

# **Teaching Close Reading Skills With Graphic Novels**

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Honors Bachelor of Arts in Secondary English Education with Distinction.

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# **TEACHING CLOSE READING SKILLS WITH GRAPHIC NOVELS**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Common Core State Standards—a series of standards adopted by almost all 50 states—are currently changing the conversation about important skills needed in the English Language Arts high school classroom. To succeed, students need to read a text, and analyze the specific choices of language an author makes in order to create meaning. However, students are historically unsuccessful at literary interpretation, often unable to provide specific textual evidence to support their claims (Marshall, 2000). Researchers hypothesized that students struggle to see patterns in a work of pure-text, for this is an abstract concept. To make the concept of literary patterns more concrete, researchers taught nineteen 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to analyze patterns first in the visual form of short graphic novel passages, then in pure-text forms. Participants completed a pretest to evaluate their analytical skills before any instruction, and a posttest after the two 90-minute sessions. After instruction, students produced higher quality essays and provided more specific textual evidence to support their interpretations.



## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Issues Finding Meaning in Literature

##### Introduction to Poetry

Billy Collins

*I ask them to take a poem  
and hold it up to the light  
like a color slide*

*or press an ear against its hive.*

*I say drop a mouse into a poem  
and watch him probe his way out,*

*or walk inside the poem's room  
and feel the walls for a light switch.*

*I want them to waterski  
across the surface of a poem  
waving at the author's name on the shore.*

*But all they want to do  
is tie the poem to a chair with rope  
and torture a confession out of it.*

*They begin beating it with a hose  
to find out what it really means.*

In this iconic poem, Billy Collins raises an important question about *how* readers conceptualize their relationship with a piece of literature. His is an important question because throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, literary critics debated the reader's role in interpreting texts. Are literary texts objects that hold their own objective meaning, independent of, and hidden from the reader? If so, perhaps the Jack Bauer torture

approach described above is the only way to find meaning in literature. On the other hand, can literary texts mean whatever the reader wants them to mean, acting as a blank canvas for the reader's interpretations, independent of the author's intentions? I'm not sure Collins would agree with this idea either. Instead, in "Introduction to Poetry" Collins seems to advocate for readers' active and varied participation with the literature's elements—asking them to "listen to its hive," or "waterski" across its surface—rather than imposing an entirely personal meaning that neglects the author's creative ideas that are embodied in the text. Both text and reader must be active in the interpretive process, what Louise Rosenblatt has called a "transactional approach" to literary interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1978).

However even though Billy Collins seems to offer a "transactional" middle ground, these two competing perspectives—that literature holds meaning independent of the reader, or that literature holds only the meaning a reader ascribes to it—have dominated both literary criticism and high school English classrooms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, these views also represent a false dichotomy for those who would seek to interpret literary texts, and they create confusion for both teachers and students as they try to engage literature in ELA classrooms.

For instance, although these approaches seem drastically contradictory, many students receive both types throughout their English class experiences. Our generic student, Jane, may go through her schooling experience receiving a number of mixed messages about what literature is and how we can derive meaning from it. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Mr. Johnston might ask her to read literature, and write down "the meaning," implying

that there is only one meaning and that it is hidden somewhere in the words, ignoring the reader's experience of the piece. In 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Mrs. Ferrill might ask her to read a different literary passage, write how it makes her feel and what the piece means to her, implying that her personal responses to the piece are more important than the message the author of the text is trying to convey. In 11<sup>th</sup> grade, her teacher again might ask for "the meaning" of the piece, and in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, her teacher may ask what the piece means to her. Here, Jane is experiencing the confusion inherent in the implicit pedagogical approaches that are based on formalist, and reader-response criticisms. Although teachers may want their students to engage in a variety of interpretive acts, for Jane and other students who experience these mixed messages about literature, English class becomes a strange puzzle where the corners seem to shift and there are always a few missing pieces. Does the literature contain the meaning? Do I contain the meaning?

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are changing the conversation in ELA classrooms, because they present a framework of literary engagement that is more aligned with Billy Collins' view of reader AND text as active in the meaning-making process (*Common Core*, 2010). First, the CCSS repeatedly emphasize the use of "relevant and sufficient evidence" as a strong indicator of ELA success. The following standards below demonstrate this focus. Students will be able to:

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text  
(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone) (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4)

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.W.9-10.1)

These standards require teachers to instruct students in how to make claims and use supporting evidence for their arguments about the meaning of texts. However, because these standards require attention to text features and textual elements, strictly reader-response oriented approaches to literary criticism and interpretation are no longer viable. According to the CCSS, in order for students to become better readers, writers, and thinkers inside and outside of the classroom, students must pay attention to relevant text features and how these features shape meaning and impact the reader (NGA & CCSSO, 2010; Lewis, Walpole & McKenna, 2014).

Traditionally, this type of reading has been called “close reading.” Close reading is an ELA skill that provides students an interpretive foothold for reading and interpreting texts by focusing on textual elements created by the writer. That being said, definitions and terminology around close reading vary to a large degree. I have seen close reading framed as a way of purposefully annotating texts (Stuart, 2014). I have seen in my classroom observations close reading described as the number of

times a text should be read in order for the reading to qualify as “close.” Further confusing matters, when definitions are provided for close reading, they often describe the process of close reading, but lack the specificity needed to actually perform the skill. For instance in Doug Fisher’s (2012) definition he describes close reading as “a careful and purposeful rereading of a text. It’s an encounter with the text where students really focus on what the author had to say, what the author’s purpose was, what the words mean, and what the structure of the text tell us” (0:25). While this type of definition may be a good starting place for understanding close reading, without further elaboration, it does not provide students with concrete and explicit skills they can take into a reading of a text.

