name to do so (line 217). That Sarah is reflecting on her own position and considering modifying it seems apparent when she echoes Kendra's earlier point (line 201), explaining she understands that Philip's dad was trying to get Philip to do something he wasn't able to do himself (line 218).

Dialogue is collaborative. While analysis revealed *pedagogical* features of collaborative dialogue to be present in the two episodes, *exploratory and improvisational* features were less salient. One indicator that dialogue is *exploratory and improvisational* is the presence of student-posed questions and student-selected topics (Nystrand, 1997). While Amanda's use of *uptake* often allowed student responses to expand and deepen the

topic of discussion, all of the topic-driving questions, and thus topics in both episodes, were posed by Amanda. When students posed off-topic questions to Amanda, they were ignored, as Example 3, taken from the 11-minute episode illustrates.

Amanda initiates the episode with an *authentic initiating* question—a question with no predetermined answer that seeks out student opinion about a specific issue. (If the question were inauthentic, Amanda might have affirmed one answer over the other [e.g., affirming Sarah's answer and taking up its consequent elaboration as focus of the discussion]). Sarah responds with a simple "yes" (line 162), but then goes on to elaborate (lines 165, 169). Kendra responds "no," and then asks Amanda "why" (line 163)[2].

Steve remarks that Amanda's question is a "good" one (line 166), and Amanda—perhaps realizing she has asked a close-ended question that can be answered with unelaborated responses, explicitly requests that the students elaborate on their answers (line 167). Amanda never *takes up* Kendra's questions about her initiating question, or responds to Steve's compliment, but instead *takes up* their on-topic comments and redirects them to elaborate on these comments (lines 170, 171).

Burbules (1993) explains "any communicatively relevant assertion can be raised for consideration…and students should be able to raise [questions] with a teacher" (p. 81). He furthers, "There will often be a temptation to set [discursions] aside for the sake of 'getting on with the topic at hand,'" but doing so "[distorts] the communicative interaction…and frequently, [discursions] are *more important* than the topic at hand" (p. 81 [italics in original]).

Steve and Kendra are obviously intrigued with Amanda's initiating question. It seems Kendra doubts the inauthenticity of the question, assuming the act of asking the question itself presumes a predetermined answer. This discursive opportunity seems ripe for a "teachable moment," perhaps more so for Amanda than the students, as Amanda could use the opportunity to explore what criterion Steve uses to judge a "good" teacher-posed question, and what Kendra thinks about the kinds of questions teachers pose in discussions, what such questions communicate to students, and what she perceives her role to be in classroom discussion.

The students' intrigue also presents an opportunity for Amanda to disclose the goals for her question, and perhaps the conversation itself. Burbules (1993) suggests "the communicative character of dialogue commits participants to a certain degree of openness about their positions and how they have come to hold them, as well as an open-handedness about their intentions within the dialogical relation itself" (p. 81). It seems as though Amanda falls short of this "open-handedness," as she continually turned the discussion in both episodes back toward her topic rather than engage the students' off-topic questions and comments.

Analysis of Amanda's interview transcript provides some insight on why this missed opportunity might have occurred. In the follow-up interview, Amanda explained she saw her role in facilitating discussion about literature to be "to keep [students] on topic, to keep them moving…" (Interview transcript, December 8, 2005). When the researcher asked why she felt she needed to do this, Amanda responded, "…you can get everything covered" (Interview transcript, December 8, 2005). Ultimately it seems Amanda viewed one of her roles in facilitating the chat dialogue as covering an agenda. That Amanda came to the computer lab for each chat session with a prepared list of questions (Field notes, February 15, 2005) seems to reinforce this interpretation. Implications of these findings for future instruction are discussed next.

Example 3: Excerpt From Episode 2 In Chat 2

Line #	Speaker	Turn	Move type
161	Amanda	do you think Philip lost his voice by the end of the book?	Authentic initiation
162	Sarah	yea	
163	Kendra	no why	
165	Sarah	the ppl didn't even get the grade right	
166	Steve	that is a good question	
167	Amanda	explain please why u think yes or no	Request for elaboration
168	Kendra	he does doesnt he or you wouldnt have brought it up	
169	Sarah	he didn't tell the story. His dad did to the reporter	
170	Amanda	so what do you think derrick	Uptake + vocative
171	Amanda	kendra how did he not lose his voice	Uptake + vocative

Implications and Conclusion

Researchers have reported that it is difficult for teachers to move away from recitation patterns of discussion to more collaborative formats (e.g., Alvermann & Hayes, 1989; Christoph & Nystrand, 2001). The findings reported here suggest that beginning teachers can achieve success at constructing literary interpretations together with students in a synchronous CMC environment, but may have trouble turning control over topics to students. And contrary to what some CMC researchers suggest (e.g., Bump, 1990; Herring, 1999; Davidson-Shivers, Muilenberg, & Tanner, 2001), the synchronous CMC medium—at least by itself—does not disrupt topic-setting norms found in traditional classroom discourse. It becomes important, then, for teacher educators who use and promote CMC environments to consider several factors in preparing beginning teachers to use CMC for discussion.

