Teachers' Pedagogical Stories and the Shaping of Classroom Participation: "The Dancer" and "Graveyard Shift at the 7-11"

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This article appears in the Fall 2002 issue of
The American Educational Research Journal

The research reported in this article was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Spencer Foundation. The data presented, the statements made, and the views expressed are solely the responsibility of the authors.

Abstract

This study illustrates how teachers' pedagogical stories inscribe worlds, beliefs, and identities that position their students' participation and performance. Based on a view of storytelling as a rich site for observing teaching as the joint social construction of "self" as successful academic performer and social actor, the study analyzes two teachers' storytelling practices that, unbeknownst to them, were integral to teaching and learning in their high school classrooms. The two teachers held contrasting visions of education and accomplishment. The analyses of the teachers' object lesson stories illustrate the particular dispositions, beliefs, and values they forwarded for their own roles as teachers as well as for their students' roles as learners. Each set of stories appealed to a particular demographic of students. By juxtaposing these unique narrative repertoires, the study extends sociocultural theories of how successful student participation is a local, interactive accomplishment tied in complex ways to macro social narratives.

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> If this were a swim class, and you guys were OK dog paddler swimmers, but you couldn't really swim, couldn't do the crawl really very well, could sort of get across. And I said, "Well, we are going to learn to do the crawl." Some of you rushed home at the end of the first practice and bought water wings. Water wings are blow up donuts that you put on your arms and you can even put them on your feet and you can float without even thinking about it. And you can sort of crawl with those water wings on. Of course you don't know if you are doing it or if they are doing it because they float anyway no matter what you do; even if you don't try to swim, you are floating. OK? Well, at the end of the swim season those students who had water wings on the whole time, if we allowed you to compete in the swim meets with your water wings, you probably wouldn't win too many events. But you also would not know if you could really swim or if it was really just the water wings. True? Are there any water wings for an English class? (A student responds with the answer the teacher intended, "Cliff Notes.") Really. Cliff Notes. (Laughing) Gosh. Cliff Notes. Well, I would like to ask you in all seriousness. Please not to buy the Cliff Notes . . . because . . . you can get through the end of this year and not have improved your reading. (Dave's story; Day 1 in English Literature)

We begin this way to introduce a study that extends theory and practical understandings about the role of teachers' discourse practices in shaping students' classroom participation. Scholarship forwarding the importance of narrative in the construction of knowing (White, 1981), of self (Bakhtin, 1981), and of knowledge (Bruner, 1986) suggests that pedagogical stories are rich sites for observing how successful academic performance is a social construction. Our analysis of teachers' instructional stories is built upon Bourdieu's (1977) assumption that alignment of teachers' and students' dispositions is critical to students recognizing and responding to learning opportunities, on Gee's (1996) theory that students reinforce and reconstitute "selves" when they take on discursive "identity kits" during classroom activity, and on Fairclough's (1995) view that teachers' discourse powerfully shapes who students think they are, who they think they can be, and who they ultimately can become.

We apply these perspectives to two teachers' storytelling practices that, unbeknownst to them, were integral to teaching and learning in their high school classrooms. Unique in their profiles, the two teachers and their classroom cultures held contrasting visions of education and accomplishment. Our analyses of these teachers' stories describe how they positioned students as learners and shaped beliefs about what constituted the purposes and goals of classroom activity. Through the kinds of stories they told and the contexts in which they were presented, these teachers offered opportunities to particular demographics of students to engage in academic learning. By juxtaposing two repertoires of pedagogical stories, we extend sociocultural theories of how successful student participation is a local accomplishment tied in complex ways to sweeping social narratives.

Storytelling as Pedagogy

Scholarship that has theorized a social and interactional view of the role of narrative emphasizes its importance in classroom teaching and learning (Hicks, 1994). Theories about narrative as a way of constructing knowing, the known, and the knower depict narrative discourse between teachers and students as an important mode through which academic knowing is tied to student identity (Bruner, 1986; White, 1981). Storytelling interactants, from the cultural perspectives of Geertz (1973) and Goodenough (1981), build knowing and being within individual classroom cultures. Through their narrative interactions, they construct ways of acting, believing, perceiving, and evaluating as classroom members. Stories, from this perspective, are symbolic conversational texts that embody sociocultural membership and represent understanding and how it is constructed among tellers and hearers. As argued by Rorty (1979), understanding is central to knowing and being within social relationships. Through self-reflexive classroom conversations, of which storytelling is one genre, members attempt to find and build as much agreement as is needed to understand what they know and need to know, how they are being viewed, and who they need to be in their current situation.

Bakhtin's (1981) theorization of the dialogic properties of interactional discourse provides a view of the transformative power of this culture-constitutive and self-reflexive process. Stories, as representations constructed through dialogue, compel as well as construct and convey transformation through the value-laden constructions tellers make of themselves, others, and "realities." As part of larger, ongoing classroom dialogues, members' stories purposefully build on prior discourse (including stories) and influence what talk may come next. Through stories, members tell each other their current reading of the classroom norms. That is, their stories communicate how they believe teachers and students should act and what behavior, information, and points of view they should value, believe, and know. So that when teachers tell stories, even when they are not explicitly or intentionally instructional, they tell them in a way that represents a view of what counts as classroom-appropriate social and academic knowledge and performance.

Laden with instructional messages, these texts instruct students in the discursive roles they should take up, the understandings they are expected to demonstrate, the information listeners expect to hear, and the ways to convey it. On the basis of these story texts, students choose whether, when, and how to enter participatory interactions and evaluate the success of their participation. Over time, the frequency, duration, and kinds of stories teachers tell and the occasions on which they tell them shape the norms for how students think they need to present themselves, what students count as knowledge, and how students display achievement in their classroom.

Teachers' instructional stories project not only students' ways of being and acting in their classrooms. Their stories imply that this is the kind of knowledge that is needed by all students in all classrooms, what Fenstermacher has called "studenting" (1986). Their views of how to be a student emerge, as do teachers' pedagogical and curricula practices, from their experientially embedded beliefs about subject matter, teaching and learning, the goals of schooling, and the role of education in life (Richardson, 1996).

Teaching as Promoting a Relationship Between Self, Accomplishment, and Classroom Practices

The teachers' stories we analyzed were discourse structures within which and from which social "selves" emerged, were recognized, and acknowledged. Through the stories both the teachers who spoke them and the students who interpreted them constructed socially acceptable

subjectivities. As Giddens (1990; 1991) has theorized, "self" is a "reflexive project," the focus of an ongoing dialogue that individuals sustain with themselves in relation to their changing lived experiences. For our study, we theorized teaching and learning as the voicing of socially appropriate selves through interactional discourses constituting social classroom practices that forwarded academic accomplishment. In the two classrooms we studied, students demonstrated through their academic performance and social behavior that they were able, with regularity, to ascertain the selves they needed to be in order to act competently as academic knowledge-builders and as cultural members.

We synthesized this conceptualization from the work of three scholars—literacy scholar James Gee, critical discourse analyst Norman Fairclough, and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In his literacy scholarship, Gee theorizes student selves in classrooms in terms of social perspectives or positions. Students position themselves in relation to others as they engage socially. Through their discourse they recognize themselves and others as certain kinds of people. Their local conversation is a site for the expression of macro Discourses (which Gee marks with a capital D). These are ways of being in the world or identity kits with instructions about how to look, act, and talk, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognize. Consequently, for students to engage in classroom talk and activity, their social Discourses must be compatible with those of their teacher. Students who ascribe to ways of being in the world different from those required for classroom participation will struggle with issues of social membership and have difficulty demonstrating capability.

Gee's theory extends Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" (1977), which theorizes a relationship between self-identity building and group (e.g. classroom) practices. By conceptualizing how the observed order of a social group comes to be, Bourdieu theorizes a dialectical relationship between what students internalize or incorporate and what they externalize or objectify. Each student brings to the group a "*habitus*, a way of being, a habitual state, a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination" (p. 214) produced by the material conditions of his or her prior existence. Each student's habitus signifies principles by which the student generates and regulates what he or she regards as "regular" ways of being and acting with that group. On the basis of these principles the student responds strategically to unforeseen and ever-changing situations by drawing from similar past practices (e.g., politeness conventions). When students endowed with similar habitus interact in a practice (e.g. reading a text, assessing performance) everything is organized by concordant principles that anticipate particular reactions and allow for a recognizable and comfortable range of implicated strategies. When group members do not have common habitus, those who are asked to engage in practices whose dispositions are far removed from those suited to current conditions will regard the practices as unreasonable, impossible, or even ridiculous.