With no clear definition or guidelines it is no wonder, then, that students are often confused by close reading, and are not successful when they are assessed on these skills. On Delaware’s Smarter Balanced assessment—which is aligned with the CCSS and requires close reading skills—Delaware students scored just over 50% proficient in the English Language Arts (Smarter Balanced 2015). This statistic shows that, at least according to this measure, many students are struggling to grasp the interpretive skills needed to be successful in ELA. Educators anticipated low scores because this was the first year the test was administered in Delaware. However, this statistic also backs the claims of other researchers who have asserted that students struggle to create their own literary interpretations of complex texts (Marshall 2000), and often lack the skills needed to go beyond basic plot summary to engage with a text’s thematic content (Persky, Daane & Jin, 2003).

The intent in this thesis project, therefore, is to effectively teach students “close reading” skills so that they can more effectively interpret literature and the impact of authorial choices on the reader. However, this task can be hard to achieve for students in a purely textual format. Many students just see words on a page, and struggle to see the important patterns of language that authors choose. For this reason, my thesis project will teach students close reading skills first in a visual format, then move systematically toward a purely textual format. I will do this by introducing close reading skills with high interest, young adult graphic novels, and then transition students into the use of these skills with traditional print texts. I believe that systematically teaching the skill of close reading with texts within an informed paradigm of critical literary theory, will help students to be more successful readers and writers of the word and world (Freire & Macedo 1987).

## **1.2 Why Graphic Novels: The Case for Close Reading Visual Texts First**

At its most basic level, close reading involves observing and analyzing patterns and deviations from those patterns in texts, and students need to build the necessary skills to see the patterns in the first place. However, this can be difficult in a purely textual format because students are devoting cognitive energy to base-level comprehension, rather than the close reading task. According to Biebrich (2006), “Visualization impacts the motivation to read tremendously. Without making mental pictures a great deal of understanding is lost. Many reluctant or non-readers are unable to form mental pictures and need concrete images to aid their understanding” (p. 17).

Students who are struggling to visualize a text will be too bogged down in comprehension issues to substantively close read.

How then, can teachers help students “form mental pictures...and concrete images to aid their understanding?” By beginning to close read in the graphic novel form first, students have direct images to assist in their visualization process. Graphic novels, therefore, reduce the cognitive load students need to devote to visualization and comprehension, therefore leaving more cognition available for the higher-level close reading task. This process is immensely helpful for reluctant readers and English language learners—two populations who often struggle with language and content learning (Gottlieb, 2006; Cary, 2004; Chun, 2009).

Graphic novels, in both research and practice, are shown to be a highly motivating medium for many students, engaging readers on emotional, cognitive, and visual levels (Heany, 2007). Many students are excited to work with this form in the English classroom. For that reason, graphic novels provide students with motivating content through which they learn essential ELA skills. Additionally, the graphic novel form serves to test one of my underlying hypotheses for this thesis: it is easier for students to observe and analyze patterns in visual media than in purely textual media. The ease with which students learn in visual media may be related to a contemporary emphasis on visual media in film, TV, advertisements, and video games. It may also be related to many people having a visual learning style (Gardner, 1985). It may also be related to the excitement students feel when experiencing a new way of learning, considering that a large amount of school learning is conveyed through auditory or

textual means. Regardless of its causes, I have observed in my time as both a student and pre-service teacher that many students begin to grasp concepts when they are first presented visually. This is further supported by the work of Lewis and McKenna (2013) which finds success when beginning new text sets with visual texts first. For that reason, this thesis tests how students learn close reading when it is presented in a visual format first.

My goal is to both build students' visual literacy through this project, as well as provide the scaffolding needed to engage with the challenging skill of close reading. Students struggle to see patterns in text. This project therefore teaches students to see patterns in a visual medium first, where they can build observation and analysis skills that will transfer to pure text forms, serving as an engaging scaffold into close reading.



## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Literary Criticism: New Criticism

New Criticism is a type of literary criticism (method/ideology used to analyze literature) that developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Revolutionary at its time, New Criticism permanently changed the way many people read and think about texts. The concept of close reading emerged from the New Critical School as they began to analyze only a text's words for meaning, ignoring the author's biography. But before we can understand New Criticism as a revolutionary movement, we must first understand the old methods these New Critics fought against.

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, literary critics worked within the historical-biographical school of thought. These scholars, while they varied in some degree, read texts as reflections of the author's historical time and/or personal biography. They might write extensively about the connections between *A Tale of Two Cities* and the French Revolution. They might analyze real letters between Jane Austen and a lover, then compare them to letters exchanged between characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, speculating how Austen's personal experiences manifested in those of her characters. Scholars of this period would also study the etymologies and histories of words an author used (Graff 1987). These 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century critics saw "a literary work chiefly, if not exclusively, as a reflection of its author's life and times" (Guerin 2005 p. 51).