First, although Amanda was more successful in facilitating collaborative dialogue than the other two teachers in the larger study (Groenke and Paulus, 2007), Amanda brought beliefs about discussion and her role in facilitating discussion to the task that may work against collaborative dialogue. Amanda suggested she felt the need to keep her pals on-topic to "cover" an agenda, and this belief about her role in the discussion works against the goals of collaborative dialogue and its exploratory and improvisational nature. Such a belief may result from Amanda's own experiences with classroom discussion. Teasing out these expectations and discussing how teachers' expectations for discussion about literature are formed may need to be an initial step in future phases of the Web Pen Pals project.

Similarly, beginning teachers may need opportunities to engage in exploratory, improvisational dialogue in class so they can better understand the character and tensions associated with co-constructive meaning-making (e.g., following discursive tangents and participating in discussion without a pre-set agenda). As O'Loughlin (1995) has argued, "Students come to us with embodied conceptions of teaching and learning—ideas that have built up not from learning about these topics intellectually but from experiencing them over many years of schooling…. Prospective

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[2] It is not clear if Kendra poses this question to Sarah or Amanda, but when the researcher considered the question in conjunction with Kendra's question in line 168, "he does doesn't he or you wouldn't have asked the question," the researcher assumed Kendra posed it to Amanda, wanting to know why Amanda has asked this question.

teachers do not *think* teaching should be done a certain way; they *know* it from their lived experience" (p. 114 [italics in original]). Beginning English teachers usually only "know" how discussion should be done from their own "lived experiences" as students in traditional face-to-face classroom contexts, where discussion might have been monologic (e.g., following recitation patterns).

Finally, Amanda's belief about her role in facilitating discussion in the synchronous CMC environment may also have resulted from a lack of experience in a synchronous CMC environment. Contrary to popular beliefs that all young people are "wired" and "online," Amanda self-reported in a pre-project questionnaire that she only used computers to check her e-mail and this was only done on campus, as she did not have a computer at home. Access to computers remains an issue for teacher educators who use and encourage the use of new internet technologies by beginning teachers. In addition, opportunities for consistent practice using the technologies we hope beginning teachers will use with future students must be provided and encouraged in teacher education if beginning teachers are to better understand what environments, such as synchronous CMC, can afford new forms of literary inquiry.

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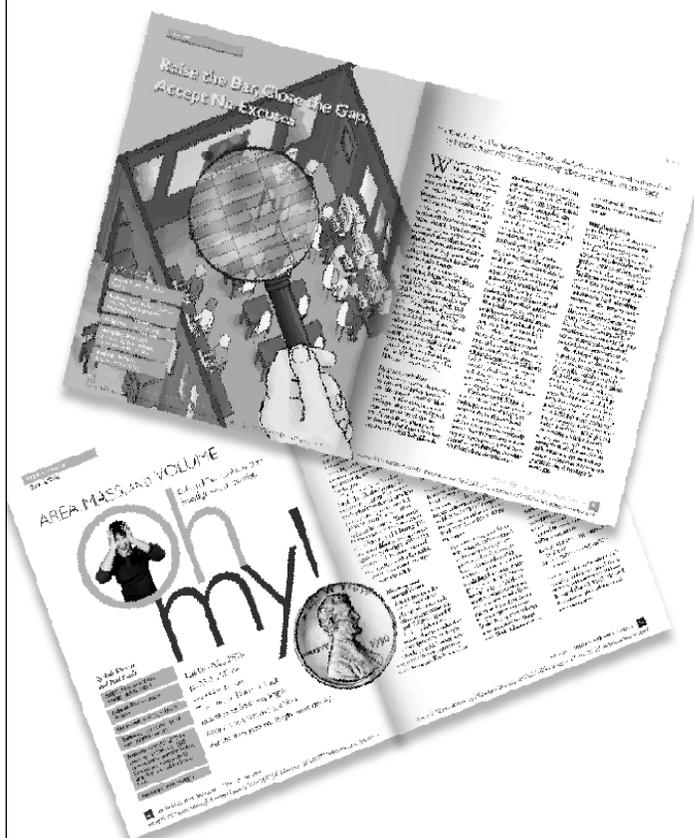
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