For a group to coalesce and experience social homogeneity requires recognition of and affiliation to a shared set of principles. When homogeneity (or what some teachers refer to as a sense of community) occurs, students have recognized at least minimal concordance between the characteristics of their personal histories and classroom principles. The appearance of tolerance for diversity within a group that shares common principles is the power that unites and motivates.

Such relations operate automatically and invisibly. Each person's actions unwittingly reproduce principled meaning without his or her conscious control. This means that within practices organized in concordance with students' own beliefs and dispositions, students have no difficulty in grasping their rationale, of making them their own, of acting in accordance with the

same rationale, and of assuming the rightness of their actions. The "unwitting" factor has particular applications in this study, which observes teachers' narrative actions. Through this lens the teachers were observed as unaware that the practices they regarded as position-neutral pedagogical improvisation meant to motivate were, in Bourdieu's terms, the enactment of acquired schemes of thought and expression. They were not cognizant that during their instruction they and their students were "endlessly overtaken by [their] own words" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.79).

By adding Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse theory to Gee's and Bourdieu's perspectives, we want to foreground the hierarchical asymmetry between teachers and students, and the dominance teachers exercise through their narratives. Critical discourse theory posits the teachers' stories as a material form of dominant social action. That is, the stories produce, reproduce, or transform social structures, relations, and identities among the students and their teacher. They do so by making available and shaping what is regarded as valid ways of performing in the classroom, and thereby determining the field of potential engagement for students. Consequently, pedagogical stories powerfully influence which discourses will be produced, who will produce them, and how they will be judged.

Method

The story analyses provided in this study emerged from separate continuing interactional ethnographic analyses of two classrooms begun in 1993 and 1994, respectively. In previous analyses of the discourse events of the two classrooms, instructional story emerged as a dominant discourse genre, raising the question that led to this study: "How do the teachers' ways of storytelling shape students' identities and their expectations of and opportunities to learn academic subject matter?" From ethnographic and formal interviews with the two teachers that applied the same guide and protocol to discern what, how, and why they taught, we learned their views about tracking and their goals for their classes. In their own ethnographic and formal interviews, students told us why they were taking their class, what they hoped to gain from doing so, and their goals for schooling and for life afterward.

The Teachers

Dave and Jack taught in separate high schools in the same district. Regarded as outstanding teachers in their schools and communities, they were educational leaders with more than ten years of experience. Both English teachers, they taught a full range of subjects including Advanced Placement and basic courses, and had been active fellows in their local national writing and literature project. The two shared similar profiles in the respect they commanded from students, colleagues, and parents, their roles in school and district decisions, their involvement in professional development, their experience with tracking-related problems, and their exposure to teaching diverse student populations. Another profile of the two teachers foregrounds unique differences in their views about the goals of schooling and their teaching.

Dave's view.

Dave believed tracking is a necessary institutional structure for distributing students to achieve the goal of schooling, which was to provide a good quality academic education leading to higher education. This belief rested on the assumption that the literacy students learn in preparation for college also prepares them for life outside of school. Consequently, college preparatory curriculum should be the standard against which student achievement, teaching

rigor, and sorting needs are assessed. Educators with this view are concerned with whether students read, write or numerate sufficiently well to move through the stages of preparation for college entrance. Top tracks are reserved for the more rigorous courses of academic study and students best suited for pursuing them. General or middle tracks accommodate students less able, interested, or prepared for advanced study. Lower tracks serve those whose attitudinal, preparational, or native intellectual attributes compromise their studies. For Dave, sorting students supports them and their teachers in targeting the kinds of curriculum and expectations that suit their interests, skill levels, and capabilities.

Dave believed a certain amount of mobility across tracks was possible, inevitable, and preferable. Capable students, who had been languishing in general or basic courses, could, through commitment and hard work, be successful in higher level classes; and those who lost motivation, though capable, would descend down the levels. His views resonated with under achiever-over achiever theories he shared with his colleagues.

Dave's goals for his Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) English Literature class reflected his beliefs. He wanted to provide opportunities for his highly motivated students to be high achievers. The outcomes by which he measured the success of his teaching were consistent with stakeholders' goals: students' good grades on academic tasks, high standardized test scores, acceptances to four-year universities, expressed love of literature and reading, sound reasoning from textual evidence, and convincingly written essays.

Dave's class.

Dave's 11th grade GATE English Literature course had a long-established history as a gateway course into 12th grade Advanced Placement English and then a four-year university. In recent years students had been permitted to self-select into this and other previously restricted courses. The year of the study, 10 general students and 17 GATE students shared the classroom—17 females and 10 males. All but two were of European American descent (two were Mexican-American), from middle and upper middle class families, two-thirds with parents who were or had worked within education. The general students selected the course because it was recommended by friends, siblings (many of whom had taken the course), or parents.

Without exception, the students entering this classroom had sought membership as an opportunity to advance their academic careers, a view that was reinforced as the course progressed. Nevertheless, students' attitudes and beliefs early on about how they would take advantage of the opportunity were less definite, and sometimes ambivalent or conflictual. While all students appreciated the stimulating challenge of the teacher's approach, many had trepidations. The general students voiced anxiety about their lack of knowledge and about how quickly and how much they would have to learn. They worried they would not succeed. Some GATE students expressed concern for their grade. The tension between appreciating more rigorous intellectual work not tied to concrete, explicit formulas and feeling insecure and less able to "read what the teacher wants" was voiced repeatedly by some students. Other GATE students expressed first surprise and then concern over the amount of work and the speed with which the course moved, and some were pleased the class covered so much ground so quickly, yet worried they were not learning what they should. Others were fearful of being held to a standard they could not meet, but pleased to be working toward its accomplishment.

Jack's view.

Jack opposed tracking. He thought the current academic and social sorting practices shaped many students' perceptions of themselves as academically mediocre or incapable and of school as a place for other kinds of people. He was aware of how this shaping contributed after high school to students' comparable placement in societal economic and social hierarchies, and he considered this sorting process unjust. As co-chairman of his school restructuring committee, he had spearheaded arguments to eliminate hierarchical sorting for most classes. He believed sorting students privileged a few students and teachers, while making teaching and learning in most classrooms more difficult. He assumed that not all students would or should go on to college, that they had diverse learning styles, and that their lives outside of school often positioned them to value school differently from students going onto higher education. He viewed education as a life-long process in which formal schooling was a resource students should value and utilize at certain stages to support their life choices and conditions. To teach students from this perspective meant giving them opportunities to develop a positive disposition toward learning, practical knowledge-building proficiencies, and literacies that would serve them in school and out in the world.

His goal for his class was to provide multiple opportunities for all students, regardless of previous learning experiences and current views of school, to participate meaningfully in academic activities. In addition to academic accomplishment, he looked for evidence of his students' meaningful participation in their improved school attendance, their mixing with new social groups, their socially responsible behavior, and their expressed enjoyment and valuing of school and of learning.

Jack's class.

Academic Foundations for Success (AFS) was designed to socially integrate ninth graders and prepare them for high school academics—those with learning disabilities, those whose first language was not English (predominantly Spanish speaking), and those designated general or gifted and talented. Since the course was being taught for the first time, Jack's students had few advance expectations for the course. Over the first three years, while the class and other restructuring measures (e.g., block scheduling) were instituted, the drop out rate decreased, overall grade point averages increased, scores on standardized tests of academic achievement rose, and reported incidents of fighting and malfeasance declined.

Of his 20 students, five were classified by the school as Special Education students (three spoke Spanish as their first language), two as GATE students, two as transitional English Second Language students (one born locally and the other a recent Mexican immigrant) and 12 as general students (English was not the first language for seven of these students). In interviews, five of his students said college was a goal and connected doing well in school with future success. For the others, school was a place they were required to attend, which they did not like or find valuable except for opportunities it afforded to meet with their friends. One of these students, a boy dressed in the crisply ironed white T-shirt and low riding black pants signaling real or "wannabe" gang affiliation, expressed the multiple, often conflicted, positions and messages that characterized his and many of his classmates' academic and social lives. He knew an education was important to earn a good living, and he wanted to do better in school, but he could not be seen carrying school books, or appear to do well or enjoy schoolwork.

Many of the students already worked for a minimum wage after school. They variously aspired after graduation to become a comic book artist, a professional hip hop dancer, a make-up

artist, the first in the family to receive a high school diploma, pregnant, and married and a parent. The five Special Education students uniformly responded, "I don't know, get a job."