Shortly after the turn of the century, writers and critics began to push back against this idea that texts are reflections of an author's life or time period. Instead, they began to focus solely on the text itself, to discover how a work of literature functions as a self-contained aesthetic object. These critics zoomed in on the text and how it created meaning as its own object. While there was not a manifesto or centrally organized school of thought on this idea, the various authors' ideas came to be known as New Criticism (Brooks 1979).

New Critics, such as Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, I.A. Richards, T.S. Eliot, John Crowe Ransom, William Empson, and others began pioneering a way of reading texts that brought focus onto the text itself, rather than the context surrounding it. For example, they would assert that Shakespeare's works did not persist through time because he led a fascinating life, or that his works were perfectly representative of the Elizabethan era. Instead, New Critics would argue that his works persist because of the intrinsic quality of the texts themselves. But how could this quality be analyzed or identified?

Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) push back against the notion of authorial intent having any purpose in the meaning of the text. In "The Intentional Fallacy," they claim that the author's intention plays no part in a text's meaning. They provide an analogy comparing poems to both pudding and machinery. If we have pudding and can't tell what flavor it is, it makes no difference whether or not the author intended it to be strawberry flavored. Regardless of the chef's intent, the pudding is not strawberry flavored to the general taster. They write, "critical inquiries are not settled

by consulting the oracle” (p. 18). If the literary piece is good, all the pieces will lie in the text itself. Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) assert that literature is like a machine, in that if it is working well, it should appear seamless. Our job therefore becomes that of an observer, investigating the small parts of literature to figure out *how* it works so well. They say that “poetry succeeds because all or most of what is said or implied is relevant.” All the pieces of meaning are there. We just have to figure out how they are working to create a beautiful piece of poetry.

But if each piece is purposeful and meaningful, wouldn't an author had to have intentionally written the passage that way? New Critics would agree, saying that a good poet is bound to intentionally create moments of beauty in his or her pieces. However, Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) respond, “the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art” (p. 3). They would agree that great authors make intentional choices, but vehemently discourage any literary critic from trying to claim knowledge of an author's intention in a given line, writing, “How is he to find out what the poet tried to do? If the writer succeeded in doing it, then the piece itself shows what he was trying to do.” Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) called the pursuit of an author's intended meaning the “intentional fallacy,” a term which will be important later as New Criticism moves into secondary schools in the 1950s.

So far, the New Critics have identified literary devices, meter, rhyme etc. as the main forces that create works of literature. If the author's intent in using these tools does not create literature's quality or meaning, then what does? Brooks and

Warren (1938) assert that it is not in the mere presence of these devices that meaning is made:

Certainly it is not to be thought of as a group of mechanically combined elements—meter, rhyme, figurative language, idea, and so on—put together to make a poem as bricks are put together to make a wall. The relationship among the elements in a poem is what is all important. If we must compare a poem to the make-up of some physical object it ought not to be to a wall but to something organic like a plant (p. 16)

Here, Brooks and Warren introduce the interplay of literary elements as the genesis of literary meaning. The pieces of a poem or piece of literature do not slide into predetermined slots like brick and mortar. Instead, good poems and literature contain blend of elements working in conjunction with one another to create an organic, meaningful piece (Brooks & Warren, 1938; Ransom, 1937).

Now that New Criticism had an ideological base—that texts contain meaning in the interplay of their words, exempt from biographical-historical data—the critics began to develop their most important contribution to literary studies: close reading. While again, there was not a unified method of close reading among New Critics, the practice focused on describing *how* a text's structure and literary elements contributed to its meaning. This exemplifies the process of close reading as understood by New Critics: identifying and analyzing the relationship between literary elements of a text.

New Criticism brought close reading into the educational limelight. As teacher candidates learned this technique in the 1950s and 60s and began teaching it in high

schools, the new critical definition of close reading became the standard method of literary analysis (Sperling & DiPardo, 2008). Students were taught that literary meaning is solely derived from an author's intention.

## **2.2 The Transactional Response**

While New Criticism remained the dominant analytical mode throughout the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars such as Terence Hawkes and Louise Rosenblatt pushed back against an entirely text-centered analysis. Hawkes writes, “the critic need not humbly efface himself before the work and submit to its demands. On the contrary, he actively constructs its meaning: he *makes* the work exist,” (Hawkes, 1977, p.157). Here, Hawkes pushes back against the idea that the work holds all of a text's meaning, instead asserting that the work means nothing without a reader to read it into existence.

Louise Rosenblatt refines this idea in her work *The Text, The Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (1978), asserting that meaning does not come from the text or the reader alone. Instead, meaning comes from the transaction between the reader and the text, where each continually acts upon the other to create meaning. She writes,

Through the medium of words, the text brings into the reader's consciousness certain concepts, certain sensuous experiences, certain images of things, people, actions, scenes. The special meanings and, more particularly, the submerged associations that these words have for the individual reader will largely determine what the work communicates to him. The reader brings to

the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition. These and many other elements in a never-to-be-duplicated combination determine his response to the peculiar contribution of the text (p. 30-31).

Rosenblatt's transactional response theory privileges both the reader and the text as equally important factors in a text's meaning.

This idea however, became—and still is—misinterpreted as teachers only focus on the reader part of the equation. As teachers began to question the text-centered approach to meaning, the analytical pendulum swung to a completely reader-centered approach to meaning, where a reader's reaction to a passage became its whole meaning (Soter, Wilkinson, Connors, Murphy, & Shen, 2010). Soter et. al. (2010) criticize this approach to literary analysis as one where students are “experiencers of the text, but relatively unaware of what is playing into that experience” (p. 205). In a purely reader-centered analysis, specific textual elements are ignored, therefore counteracting the true definition of a transactional response.

This crossroads—between text-centered and reader-centered methods of analysis—is where this thesis' work lies. As students are taught to analyze the mood of a short literary passage, they must first recognize the feeling the text has created in them. The key is for students to then be able to recognize *how* the text created that feeling, specifically through choices of diction and syntax. In teaching this skill as transactional rather than purely New Critical or Reader-Response, this thesis attempts

to reconcile the two extremes in the teaching of close reading in the contemporary high school English classroom.

### **2.3 The Role of Graphic Novels**

Many teachers across the country have begun using graphic novels to supplement and enhance their students' education. At this point in time however, the research on graphic novels in the classroom is limited, which is part of the reason I designed this study. Research does, however, show that the use of varied forms of literature—including the use of graphic novels—does improve student motivation and comprehension of complex texts (Allington, 2011; Guthrie, 2001; Edwards, 2009).

Graphic novel artists Scott McCloud and Gene Yang assert that the medium lends itself particularly well to reader comprehension because of its “permanence” (Yang, 2008 p.188). When a student watches a video, the video moves at its own pace. The student may pause and rewind as needed, but the video will move on unless otherwise acted upon. In the graphic novel form however, the reader is in complete control of the pace. The reader decides when to move on to the next frame, and can easily reread a difficult passage. The visual support, combined with the text's permanence, can be particularly useful in aiding the comprehension of struggling readers and English Language Learners (Cary, 2004; Chun, 2009; Gottlieb 2006).

If graphic novels can help students comprehend what they read, my hypothesis asks if the form's visual characteristics can also help students learn to close read. Fahnestock and Secor (1991) assert that literary experts look for discipline specific patterns in literature which serve as warrants for their ideas. This is, in essence, close reading: identifying patterns in a text, then analyzing their effect on the piece's meaning. Knowing that students struggle to grasp this complex idea in pieces of pure-

text, I attempt to introduce the idea of identifying and analyzing patterns first in graphic novels, then in works of pure-text.

My study seeks to access the graphic novel's ability to aid comprehension, and use that to build close reading skills. If students first learn to close read textual elements in a visual and more comprehensible format, will they then be able to transfer those skills to their analysis of literary texts?



## Chapter 3

### METHODS

#### 3.1 Overview

This study is a quasi-experimental study involving three parts: pretest, instruction, and posttest. I administered a pretest to students (see Appendix C) which measured their initial abilities in close reading literary passages for mood. I then taught two 90-minute lessons, one on close reading visual texts via graphic novels, and the other on close reading traditional print literary texts. I then gave students a posttest, analyzing a literary passage of similar difficulty to the pretest.

#### 3.2 Participants

Nineteen 9<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in this study. Nine students identified as Black, eight as White, and two as Hispanic. Approximately six students qualified for free or reduced lunch. This class was tracked as the next to the lowest ELA level; however, despite the tracking, student reading level varied greatly among students. According to their STAR Reading Reports—a standardized test that measures approximate reading levels—students in this class read between a 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. The mean reading level was 7.7, with a median of 6.6. While this measure may not have precise accuracy, it does illustrate a wide range of reading skill variability within this class.

#### 3.3 Instructional Process

All participants were given the same instruction in a full-class instructional format. Each day was focused on learning a specific element authors can use to create

effects in visual texts (frame and typography) and in readers of literary texts (diction and syntax). I began each day of instruction by showing a passage to the class and modeling my own analytical thought process about the choices the authors were making. I then gave students another passage to analyze in groups with the assistance of a graphic organizer. Students' final task was to read and analyze a third passage individually with the graphic organizer and to provide a short written analysis.

**3.3.1. Lesson 1** In Lesson 1, participants were first given explicit instruction on the procedures of reading a graphic novel page. We then defined "mood" as the emotional energy of a passage, and discussed how authors can actively create moods in this graphic literary form. Students were then introduced to an example graphic novel passage where I modeled my analytical thinking about the mood that was created, called attention to which frame stood out to me the most, considered how I felt while reading the passage, then drew a connections between the author's manipulation of frame and the creation of a mood. Students then read another graphic passage in groups of 2-4 and completed the Frame Graphic Organizer (Appendix B) used to guide their thinking. Students then individually read a third passage, used the graphic organizer, and wrote a small paragraph analyzing how the author utilized choices of frame to create a mood. In the second half of Lesson 1, students followed this same sequence, but this time they discussed how authors manipulate speech bubbles and typography to create a mood in a graphic text.

**3.3.2. Lesson 2** In Lesson 2, students followed the same gradual-release sequence, but instead of reading short graphic novel passages, they were provided

with literary passages that were controlled for length and readability. During the second lesson, I first taught students to look for an author's choice of adjectives and verbs to find the mood of a passage. Students continued this diction analysis work in groups and then analyzed diction individually for the mood it created. We then discussed how sentence structure can also contribute to the mood of a piece, with students watching my syntactic analysis of a passage, completing another analysis in a group with a graphic organizer, then completing their own analysis individually. Like lesson 1, the diction and syntactic analysis ended with students writing their analysis. The total instructional time was 180 minutes.