Data collection and analysis

Ethnographic methods were used to collect the data on which this study is based (Spradley, 1980). For the analysis reported here, the researcher (first author) and research assistant (second author) reviewed daily videotapes and field notes of the first weeks of each class and coded for discursive patterns. Early on in the coding process, we noted the teachers' use of narrative-like constructions when addressing their classes. We found helpful Bruner's (1986) concept of narrative as a mode of thinking distinct from logical or pragmatic thinking. Using Bruner's conceptualization, we selected and labeled as "stories" particular discourse segments that Jack and Dave narrated when they talked to their entire class. These segments of talk were topically bound with details chronologically ordered to represent an event that had happened in the past, was occurring in the present, or was likely to happen in the future. Each narrative segment described an event in which people were doing something that was important and valued. Characters in the narratives were given motivations for their actions as they related to other people, circumstances, and consequent actions. The stories created a verisimilitude that made what people did (most often students) seem real and right within the situations being described. Stories often began with constructions like "I once had . . ." to signal a story about a past experience, or "when . . ." to indicate a narrative about a current event. Stories that projected hypothetical future events might begin with "If . . . ." Stories included specific details that resonated with students' experiences to bring to life characters and their actions. Whether implicitly or explicitly, stories provided messages, morals, or punch lines, conveying the "point" or significance of their telling.

Initial analyses of the meanings of Dave and Jack's stories confirmed that they were consistent with prior studies of their non-narrative instructional discourse, their curriculum, and students' performances (Rex, 1997; Rex, Green & Dixon, 1997; Rex & McEachen, 1999, Rex, 2000; Rex, 2001). This internal consistency encouraged us to more deeply analyze what their stories meant and how they influenced their students' participation in the communities of practice they were building.

In a second level of analysis, we identified semantic relationships among where story content originated, where stories were instructionally targeted, and how stories functioned. We called these the "source," the "purpose," and the "categories" of the stories. Using a variation of Spradley's semantic domain analysis (1980) (i.e., X is a kind of Y), and drawing from field notes, videotapes, interviews, and prior transcriptions and analyses, we created taxonomies for the sources and purposes of all of Dave and Jack's stories within the context of their ongoing instruction. For example, Dave purposefully told his students the "water wings" story as a lesson in how to be a student, specifically to dissuade them from using Cliffs Notes as a substitute or "crutch" for their reading. The story had originated from his teaching—from his many experiences with students who had used the notes. Most story sources were located in teachers' prior experiences with teaching, with higher education, and with their families. Jack's sources also included sports, media, and business. Dominant story purposes in both classes were learning subject matter and how to conduct oneself as a student. Refer to Appendices 1 and 2 for sources and purposes of Dave and Jack's object lesson stories.

We next categorized the stories based upon the taxonomies of their sources and purposes. Stories like "water wings" we categorized as object lesson stories because they provided a

message or moral of preferred action or state of being. The other types of stories Dave told we classified as humor, cultural illustration, learning strategy, solidarity, and institutional illustration. Jack's stories we categorized as object lesson, psuedo parable, classroom culture, procedural, modeling, story elicitation, bonding, availability, humor, historical fact, "If" illustration, and school culture. Refer to Table 1 for definitions and frequencies of occurrence.

Insert Table 1 here

Since the object lesson was by far the most frequent category in both classrooms (i.e., 35 and 41), we conducted further semantic analyses of each teacher's object lesson stories. We analyzed how the forcefulness of each story's lesson was achieved in the relationship among the teacher's authoritative experience, the source, and the purpose, or targeted instructional application. We returned to students' interviews, surveys, and performance artifacts to determine whether there was evidence of this forcefulness in student performance. As we analyzed relationships between the stories and student performance in each class data set, "The Dancer" and "Graveyard Shift at the 7-11" emerged as key stories.

To ensure validity, the researcher and research assistant worked separately and collaboratively using an interpretive method of coding (Erickson, 1986) to ascertain confirming and disconfirming evidence of assertions arising from relationships among purposes and sources of stories in relation to students in each class. To establish consistency of quantity and duration of stories, we held time in minutes constant. Since Dave's classes were held for 55 minutes and Jack's were 90 minutes long, we compared narratives from the first 10 classes of Dave's (550 min.) and the first 6 classes of Jack's (540 min.). During that time period, Dave told 68 stories, and Jack narrated 81. We conferred with Dave and Jack about our analyses and they wrote their own points of view.[1] However, the final discussion and their implications reported at the conclusion of this article are the interpretation of the first two authors.

Results

The Emergence of the Object Lesson: Teacher Stories over the First Weeks of Class

Dave and Jack knew that pedagogical stories were everyday fare in their classrooms, but were surprised by the number and the kind that they told. During the first formative days of class (Lin, 1993), both relied on stories to explain to their students what was expected and what the class would be about, while leading students in instructional activity. Most surprising was the dominance of object lessons in their stories—35 of Dave's 68 stories and 41 of Jack's 81 stories.

[1] Dave and Jack and the university researchers agreed to share the data and analyses to serve their professional purposes. They also agreed all four voices would be represented in any publications. Dave wanted to investigate the efficacy of his teaching methods. Jack, as co-chair of the school restructuring committee, wanted information to improve Academic Foundations for Success.

Prior to the studies, the first author had worked as supervisor of English student teachers for seven years at Dave's school and for eight at Jack's, including supervising student teachers in their classrooms. She had also participated with them in activities of their local national literature and writing project site. During data collection, Dave and Jack collected and analyzed data. The three co-presented various studies from the data corpus at national education conferences, to Jack's high school faculty, and each year to Dave's students.

In both classrooms, object lesson stories told students what they were to do, say, have, be, think, believe, value, remember, avoid, understand, pursue, and expect.

Dave and Jack drew most of their object lesson stories from their teaching of previous classes and their professional lives in schools (Dave: 21; Jack: 21). The next most frequent source was specific incidents they had experienced in their personal lives (Dave: 8; Jack: 6). In addition, they drew stories from their extensive higher educations, from their undergraduate experiences and from later advanced degree and professional development experiences (Dave: 6; Jack: 3). While Dave's stories remained exclusively in these three categories, Jack's story sources also branched out into media (6), sports (4), and business (1).

In order of frequency, the purposes of Dave's object lesson stories fell into three categories: learning subject matter (20), learning how to be a student (9), and standardized testing (6). The three purposes of Jack's stories indicate a different emphasis. They were learning how to be a student (24), learning subject matter (11), and introducing class members (6).

Dave's object lesson stories.

In Dave's stories, his own and past students' performances were models for his current students' immediate and future approaches to reading and writing. For example, he narrated occasions when people used effective and ineffective practices. One story showed the limitations of rote memory: "A lot of people, truly a vast majority of people, when they had this kind of thing to memorize, will… repeat the word over and over again without making any sort of connection or association; they just mindlessly repeat" (Rote memory; Day 3, 8:25-9:48).[2] Dave's stories pointed out that changing old habits was difficult and uncomfortable, but necessary, and that it took perseverance and attention. For example, he united himself with his students as fellow readers to commiserate about the difficulties of reading.

> "I also know that our minds are in the room, out of the room, in the room, over to some other person, back to me, thinking of tonight, back to me, thinking of the book, how much homework do I have, back to me. Isn't that how the minds work? That's how they work while you read too. So this crazy, you know, capricious mind that we have is attending a lot of the time, not nearly all the time." (How not to read; Day 5, 14:25-17:09).

Dave used a story about his father's golf game to illustrate that reading is a skill requiring extensive practice, but not of ineffective methods (Dad golfing; Day 1, 19:20-20:03). To explain why his approach to reading might be a change from instruction they had received in prior classes, he recalled how he had learned to read literature in college: "When I was in college the first time, new criticism was the only way. . ." (College reading as English major; Day 3, 36:20-38:05). Using a story about how he had failed to notice his friend's teeth (Sharon's teeth; Day 3, 40:10-42:21), he made the point that people perceive different things to argue for the personal response aspects of Louise Rosenblatt's Reader Response theory.