### **3.4 Scoring Procedures and Inter-Rater Reliability**

Dr. Lewis and I scored pretests and posttests for quality using a 6-point primary- trait rubric (Appendix C). The inter-rater reliability on this initial scoring was .763 across the 38 essays. However, inter-rater reliability was .973 when agreement was calculated within one point. We then discussed and reconciled differences in scoring and used these scores for the quantitative analysis.

### **3.5 Qualitative Analysis**

After the quantitative analysis I conducted a qualitative analysis of the essays, where I looked for specific changes in writing between essay pairs. I looked to see if students analyzed both diction and syntax as we had learned to do in class. I also wanted to see to what degree students' use of evidence became more specific and targeted. Rather than quoting entire sentences or paragraphs, I wanted to see if individual students began quoting just specific words and phrases they wanted to

analyze. Lastly, I was also curious about the relationship between change in word count, and change in score. I wanted to know whether students who wrote longer essays on the posttest received higher scores, or if students rambled on their pretest and were then more concise on their posttest.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this intervention was to improve students' ability to close read literary passages for mood, make claims about how authorial choices impact that mood, and use textual evidence to support those claims in writing. I anticipated that after the instruction, students would write essays about authorial choice that were both longer and of higher quality. To evaluate changes in student essays, therefore, I considered changes in essay length, and changes in quality from pretest to posttest. This chapter details those changes which indicate an overall improvement in students' abilities to close read and share their understanding in writing. Additionally, this chapter provides a qualitative analysis of those changes.

#### **4.2 Word Count Improvement**

I considered word count as a measure of interest because students will often write more when they are provided an interpretive framework for understanding literary texts (Lewis & Ferretti, 2011). Because this instruction provided them with a strategy for reading and analyzing a text and identifying textual evidence to back their analyses, I anticipated that student word count would increase from pretest to posttest. Table 4.1 below shows mean gains in students' essay length. Essay length increased from a mean of 99 words pre-test to a mean of 134 words after instruction, showing an average increase of 35 words (34.65%). However, it is important to note that not all students wrote longer essays after instruction.

Table 4.1 Word counts and qualities before and after instruction

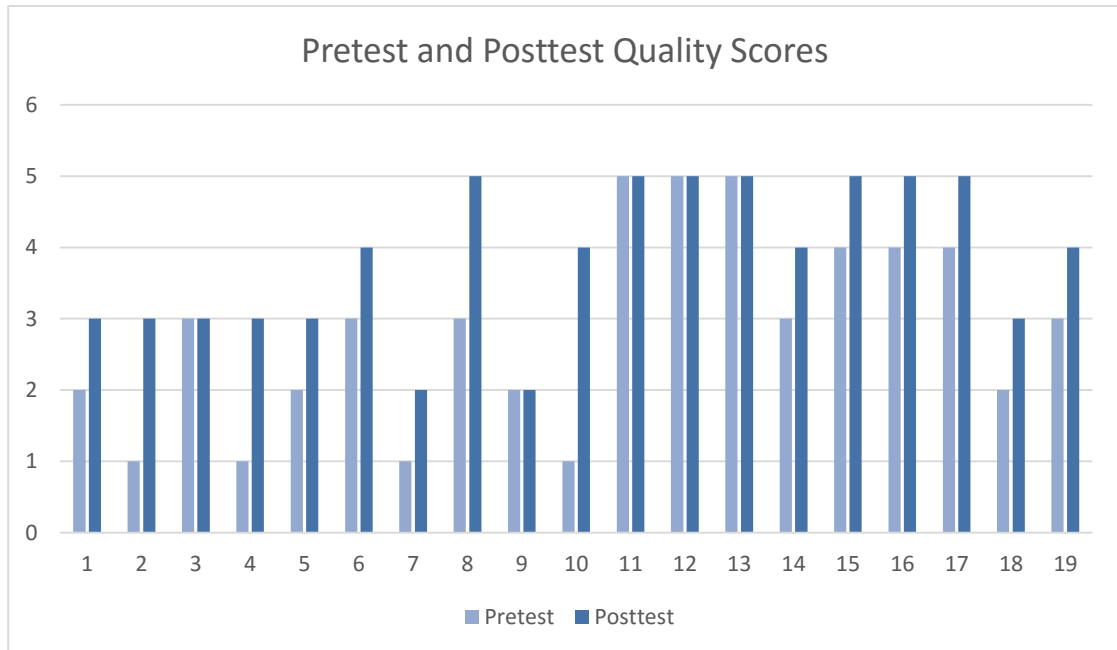
Student	Pretest Word	Posttest Word	Pretest Quality	Posttest
Number	Count	Count		Quality
1	72	79	2	3
2	65	28	1	3
3	97	124	3	3
4	24	19	1	3
5	52	73	2	3
6	152	138	3	4
7	40	58	1	2
8	64	257	3	5
9	74	121	2	2
10	114	127	1	4
11	93	190	5	5
12	199	148	5	5
13	223	148	5	5
14	36	77	3	4
15	130	409	4	5
16	75	119	4	5
17	178	163	4	5
18	91	55	2	3
19	111	102	3	4
Mean	99	134	2.79	3.84

### **4.3 Quality Improvement**

This intervention's purpose was to get students analyzing how an author's choice of diction and syntax can create a mood for the reader. It was anticipated that after instruction, students would make a clear claim about a passage's mood, and also use specific textual evidence to support that claim.