He told six object lesson analogies to exemplify how improving reading and writing meant taking responsibility for observing what one needed to learn. Several reflected his personal life. "If I go to a golf pro to get lessons, and I don't even tee up the ball . . . Proof read your papers. Tee up the ball" (Teeing up the ball; Day 10, 28:28-29:20). Other analogic stories warned students away from practices that would make the course work easier but limit their

[2] The title of each story, the day it was told, and the time of occurrence in elapsed minutes and seconds appears after each story segment.

opportunities to learn and grow. Cliffs Notes became "water wings" that artificially kept them afloat and prevented them from learning how to read on their own. Later on, water wings reappeared in a narrative discouraging the use of the five paragraph essay as water wings that are used "if you have a great deal of trouble essay writing, if you need structure. . . " (Five paragraph essay; Day 9, 15:05-16:15).

Six stories addressed how his anxious students should regard the SAT and PSAT tests they would soon be taking. Dave started his PSAT lesson with a story about his son's less than successful first attempt at the difficult SAT, and his more successful second try to make the point that "scores are just plastic. They can be anywhere," to show a negative and positive case of preparation, and to tell them not to settle for what they initially think is their best (Scores are plastic; Day 8, 28:01-29:37).

Dave took a similar approach in talking about grades and cheating, for which he told eight stories. One was about a former student whom he had caught cheating under the weight of the course's rigorous work load (Cheating at the theater; Day 2; 16:25-18:09). Other stories demonstrated how to complain about a grade (Who to complain to; Day 6, 27:53-29:09), explained the impetus and fairness of his grading practice (Fairness in grading; Day 6, 32:07-33:13), and illuminated his unique system of giving credit rather than grades for accomplished essays (Astonishing essay; Day 7, 55:27-56:56; B+; Day 10, 31:05-31:37). The rest illustrated the arbitrariness of grades as marks of learning (Grading is arbitrary; Day 10, 30:13-31:05) and told students how to get full credit rather than a less prestigious A on their essays (How not to get an A; Day 10 31:50-32:34).

Dave's object lesson stories carried consistent messages about being tenacious, alert, and responsible in taking up the challenges of learning new and difficult things. They also served to represent those challenges as warranted and achievable if one followed particular strategies, and as missed opportunities if one did not. Authoritative weight inhered in his stories of his prior personal experiences as a successful student, of his former students, and of his children, who had succeeded or taken unfortunate paths. Power also resided in the stories' detailed representations of worlds and events in which the students could imagine themselves. His narrations acculturated initiates into an academic domain, which every student cast as trustworthy in exit interviews and surveys during the year of this study. They believed that Dave was a reliable narrator, and that taking on his object lessons helped them learn and achieve.

<u>Dave's story: The Dancer.</u>

Dave told "The Dancer" story each year, and it was not unusual for students to remember when. Students in his April, 1999 class recalled the specific day and told us their common reading of the story, which we will elaborate in this section. Dave told his story on the 13th day of class, as he prepared to give back to students' their first major essay for the course. The story was a planned part of an essay composing cycle (Green & Meyer, 1991), the first of many essay writing cycles the class would engage in over the duration of the year as they wrote case-making essays for their readings of literary texts. At the beginning of the cycle on day 4, Dave had explained what he was "interested in students doing on this paper" as he assigned them to free write about a viable topic for an essay they would write. He further explained how the way the class had been learning to read the text of <u>Beowulf</u> was the same method they would use to write papers about their reading of the text—that is, "drawing from the text so the paper is really grounded in the text as [they] frame their argument." On day 6, while the rest of the class looked on waiting for their turn, he interactively questioned students about the reasons and evidence for

their paper topics. Next, on days 9, 10, and 11 respectively, he led students in activities that established expectations and supportive interim peer feedback for their drafts in progress. While students asked numerous clarifying questions, he walked them through a hand out of essay writing conventions (e.g. rules for and examples of embedded and unembedded quotations). He modeled for them how to respond critically but supportively to a draft, after which they responded to a partner's draft; and, he demonstrated the use of peer editing guidelines before students edited each other's papers. On day 13, students anxiously awaited the return of their essays to see how they had been assessed. Aware of their concern, Dave told his story.

It was a story within a story. He reported a tale told to him in the early days of his teaching by a former English student who was also a student of dance. His discourse created a particular identity for his former student and her dance teacher that can be read as an indication of the kind of teacher Dave wanted to be and of how he positioned his students. When he began his story, Dave signaled to students the historical weight behind the words and established his role as an authority figure. His manner of introducing the narrative, "I want to tell you a little story," and his allusion to the timely coincidence of its original telling and the students' births served to initiate a fatherly theme that was reinforced throughout the narrative. For seventeen years, while they had been growing up, he had been successfully guiding other students in this particular way.

> I want to tell you a little story. About twenty years ago- I can't believe it- actually- no- probably seventeen- only seventeen. It was when you guys were born, about. I was teaching at LC Junior High and I had a student who was in my English class and also was my aide. . .
>
> She came into the period when she was my aide, and I was teaching a class that period, and she seemed very down. And I said, well, what's the matter. And she said, well last night at ballet—This girl was really quite a fine dancer. In fact is a professional dancer in New York right now—Last night at ballet the teacher didn't yell at me. And I said, well, wouldn't that be more an occasion to rejoice than to be sad? And she said, well, no, not really, because he only yells at the dancers that he thinks really have talent, and that could get better. The kids that he knows, you know, they're just there, he doesn't yell at them, he doesn't give them a hard time, cause he knows they're sort of doing their best and sort of passes it off, and he usually yells at me and he didn't last night and I'm worried.
>
> And I said, well maybe he will yell at you tonight. So the next day she came back and she was her usual effervescent self, and in fact he had yelled at her and everything was OK again. And she went on to do a lot of solo dancing and chorus line dancing and major Broadway productions and continues as a professional dancer. (Day 13, 9:28-12:02)

Dave's story depicted him as a sensitive, student-centered authority figure, alert to his student seeming "very down," and to learning from her. It held the dancer up as a model of the outstanding student whose excellence in her dance classes made her a professional dancer in a venue known for its fierce competition. It depicted the dance teacher as the primary influence on a dancer's professional achievement. His "yelling" and giving of "a hard time" somehow assured her success. The happy ending sent the message about achievement that even students who are talented need to be continually pushed by their teacher. It told students listening to the story that if Dave yelled at them they must be talented and fortunate to have a teacher who pushed them.

The student's distress when she was not yelled at implied that she understood, accepted, and relied upon the expert-apprentice relationship. For her, the teacher embodied the knowledge

she needed to succeed. His actions reflected that knowledge and were, therefore, in her best interest. The dancer's worry when her teacher stopped yelling indicated another of the teacher's roles—to reassure students that they were actually as talented and capable of achievement as had been thought. The story told students to regard their capabilities in terms of external reinforcements. As long as the teacher was yelling, the student thought she had promise. When the yelling stopped, doubt and insecurity immediately besieged her. This role forwards a subtle but powerful belief that successful students require continual external reassurance to maintain an integrated sense of self. Once yelling resumed, the student was her "usual effervescent self" and "everything was ok again."

Her distress also implied she understood herself to be talented and promising in ways that eclipsed her classmates who were not yelled at. She referred to these students as "just sort of there;" "they're sort of doing their best," which would never be good enough. Some of her distress may have also been due to being treated as one of the "just there" students. The self she had colluded with her teacher to construct took its identity, in part, from being better than the other selves in the studio. In order to continue to define herself this way, she was compelled to out perform them. Yelling was not only a signal that she was talented and doing well; it also signaled social differentiation, that she was better than the others.

That the story positioned students as competitors contradicts the view reported by class members at the end of the term—this was a collaborative community of learners. This reading appears less of a contradiction when we consider a difference in scale. Students in this class judged themselves in relation to other students in school. Students in GATE English Literature shared status, in contrast to students in the other English classes who were being yelled at for reasons other than their academic accomplishments.

Over the duration of the course, whenever Dave returned student papers, he reminded them of the dancer story. He explicitly stated his purpose in telling the story when he began his explanation of his paper-grading approach. He asked students to keep the story in mind as they read the comments he had written on their papers: "That sort of has stayed with me, that little incident because. . . I would like you to think about that when I write comments on your papers." A little later during his explanation, he invoked the "yelling" metaphor from the story to describe what he was trying to accomplish through his comments: "So I was sort of saying good things and bad things and sort of "yelling" at you, OK?"