Dr. Lewis and I used a 6 point primary trait rubric to evaluate student essays for quality (see Appendix C.) Inter-rater reliability for quality scoring was .763 for exact agreement and .97 for agreement within one rubric point. We scored each of the essays independently and then reconciled disagreements. The changes in student performance are shown in Figure 4.1 above. The mean pretest quality score was 2.79 on the six-point primary-trait rubric. After instruction, the average posttest score was 3.84, giving the class an overall mean improvement of 1.05 per student after instruction.

Of the 19 total students, 15 (79%) showed improvement by one or more points. Four students (21%) showed no improvement, and no students decreased between pre and post testing. Of those students who improved, eleven students improved by one point. Three students improved by two points, and one student improved by three points. Quality change data is represented in Figure 4.1 below.



*Figure 4.1.* Pretest and posttest quality scores showing either stagnation or improvement after instruction

#### 4.4 Qualitative Analysis of Improvement

The following section will present more specific information about the changes in students' essay quality after instruction. I will do this by discussing the specific choices that students made that led to a rise in essay quality and detail the differences in performance as students moved from two to three, three to four, and four to five. Scores of one are omitted from this analysis because they are essays simply lacking any of the close-reading elements that are of interest. Scores of six are omitted because no students achieved this score.



#### **4.4.1 Improvement from Two to Three.**

The use of textual evidence is the major differentiating factor between essays scoring a two and those scoring a three on the primary trait rubric. As discussed in Chapter 1, the ability to use specific textual evidence is a key indicator of success in the English language arts. Essays which only made a claim about the mood but did not provide specific textual evidence to support that claim received a two.

In essay 1A for example, the student makes a claim about the passage's mood, writing "the mood of the story is tired and mad." The author then supports this claim by writing "the author's use of language describes the person's feelings about school." However, although the author has a clear claim about mood, and mentions the author's use of language, this student does not use any specific references to the text which show how he knows the mood is tired and mad, therefore scoring a two. In essay 1B however, the writer states, "the words are words of danger. Some of the words are 'grim', 'terrible', 'aggressive'." Here, we see the writer making a claim about the mood by calling it dangerous. He then explicitly references the specific words in the text that create the feeling of danger. This essay, therefore, scores a three.

#### **4.4.2 Improvement from Three to Four**

There are two main differences between essays scoring three and those scoring four. Essays scoring three identify a mood and use one or two pieces of evidence to support that claim. Essays scoring a four do the same, and also make an attempt to explain how that evidence proves the claim. This has been called a tie-in sentence because it ties the textual evidence specifically to the claim (Lewis, Walpole & McKenna, 2014).

For example, in essay 19A, the author makes a claim saying there is a “dull, boring mood.” She also provides quotes from the text to support her claim. The essay however, lacks an attempt at a tie-in sentence. In 19B however, the writer again makes a claim, provides evidence to support it, then makes an attempt at a tie-in, saying “these words are describing the situation and really feed into your mind as you’re reading.” She also writes “The mood is kind of scary because the author uses scary words.” These sentences partially explain how the chosen quotes illustrate her claim as they attempt to tie the two ideas together. By attempting to tie the ideas together, 19B received a four on the primary trait rubric.

#### **4.4.3 Improvement from Four to Five**

Essays scoring a five use two or more pieces of textual evidence to support their claims, and they clearly explain how chosen pieces of evidence work together to create a mood. For example, essay 13B shows an exemplary analysis of the passages’ diction, the student writing:

The mood in this story is angry. You can see this because the story used words like cruel, aggressive, terrible, jagged, growling, and fierceness to describe the waves in a storm. These words show that the storm is getting rougher and might even attack them at some point. The words in the story were shown to tell you that the storm is angry. (13B)

This quote illustrates the use of a claim, evidence supporting that claim, and a tie-in that explains how the evidence is relevant.

#### **4.4.4 Missing Sixes**

On the primary trait rubric, a six is defined as having the same characteristics of a five, but also successfully analyzing both the diction and syntax of the posttest piece. While many students successfully analyzed the passage's diction, no students made strong claims about the syntax's effect on the mood of the piece. Possible reasons for this are expanded upon in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Quantitative**

The results show that 15 of the 19 participants improved their scores by at least one point after the intervention, and that 4 participants' scores remained unchanged from the pretest to posttest. No students' scores decreased. This is a small sample size and a simple pre and post quasi-experimental study; therefore the results cannot be generalized to a broader population. However, these initial results do suggest efficacy for close reading instruction that utilizes graphic novels.

As a result of this instruction, students improved their ability to make a clear claim around authorial choices and support that claim with sufficient textual evidence, an important focus of the Common Core State Standards for reading and writing. Helping students to understand craft and structure choices, find evidence for those choices, and support their claims with evidence drawn from texts was a key focus of the study. These are integral skills within the English language arts discipline, and skills which students often lack (Garrett-Petts, 2000). As discussed in the introduction, students are often prone to summarizing a text when given an in-depth reading task. In order to become better readers, they must be able to recognize and analyze patterns that occur in a text. By the end of the instruction, all students made a claim about an observed pattern, and 17 of the 19 used evidence to support that claim, up from the 10 who used some form of evidence in the pretest writing.