"Yelling" as a key metaphor in the story poses multiple questions: What constituted yelling both in the dance studio and in the GATE English literature classroom? What did the dancer mean when she said she was yelled at? What did Dave mean when he said he would "yell" at students on their papers? Furthermore, what did students understand his yelling to mean? The common sense entailments of yelling are loud volume and strong, strident language. Ethnographic data indicates that Dave never raised his voice in the classroom or used what might be regarded as strong, high inference language. Which is to say he never yelled either verbally or in writing. By choosing this high inference term, he reflected his understanding of his students' position, their experience, and their emotions. Dave's evaluative practices indicate that while he believed critique was important, he was aware that students were particularly sensitive to having their work evaluated. He believed students experienced most evaluative comments as being yelled at, and could experience benign comments as deeply wounding. His explanation to the class contained references to his concern for students' feelings: "If we left it at that [a grade with little or no comment], I think what I would face, after passing these back, would be a class of wounded students, for one thing, who wouldn't have a clear way to heal. . . I hope none of you

will feel wounded by this." Dave told a story in which the apparent antagonist turned out to be the good guy, and the weapon (i.e. yelling) was revealed as a powerful positive. The story confirms Dave's belief that though students may feel they are being yelled at, they will value his yelling and see him as their advocate.

This intertextual interpretation of Dave's teaching role was illustrated in the discourse actions students took on their own time before class had officially begun. Every day as their lunch break was ending, students would mill around Dave with questions related to their performance on class assignments; every day Dave would listen and suggest concrete ways they could improve. The mapping of this story onto his role as essay evaluator and onto his comments provided students with a complexly structured ideological frame for dealing with the feelings they experienced as they read his response to their papers. It was a powerfully appealing frame that made it possible for them to hear and make use of his principles of practice.

Jack's object lesson stories.

Most of Jack's object lesson stories advised how to be successful high school students by referring to life outside of school through allusions to popular culture (e.g., sports and movie making) and media or sports figures admired by or familiar to students (e.g., Michael Bolton, Michael Jordan, and Barbara Walters). His stories assumed many of his students would have difficulties integrating school into their lives in the short term and the long run. They provided a means for students to think about how to evaluate and put into perspective their school performances. For example, Jack told about former students who had not taken school seriously, who did not earn good grades, and who missed going on to great careers in drama and sports (Justin Maceda; Day 3, 74:45-75:26). While stories like these portrayed the need for students to work, others warned against too much work. "I've had students in the past who worked so hard they self-destructed" (Work, work, work; Day 2, 83:44-83:58; Self destruction; Day 2, 84:03-85:47). "What good is it to be the richest man in the world if you're in a hospital bed with a heart attack because you worked so hard . . ." (Richest man; Day 6, 25:32-26-45).

Fourteen of his stories provided criteria for students to gauge their school progress. Some forwarded school practices as good ways for students to self assess. For example, "Outside of English and [this] course, a lot of teachers in Social Studies require writing; a lot more Math and Science teachers are having students write. The idea is this…after you've been here four years you're going to have a collection of writing from a lot of different classes in there . . . I wish I had done this in high school because I think this is a good way to see how you have improved over the years" (Academic folders; Day 2, 26:45-27:13). Other stories forwarded school practices as helpful to students in getting work done: "Signing and keeping to this contract will insure that everyone of you gets a passing grade in this class" (Auto insurance; Day 2, 31:41-32:36). In the stories, tangible, future benchmarks were associated with high school learning and higher education or careers. "I read in a magazine today that colleges are probably going to require you to have your own computer and know how to use it" (Have your own computer; Day 1, 31:27-33:02).

Jack's stories about how to be a successful student were often hypothetical and cast his students in alternative scenarios that reflected prior experience with students who did not conform to standard school procedures. Three scenarios depicted them turning in work late to demonstrate which circumstances were acceptable and which were not, as in, "Oh, I did my homework, but I left it home" (Turning in assignments late; Day 2, 35:25-36:18). Another hypothetical case concerned their right to decline to participate if called on: "If you say no . . .

that's all right" (Publishing in class; Day 2, 40:37-41:02). His stories also told students there was room for disagreement and depicted how they could express alternate views: "If you write a paper, say, that's about a controversial issue, and I disagree with your position, if you do a good job of explaining why you feel the way you do, I'm not going to mark you down because I think you are wrong" (Room for disagreement; Day 2, 39:58-40:36). In one hypothetical story Jack provided examples of the how students could make public that they did not know something: "You're reading and you hit a word in French and you don't know how to pronounce it . . . I'd like this to be a class where you feel OK about saying what's on your mind" (Reading aloud, avoiding ridicule; Day 2, 34:10-35:24). Through Jack's stories, students missing deadlines, disagreeing with the teacher, and lacking academic knowledge became ordinary conversation about managing learning.

In three linked object lesson narratives Jack legitimized mistakes. Drawing from sports history, Jack told the story of Babe Ruth, the "Strike Out King," who made lots of mistakes in between hitting the big ones (Babe Ruth strike out king; Day 6, 70:57-71:25). Then, drawing from his high school experience, he told about being a poor, often sidelined player because he mistakenly joined the basketball team instead of the swim team. Once he realized his error and switched into a sport that fit his talents, he did well. "If you don't succeed in one direction . . ." (High school basketball; Day 6, 72:17-73:38). To illustrate a different way of thinking about mistakes, as "miss-takes," he narrated a movie-making analogy: "A miss-take is like, if you're shooting a movie, you take one take, and then it doesn't work or you want to do it better, you take another one, so that's kind of what making mistakes is all about." Jack's "mistake" stories were imbued with the value of learning from error: "Success has no rules, but you can learn a lot by failure" (Shooting a movie; Day 6, 73:39-74:02).

While Jack's object lesson stories promoted ways to be successful as a student in the AFS class, in other classes, and beyond, they also provided a comfortably recognizable way of talking about how to do so. The stories framed learning for students not yet familiar with academic or social success, for students who may experience difficulty learning how to be successful, and for students who may grow impatient with others who perform differently than they. The stories inscribed a way of acting in the classroom that guarded personal dignity; they portrayed a classroom that protected participation, one in which students could decline to participate without penalty, and in which mistakes were expected as developmental signposts. The stories moderated academic performance, positioning it as one of the things students do to be successful people in the world, warning against positioning high academic achievement as the sole measure of personal success. Though striving for and earning good grades was expected, academic excellence needed to be kept in perspective in relation to other important considerations.

Jack's story: Graveyard Shift at the 7-11.

By looking more closely at a story Jack told when he explained one of the class purposes (to think about high school as preparation for a career), we observe what in particular spoke to his students. Jack's story began as part of a letter he read to his class on the first day of the course (Day 1; 16:26-16:33). He had written the letter to introduce himself to the class and to model the letters he wanted them to write about themselves for homework. They were to "talk about the things you like to do for fun, the things you have accomplished so far in your life, and what you hope to have happen in the future." The letter reading came after students had completed personal information cards that included, if they had decided, their post high school plans "to follow a specific career, be a certain kind of professional or job . . . if you know where

you want to go to school after you get out of high school, [name removed] college, or [name removed] university."

The letter began with the bitter sweet ambivalence Jack felt about returning to teaching after a summer spent traveling, and went on to relate his experience of teaching at this high school for the first time the previous year (he had taught at another high school for ten years prior to moving to this school) and the many jobs he had held between college and teaching. He described his hobbies, the challenge he had taken on that year as chairman of the school's restructuring committee, and the hopes he had for what that meant for the school's success. The letter depicted him as a person who had built a life by going many places and doing many things, all related to education, from which he had learned and benefited.

Midway through the letter, when Jack read about working the graveyard shift in a 7-11 store, he began to enlarge on the experience and construct his story.

[reading] "At one point, I even worked as a cashier during the graveyard shift from midnight to 7 a.m. That's not a career I'd recommend unless you are an insomniac who likes boredom." [speaking while looking at the class] You do get to have all the free Slurpees you want, you know, but other than that it's not a very good job. They don't pay very much, and [big sigh as he shakes his head] in the middle of the night, sometimes I wondered, what am I doing here, you know, four in the morning, you're sitting in a 7-11 store. Not a whole lot of people come in at that time.

Of all the jobs he had held and the personal details he mentioned in his letter, Jack chose to enlarge upon the graveyard shift. His first story for his students was not about a success or a good time, but an account of despondency. He could have described how he successfully saved the seafood restaurant he named in his letter from its slide toward bankruptcy. Or, he could have told one of his many engaging college days social antics stories. By describing working the graveyard shift, he chose a story that represented a part of his life when he was not at his best, when he felt his life was not going well. Jack's story encouraged his students to take up a particular view of themselves and their circumstances. Designated as a model of the stories that could appear in their letters, the 7-11 job positioned students to recall situations characterized by familiar qualities in which they felt in ways similar to Jack. As part of their constructed personal histories, they were being encouraged to tell about feelings of despondency in a dispiriting work situation. In addition, Jack's stance in his stories as the older and more experienced life traveler, implied that even if they had not yet had this experience, they would at some point in their school or working lives.

Jack thought about where he was and about what being there meant. His story cast him in the role of the existential wonderer—"sometimes I wondered, what am I doing here"—who finds himself lost, alone, and doing something unpleasant simply to get by. One way of reading this discourse move is to see it as Jack's representation to students of the kind of teacher he would be as well as the kind of student they could be. He was the wanderer who had been where they were now and who understood how to get beyond that state. He had emerged on the other side of boredom, dead end jobs, and loneliness, and he could help them get there too, or perhaps avoid that route altogether. In making this move, he also sent a message about the kind of knowledge valued in this course. Personal revelation of and about one's experiences had value and could be useful. There was no shame in being in a dead end job, and a certain strength accrued to those who reflected upon their situation.

Ten minutes later, after completing the reading of his letter and beginning his explanation of what the course was about, he returned to his 7-11 narrative. He had asked students to

volunteer what they planned to do after high school. Two students said they wanted to go to college. Five more students raised their hands to indicate they too thought they were college bound. Jack said, "Most of the better paying jobs, not all of them, but most of the better paying jobs require you to go to some technical school or college or university to get something beyond a high school degree these days." He started by explaining that high school would present the students with "a lot of [career] options" for them to think about.

> We thought another part of this class would be, you know, since most of you are, you know, you kind of know what you want to do. But we are going to be presenting a lot of options for you to think about over the next couple of years to try to get you thinking. 'Well, what do I want to do?' You know, 'What are my strengths? What do I like doing? What do I have fun doing?' Because I think that is the key to really having a kind of career you can enjoy. If you like what you are doing, if when you get up in the morning you're excited about going to work, then I think you are in a good job. You're in a job you belong in. I know, like when I was working at the 7-11 store, I only did this about two weeks and I hated it. I had to give it up, uhm, I dreaded going in to that work. I thought, if I had to do that for my whole life I just would just not be a happy person. Teaching, however. Teaching. . . you know, I guess the thing I didn't like about the 7-11 job was, it was so boring. It was the same thing, you know. You stock the Hostess Twinkies on the rack, you know, and then you sell a couple of lottery tickets, and that was it. The rest of the time you are just trying to keep people from stealing stuff, you know, in the middle of the night, and keeping them from putting things in the microwave, you know, that would blow up. So it was not a job that really offered a lot of challenges, but teaching is something I really like doing because it's different. Everyday is different, every year is different, every class is different. So I like the variety that's involved. And I think that's the key. So part of the class is going to be getting you to think about, you know, what you want to do, not only while here at SM, but after, after school. (Day 1: 28:58-30:31)

Jack's narrative did not focus on his actions at the 7-11, although the details provided essential ballast for the argument he was making to the students. He mentioned elements of the job he knew were familiar to students in order to tell about himself. He constructed a character who comes to understand how badly he is messing up. In his story he was the inexperienced youth trying to manage the situations in which he found himself. As the teller of the tale, however, he was a grown up now suited to the role of guide, mentor, or teacher. Jack constructed himself as someone who had faced the difficulties of coming into his own and emerged relatively unscathed, someone who could understand their anxieties and guide them through adolescence to adulthood. Growing up was depicted as a series of choices and experiences one had—good and bad— before finally making the right career choice. By positioning himself as someone who figured out how to get out of a predicament brought on by a poor choice, Jack's story positioned students to think of themselves as either currently in that situation or inevitably occupying it. Jack tied who he became (a teacher) to whom his students would become and how they would get there (satisfied in their careers) to why they were in high school (to practice choice-making and understand their options). Over the course of their high school experience, they would make poor choices, reflect upon them, and make better ones, until, like him, their choices ended happily in a career they enjoyed.

Consequently, challenges were to be sought after and valued. By juxtaposing what he characterized as the stimulating variety of teaching with the grinding boredom of the graveyard shift, Jack had privileged a job that offered "a lot of challenges." Prevention of stock theft and

intervening in microwave explosions were not challenges from this point of view; nor were all the free Slurpees one could drink a benefit. By disparaging the limited benefits and challenges of working in a convenience store, he reinforced students' suspicions of such jobs as potential careers and their motivation to make better choices.

Jack's story not only told students who they should be and what they should be doing in high school, it also declared the potential personal and career value of high school itself. They would experience it as brimming with variety, as an opportune series of different choice-making events. The message of Jack's story emerged: Since everyone deserves to have a satisfying career, working toward it should be one's central focus, practice, and purpose in high school and life. To make the right choices students were to ask themselves "What do I want to do? What do I like doing? What do I have fun doing?" and then act upon their answers by leaving behind what was not good for them and moving toward what was.

The Teachers' Points of View

Acknowledging that told stories are polysemic and more than words written down (Patai, 1988), we invited Dave and Jack to respond to our analyses and to provide their own perspectives on what stories meant in their teaching.

Dave's Response

After participating in the study of the stories I use in my teaching, I have a better understanding of what I consider to be important elements of my classes. Stories are especially important, I now understand more clearly, because they reflect and reinforce the culture and overall classroom tone I hope to establish with my students and my curriculum. By classroom tone I mean the attitude I would like to establish with my students as they experience the curriculum in all of its dimensions. I hope to establish some of the following attitudes: 1. It's okay to be smart. 2. Originality and creativity will be valued. 3. Using evidence to support interpretations will be important, and we will recognize that there could be multiple readings of a document. 4. The same standards for academic rigor will be applied to the teacher as to the students. No one's ideas will be accepted on the basis of authority alone. Just as literary tone is communicated by an author's use of diction and his or her selection and arrangement of details, a classroom's tone is largely communicated by the teacher's stories and language choices in speaking with his or her students.

I hadn't initially realized the many impacts of my stories on my students and my classes. Since this study, I have made a connection (perhaps an obvious one, though I hadn't consciously thought about it before) between the power of stories in my teaching and the power of stories in my wife's sermons. We all remember the stories, though we certainly do not remember the direct admonishments, tips, bits of advice that we hear. Similarly, lessons that include good, illustrative stories are undoubtedly going to be remembered longer by the students than lessons that lack them. I can ask a class if I had mentioned something about General Semantics, for example, and be met with quizzical looks. But when I remind them of "Sharon's teeth," they immediately light up in understanding.

My stories reflect values that I hope to instill in my students, and often these values seem at odds with those transmitted by the news media, books, magazines, and movies—what I consider competing ways of students valuing themselves in the world. Studying my stories has helped me recognize that through them I am trying to counter certain dimensions of these American social narratives. I see a relationship between each person's unique experience and

the social narratives they are bombarded with. Before the study, my offering of alternative stories was inadvertent. Now I can more explicitly choose their focus, content, and timing to fit what we are trying to accomplish together. I think about the study every time I tell a story, and my insights have helped me create a more conscious "filter" for shaping them. I have stories about working hard, getting into college, seeing writing as "in process" and not as something "finished," noticing the world from each person's unique perspective, and dozens more. I know that students remember these stories because they refer to them months later in some cases. Many times I have been addressing a certain issue in my class of seniors when I have mentioned a story I had told to them as juniors relating to a certain dimension of the class. The story of the dancer and her teacher who hadn't yelled at her during a rehearsal is a good example. More often than not, some student who had heard the story the past year will volunteer to tell it to the students this year. It's sort of like taking pleasure in re-telling a good joke, except that the attitude of the students who volunteer to share the story of the dancer is more that of someone sharing an important truth. This year, since the student in my story received a Tony Award for "Featured Actress-Musical" for her role in "The Producers," its truth value has increased even more.

While it seems apparent that somehow getting teachers to reflect upon and change their stories would be difficult, considering the fact that the stories emanate from each teacher's worldview, it still seems to be important to do so. In fact, the value of this research on story telling would seem to be largely measured by the extent to which teachers might become more consciously aware of the stories they tell and the effects of their stories on their curriculum and on their students personally. Teachers who are more consciously aware of their stories and of the likely interpretations of their stories by their students would be inclined to "screen" stories for likely impact, and perhaps omit certain stories that had been told in the past in favor of stories that would aid more effectively in the creation of the classroom culture the teachers want to establish. I have found that to be true in my case.