The type of evidence students used to support their claim tells a certain story about the instruction. 79% of participants explicitly mentioned word choice or diction as literary elements authors use to create mood. Only three students, however, made

an attempt to analyze the syntax of the passage, with no students adequately explaining how the passages' sentence structure works to create a specific mood. Because syntax instruction was a major component of this instructional protocol, this is clearly an area where more focused instruction is needed. Diction is a relatively concrete foothold for students to use as they interpret a literary work. They can identify important adjectives and verbs, then describe the emotional pattern these words create. Syntax however, is a much more abstract concept, asking students to consider not only the grammatical constructions of a text, but also the symbolic implications these constructions can take.

In the context of this instructional protocol, syntax was the last concept covered, and the one in which students received the least amount of practice time. As part of the instruction's gradual-release, students watched me model my thinking, and then completed a syntax analysis without a graphic organizer. By removing the graphic organizer and group discussion, I hoped to wean students' off these elements as they prepared for the posttest. Upon seeing the class' absent syntax analysis in the posttest, this decision may not have properly prepared them to independently analyze a literary piece's syntax.

The graphic novel piece of this instruction focused on analyzing frame/paneling and speech bubbles/typography. These were chosen because they offer a concrete visual element to observe. It is easy to see if one frame is made much larger or smaller than the rest. It is also easy to see if an artist changes the size or style of a speech bubble or the words inside it. These, however, did not line up 1:1 with the literary concepts of diction and syntax. They were instead chosen to acquaint students with the reading concept of noticing a pattern, or deviation from a pattern, then

analyzing how that authorial choice creates a mood. Three of the four concepts students learned involved concrete observations. Syntax, however, is a more abstract concept that requires students to consider the rhythmic effects of sentence structures. Coupled with the fact that the syntax section of instruction involved the least external support from groups or graphic organizers, this would seem to explain the participants' unsuccessful analysis of this specific element.

## **5.2 Word Count and Essay Quality**

Regarding essay word counts, I initially anticipated three likely outcomes from the instruction. My first conjecture was that students would initially not know what to write, and therefore experience a large word count increase on the posttest when they knew how to analyze a text and choose relevant textual evidence. My second was that students would ramble and summarize in the pretest in order to show their effort, and then have fewer words in the posttest when they know what to write. The third possibility was that students would have approximately the same word count for both essays, resulting from their preconceived notions about how long an essay “should” be. The data seems to support all three of these outcomes. Therefore, writing quality is not always correlated with essay length.

Essays 8A and 8B show a writer who greatly improves both word count and writing quality after instruction. This writer's first essay is 64 words long, and scored a 3 on the assessment rubric, meaning it made a claim about mood, provided a few pieces of evidence in support, but lacked a tie-in between the evidence and the claim. After instruction, essay 8B shows a massive word count increase, from 64 to 257. Additionally, 8B shows a much more developed ability to pull out specific textual evidence and explain how that evidence is connected to the writer's claim. For

instance this writer connects diction to creation of bleak mood by stating, “Thinking about it this pattern makes me think of someone thinking of all the worst possible outcomes, and this projects the final mood of panic.” The writer clearly here explains how his chosen evidence works to create the piece’s mood. This writer also increases his use of direct quotes rather than paraphrases. In 8A, the writer uses five paraphrased pieces of evidence. In 8B, the writer uses four direct quotes from the text, showing an increased awareness and analysis of specific word choices rather than paraphrased ideas.

The changes in essays 13A to 13B illustrate my second hypothesis: that students may have rambled in their pretest, and been more specific and concise in their posttest, creating a decrease in word count but increase in essay quality. In essay 13A, the writer uses many long, direct quotes to support her claim, but does not write sentences explaining the connection between the evidence and claim. In 13B however, the student uses fewer words, but much more specific quotes to support her analysis. Rather than transcribing entire sentences, this writer only pulls out the specific words she wants to analyze when discussing diction. 13B also features multiple tie-in sentences, ones that explain how the provided evidence is proving the claim. While the word count of essays 13A and 13B decreased by 60 words, this writer was simply more concise and specific in her analysis, raising her score from four to five on the rubric.

Most essays, however, do not illustrate a consistent narrative relationship between word count and essay quality. For example, essay pairs 3, 9, 11, and 12 show essays with increasing, decreasing, and consistent word counts. Yet each of these essays received the same score on pretest and posttest, illustrating that word count

does not necessarily equate to an increase or decrease in quality score. Essay pairs 8 and 15 both show a dramatic increase in word count (+193 and +306 words respectively) accompanied with an increase in score. Essay pair 13 however, shows a notable decrease of -63 words, and yet still improves in rubric score. Overall, it seems that in this sample set, word count is not a consistent measure for assessing quality. It can however, be a helpful factor in explaining the interpretative development a student shows from their pretest to posttest

### **5.3 Limitations**

This study only examined a small class of 19 students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. For that reason, the results of this study are not generalizable and the pre/post methodology cannot control for environmental or maturation factors that could impact increases in analytical reading and writing quality. Additionally, since I was not able to include a maintenance probe, I cannot make claims about how well students will retain the benefits of instruction. Also, although the literary passages students analyzed were controlled for length and readability, they do not fully reflect the challenges a student may face when analyzing longer texts in the ELA classroom. The brevity of the texts may have challenged students' ability to form a cognitive representation of the passage's plot or broader theme, therefore inhibiting their ability to close-read the text. Furthermore, students' background knowledge of a specific text may affect their comprehension of it. The pretest passage is about a high school students' daily routine. The posttest passage is about men lost at sea. While most students improved their score from the pretest to posttest, even better results may come from a posttest with a similar level of relevance to students' daily lives as seen in the pretest.