Jack's Response

In looking over the study, I was not surprised by the fact that I used stories to illustrate particular themes in my classroom. It's only natural, since I grew up learning from stories told at home, in church and at school. And, I must admit, from television as well. Whether told by my dad who loved to spin a yarn or two, by my third-grade teacher Mrs. Acker who read us Jack Tales after recess each day, or by Andy of Mayberry, stories have long guided me. In my classes now, talking about shared experiences and reading about the experiences of others' times and places connects us on a very human level, and provides a needed foundation for understanding the rules and protocols for future interactions within the group.

I have to admit that I was surprised by the number of object lesson stories that I told in the first days of the class. This may mean that I am doing way too much of the talking. I might consider cutting out some of the narratives in favor of more activity and student-to-student discussion. On the other hand, if these stories draw students into the culture of the class and successfully establish a tone of mutual respect, then maybe it's most appropriate.

One of my professors in college, Dr. George Abernathy who taught and lived religious studies, had a subtle and dynamic impact on my life and my teaching. He always began and ended his classes with narratives (moral tales, actually) from his life experience, his travels to Asia or Africa, or his reading. Those stories created the spirit of his class, and made us willing to

think about some of the larger questions that life presents. We became a cohesive learning community.

When I am willing to share things that happened to me in my life, my students begin to share as well. I know that this approach is working when even the most quiet and reticent students begin to speak up. Some students will not share, and they know that's ok in our class. I can see how my stories echo some of the things that we've been told about life in America and how to get ahead. Personal responsibility and determination are key elements in achieving success, but students know there's more to it than that. Ninth graders have lived thirteen or fourteen years, long enough to see the inequities that exist in schools and communities. Signs of wealth and status are part of the school culture, and students are pretty sharp observers of what counts in social positioning.

One concern I have is that, as we enter a time of more demands for teaching technological applications across the curriculum, we may lose some of the space for narratives in our classes. I hope that there will always be time in the curriculum for human communication that doesn't involve a machine in the middle.

Discussion and Implications

In this paper we have considered how teachers' stories inscribe worlds, beliefs, and identities that position students to engage in classroom instruction. We have observed how teachers can and do use stories strategically as methods for shaping knowledge, reinforcing motivation, and building community. At the same time, it has become apparent that these stories inadvertently determine which views of schooling and life will prevail. Consequently, if we use pedagogical stories to study the construction and conditions of classroom learning, then it is incumbent upon us to carefully consider both their strategic and inadvertent influences.

Dave and Jack's new awareness of story offers them, other teachers, and those of us who study teaching and learning ways of consciously thinking about the use of storytelling as a strategic tool in classroom teaching. Our analysis of their stories illuminated the role of narrative meaning in connecting what teachers and students think is important to learn and how to engage in learning it. To become more strategic in the use of story requires teachers to analyze what particular collections of stories accomplish in their teaching and make that analysis part of their planning. Such analysis requires considering how narratives express views about what should count as knowledge and as displays of knowledge and of achievement, and whether these messages are consistent and aligned with classroom practices.

This analysis is important because pedagogical stories with the object lesson resonance of "The Dancer" and "The Graveyard Shift" become an instructional presence that is reinvoked in daily classroom practices and in students' memories. These narrative ideological frames instruct students in ways to voice themselves and their understandings. They teach students why, whether, when, and how to participate in learning and evaluate the success of their participation. Over time, the frequency, duration, and kinds of stories teachers tell and the occasions on which they tell them shape and hold steady the norms for how to be a good student, for what is worth knowing, and for how achievement should be displayed.

Dave's narratives provided students with ways of managing their anxiety over demands to get good grades and high test scores, reinforced their importance, and told students to reach beyond them. His stories encouraged students to seek out powerful learning experiences—including demanding teachers, rigorous instruction, and difficult academic assignments and examinations—to push them to achieve more than what they considered their

best. In his stories, instructor's critique and critical self-examination played important roles. Successful students in his narratives accepted rigorous critique as the foundation for their improvement. Their acceptance and following of the teacher's directions led them to achieve both in class and beyond in higher education.

In Jack's object lessons, the successes and failures of the characters in his stories reinforced the importance of life interests and experiences, and their relationship to schooling. Jack's stories also contributed to the point of view that school, jobs, and life are about solving problems. Jack's characters made mistakes, disagreed, failed to understand, and missed deadlines in their processes of learning and achievement. Keeping track of where one stood as one aimed for achievement was presented in the stories as what students needed to do. They provided students with strategic, motivational, and procedural guidelines for maintaining a long-term perspective in which to contextualize their short-term failures. In addition, the stories provided a framework of values and dispositions that informed how students could work together to achieve. Learning from failure by figuring out what had not worked and why was presented as what they all needed to do.

Clearly students in these two classes understood their roles as participants in a learning community very differently. These differences in roles were cultivated as students recognized, developed, and reinforced the identities they saw for themselves in their teachers' stories. Dave's students, assuming the educational system worked for and with them, adopted a critique-based relationship with Dave. For Jack's students, who could not be assured of always doing work that met academic standards, a critique-based relationship would have reinforced their assumption that school is a system organized for others' needs. Their relationship with their teacher needed to provide space for ambiguity, error, and knowledge gaps and allow them to measure their performance on a broader scale than immediate academic tasks.

These sharp distinctions underscore the importance of reflecting on how teachers' stories may or may not encompass the range and diversity of values and beliefs of every student in a classroom, or appeal to or discourage particular students. We are reminded by these distinctions that stories have the inclusive power to build a classroom community of participants, and we wonder if in other classrooms stories privilege some students and marginalize others. When stories give all students an opportunity to recognize, develop, and reinforce their identities, and when they imbue schooling practices with recognizable and valued meaning, then a community of practice exists. It exists because such stories make the recognition and acceptance of similarity and difference possible through articulating a common belief system in which students see themselves, and peers different from themselves, as belonging.

To carry out these reflections, we should attend not only to the kind and content of teachers' stories, but also to the occasions on which they tell them, their purposes, and their forcefulness in engaging students. We observed that to understand whether consistency and alignment existed across stories, we had to consider not only similarities and differences of kind, content, occasion, purpose, and forcefulness. We also had to observe instances when stories were reinvoked, mirrored, or cross-referenced. Such logic of inquiry into the narrative webs teachers spin will help them locate disjunctions, contradictions, and absences. Looking at the stories they tell will give teachers access to their own meanings and give them the wherewithal to make their meaning-making a consciously strategic facet of their pedagogy.

Stories and their meanings are not only chosen and managed by their tellers. Stories are also inadvertent expressions of cultural values, norms, and structures passed on through tellers, many times without their conscious intention (Geertz, 1973). Teachers unwittingly select and

shape their curriculum and pedagogy according to cultural dispositions about how to get along in the world, which are based on perceptions about self-worth, self-efficacy, and opportunity that are of their social class and historical time period (Bourdieu, 1977). Macro social narratives are projected through teachers' stories about people's educational and life experiences and their consequences (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995). The people who populated Dave's stories, including his sons, had had a sometimes challenging but upwardly mobile and successful experience in moving through the traditional educational system. Consequently, Dave's stories projected the view that students could do well in a responsive school system. For instance, though GATE English Literature was created specifically to serve only students designated as "gifted and talented," Dave had opened it up and fashioned it for any student willing to do the work. Students not officially designated as exceptional were given the opportunity to experience the rigorous curriculum they would need to become a top student. This, the any-person-can-do-it-if-they-are-smart-enough-and-work-hard-enough meritocratic perspective, reflects belief in schooling achievement as an outcome of tenacity, discipline, and hard work. Jack's stories, on the other hand, reflect a life in which schooling does not dominate, and education does not inevitably mark a straight line to social mobility and self-fulfillment. Jack's stories reflected a life in which he had learned much outside of formal education. They appealed to students who had less faith in their access to educational or societal privilege. While his stories promote the every person-can-be-a-success, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps lore of American individualism, they take into account that social and cultural forces are not always opportune and can be arbitrarily or intentionally oppressive. The people in Jack's stories needed to constantly figure out what was in their best interest and rescue themselves from their missteps.[3] Pedagogical stories, as semantic maps infused with an ideological point of view, exert a resilient regularity, systematicity, and uniformity for what counts as getting to the destinations they promote. When students in a classroom meaningfully unite and experience community, they share that ideological point of view. Additionally, when they observe their own and others' success within this community of beliefs and practices, that ideology is reinforced and sustained and takes on the status of "the way life and education are."

Stories also inadvertently shape teachers and their teaching as well as their students and curriculum. Storytelling articulates, affirms, and strengthens teachers' interests and values. Dave and Jack's reflections bear out that they were unaware of how much their stories uniquely structured and reinforced their own teaching points of view. They reported that they told their stories for pedagogical effect, to support their students' engagement in learning the curriculum. However, to attribute story emergence to only the demands of a given teaching situation underplays the extent to which Dave and Jack's stories were voicings of identity. Their object lesson stories expressed and reinforced their senses of who they are. They did so by representing their informal, practical knowledge about their mastery of what Weber (1978) calls "life chances." Their urge to pass on their practical, strategic lessons about the relationship between school and life was realized through storying. Dave and Jack converted their own experiences of social and economic necessity into what they thought was best for their students. Though they offered their students choices, those they provided conformed to and replicated the views of schooling and life that evolved from their own experiences and choices. In Dave's story set, life was for the talented and strong who chose to accept criticism. In Jack's, life was difficult and arbitrary and required constant evaluative monitoring. The stories that Dave and Jack told, by

[3] To further consider the macro social narratives Dave and Jack's stories represent, see Brian Street's (1984) distinctions between autonomous and ideological models of literacy.

articulating the conditions that they warned students against and were preparing them for, shaped and maintained their identities as viable teachers who had much to give.

Dave and Jack are not anomalies. Traditionally, students describe their good teachers as inspirational storytellers, as Jack reminds us with his reference to Dr. Abernathy. Bourdieu (1977) argues that driven by their sense of honor, good teachers try to give meaning to the practices they teach and give their students access to the fruits of education. They give subject matter, practices, and their way of teaching honorable reasons for existing, and they provide necessary lessons about how the individual comes to terms with the institutional structures of education, and the societal structures in which they are embedded. However, though pedagogical stories can be honorable and important tools for creating classroom communities, the contrast between Jack's and Dave's social narratives as they position who to be and how to be alerts us to reconsider previously unexamined assumptions about communities of learning. Communities of learning are more than idealized spaces in which teachers and students come together to accomplish satisfying projects. What constitutes and creates community needs to be understood as more than a set of instructional practices, approaches, and processes. Dave and Jack's stories show us how subject matter and instruction are embedded in narratively delivered value systems overlapping with or bumping up against students' values. This view encourages us to consider how classroom cultures reflect their teachers' beliefs, why some students find it easier to "buy in" to certain kinds of classes more than others, and how classrooms are the places in which societal agendas are inculcated. Dave's and Jack's cases are object lessons for understanding teaching and learning and strategic steps we can take to improve it.

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Table 1
Teachers' Stories

Dave's story categories (550min/10classes)	Category definitions	Frequency
Object lesson	Provided a message or moral of preferred action or state of being	35
Humor	Initiated laughter, not purposefully related to current instruction or procedure	3
Cultural illustration	Provided historical/cultural information for reading the literary text	22
Learning strategy	Reported and recommended an approach to learning	6
Solidarity	Took students' position to view institutional testing	1
Institutional illustration	Took institution's position to view institutional testing	1
	Total	68

Jack's story categories (540min/6classes)	Category definitions	Frequency
Object lesson	Provided a message or moral of preferred action or state of being	41
Pseudo parable	Explicitly signaled moral purpose of the story	1
Classroom culture	Provided information about the classroom's procedures, purposes or members	9
Procedural	Provided procedural steps for students to follow while doing an activity	2
Modeling	Demonstrated how students were to perform an instructional activity	5
Story elicitation	Used to initiate and sustain student stories	2
Bonding	Shared personal information with student(s) not purposefully related to current instruction or procedure	7
Availability	Informed students when and where the teacher will be available to them outside of class time	1
Humor	Initiated laughter, not purposefully related to current instruction or procedure	1
Historical fact	Informed the meaning of an academic term	1
"If" illustration	Cast student in the class as the protagonist in hypothetical story plots to demonstrate academic term or concept	8
School culture	Illustrated dimensions of the high school resources and culture available to students	3
	Total	81

Appendix 1

Dave's Object Lesson Stories

Stories	Sources	**Purpose:** *Learning subject matter*
1. Dad's golf game (analogy)	Personal	Reading approach
2. College reading as Eng. major	Higher education	Reading approach
3. Listing	Higher education	Reading approach
4. Sharon's teeth (analogy)	Personal	Reading approach
5. If anything is odd…	Higher education	Reading approach
6. How the mind works	Higher education	Reading approach
7. How not to read	Teaching	Reading approach
8. The Beowulf writer	Higher education	Reading approach
9. Rote memory	Teaching	Memorizing
10. Phone numbers	Teaching	Memorizing
11. Memorizing presidents	Teaching	Memorizing
12. Five paragraph essay (analogy)	Teaching	Writing approach
13. Modifying language	Personal	Writing approach
14. Complication in point of view	Teaching	Writing approach
15. Bureaucratic memos	Personal	Writing approach
16. Twain's advice	Higher education	Writing approach
17. Ten video boxes (analogy)	Teaching	Writing approach
18. Edge of a cold pool (analogy)	Teaching	Writing approach
19. Always right; always wrong	Teaching	Writing approach
20. Teeing up the ball (analogy)	Personal	Writing approach
		Purpose: *Learning how to be a student*
21. Cliffs Notes water wings (analogy)	Teaching	Learning aides
22. Cheating at the theater	Teaching	Cheating
23. Spilled milk	Teaching	Classroom behavior
24. Who to complain to	Teaching	Dealing with grading
25. Fairness in grading	Teaching	Dealing with grading
26. Astonishing essay	Teaching	How to get an A
27. Grading is arbitrary	Teaching	Attitude toward grades
28. B+	Personal	Attitude toward grades
29. How not to get an A	Teaching	Earning a good grade
		Purpose: *Standardized testing*
30. Earning glory on the PSAT	Teaching	Mental prep for test
31. Prep for PSAT	Teaching	Prep for SAT
32. My son's one achievement test	Personal	Prep for SAT
33. Take test once	Teaching	Prep for SAT
34. Scores are plastic	Personal	Prep for SAT
35. Advantage of a big vocabulary	Teaching	Prep for SAT

Appendix 2
Jacks' Object Lesson Stories

Stories	Sources	**Purpose:** *Learning subject matter*
1. Barbara Walters interview	Media	Interviewing
2. What animal would you be	Teaching	Interviewing
3. Stereotyping basketball	Sports	Interview
4. Organizing/writing it up	Higher education	Interview write up
5. Justin Maceda	Teaching	Interview write up
6. Starting the essay	Higher education	Interview write up
7. Starting essay with interview structure	Higher education	Interview write up
8. Most interesting fact	Sports	Interview write up
9. Other ways to begin	Sports	Interview write up
10.Homonyms	Personal	Word understanding
11. Scavenger hunt (analogy)	Teaching	Inquiry method
		Purpose: *Introducing class members*
12.Best school	Teaching	Introduce school
13.7-11	Personal	Introduce teacher
14.Map of your neighborhood	Teaching	Introduce student
15.Backyard tree	Personal	Introduce student
16.Huge map	Teaching	Introduce student
17.Foundations/architects	Teaching	Characterize the course
		Purpose: *Learning how to be a student*
18.Last names	Teaching	Give all information
19.Have own computer	Media	Necessary tools
20.Academic folders	Teaching	4-year record
21.Auto insurance (analogy)	Teaching	Performance contract
22.Reading aloud, avoiding ridicule	Teaching	Public behavior
23.Turning in assignments late	Teaching	Managing deadlines
24.Plagiarism	Teaching	Plagiarism
25.Michael Bolton	Media	Plagiarism
26.Copying homework	Teaching	Plagiarism
27.How not to play	Teaching	Don't cheat
28.Room for disagreement	Teaching	Managing disagreement
29."Publishing" in class	Teaching	Displaying work
30.Work, work, work	Personal	Managing workload
31.Self-destruction	Teaching	Managing workload
32.Teachers have homework too	Teaching	Respect teachers' time
33.Taking school seriously	Teaching	Being successful
34.Day planners	Business world	Organizing time
35.Some schools have 7 classes	Teaching	Organizing time
36.Responsibilities	Personal	Organizing time
37.Teen age sleep	Media	Organizing time
38.Richest man	Media	Effort
39.Babe Ruth strike out king	Sports	Making mistakes
40.High school basketball	Personal	Finding your niche
41.Shooting a movie (analogy)	Media	Making mistakes