Additionally, Dr. Lewis and I were aware which essays were pretests and which were posttests. Were we to do this study again, I would like to keep that knowledge hidden during the evaluation process to avoid bias. I would also like to have another professional English teacher evaluate the tests using our rubric while unaware of the larger purpose for the study. This would add an additional layer of credibility to our results that was unavailable with the semester's time restraints.

Participants also came to the instruction with a wide range of reading comprehension ability, spanning from approximately 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading levels. In order to work with higher level concepts like close reading, students must first be able to comprehend the gist-level of the text they've read. This instruction may only work with students who are at or above the comprehension level of the selected texts.

#### **5.4 Implications and Further Research**

While the quasi-experimental nature of the study may not make my results generalizable, other educators can benefit from this work. Close reading is a skill that many students struggle with. It requires them to critically analyze the elements that make a literary piece function, which is a cognitively abstract task. The texts and protocol used in this thesis can help other educators design instruction that leverages graphic texts to scaffold close reading of traditional print texts. Additionally, they may consider using graphic novel texts to encourage broader student engagement with canonical literature selections.

Future studies might include a control condition that omits the graphic novel portion to see if students achieve the same results with just the literary instruction. This would help me better understand the degree to which the graphic novel

instruction helps students comprehend the concept of close reading. Further studies might include different graphic elements as part of the graphic or textual instruction. For instance, I might substitute frame in the graphic passage section for color. How color creates mood may be an even simpler concept for students to grasp than frame as they begin their close reading instruction. Additionally, I may choose to increase the time and number of examples students encounter with syntax in order to see if these factors improve student ability to analyze passages for syntactical features. Lastly, a further study could examine more specifically which students benefited most from this instruction. Does this instruction benefit students who are well below grade-level readers more so than above grade-level readers? Do students already reading at a high level still improve their reading? These questions would help determine the best demographic audience for this work.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Overall, this instructional protocol successfully taught a class of 9<sup>th</sup> graders how to close read both visual and literary passages for mood. 79% of participants increased their essay scores, using textual evidence to support their claims. This intervention gave students an interpretive foothold into works of pure text, demonstrably improving their ability to read at a high school and—with continued practice—college level.

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## Appendix A

### INSTRUCTIONAL PROTOCOL/DAILY LESSON PLANS

# Graphic Novel Close Reading: Frame and Typography

9 ELA

4/6/16

#### Overview:

- In this class, students will be introduced to close reading with visual texts. We will start by reviewing last class' discussion of how visuals can create a mood with size, color etc. I will then give a short presentation on the mechanics of reading GN and how that works. We will then go through the modules of each close reading section: first Frame, then Typography/Text/Speech Bubbles. This involves a teacher modeled analysis, then small group analysis, then an individual analysis with discussions in between each. We will then repeat the same sequence for the concept of close reading the typography/text/speech bubbles of a GN.

#### Essential Question(s)

- How do authors create mood in a visual image?

#### Objective(s):

- SWBAT analyze in writing *how* a mood is created in a short graphic novel passage, looking at both the elements of frame, and typography

#### Rationale:

- My group of students has not worked closely with many literary text in a few months since we focused on informational texts and argumentative writing. This class is part of a series that will introduce students to literary analysis through close reading as we prepare for our unit with *Of Mice and Men*. I have hypothesized that this abstract idea is more easily learned through a visual form first, then transferred into literary works of pure-text.

#### Applicable Standards:

Reading, 9-10, Standard 1

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Writing, 9-10, Standard 1

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Before Class Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 Copies of Close Reading Frame Group</li> <li>• 22 Copies of Close Reading Frame Individual</li> <li>• 7 Copies of Close Reading Words/Bubbles Group</li> <li>• 22 Copies of Close Reading Words/Bubbles Individual</li> <li>• Powerpoint slides Senior Thesis Slides for IRB Approval</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Physical Room Set Up/Placement of Materials</b></p>

**Activity #1 Graphic Novel Basics (3-5 min)**

- So if you remember last class, we discussed skimmed through a few comics and graphic novels looking pages that used visual elements to create a certain mood. Today we're going to learn more specifically what some of these elements are, and how we can analyze them.
- BUT FIRST, it's important for us to know how to read these things! Let's look at the pieces that make up a graphic novel page
- Slide 2 - Panel, speech bubble, text box
- Now that we've got the components, how do we read this thing?
  - Slides 3 and 4

**Activity #2 Analyzing How Frame Creates Mood (35-45 min)**

- So now we know how to read a page and understand the frames. Now let's talk about the specific elements the artists in graphic novels use to create a mood.
- This skill, analyzing the elements of a text is called close reading. How many of you have heard of close reading before?
  - The whole point of close reading is identifying and analyzing *how* the elements of a piece create its meaning, in this case, its mood.
- Author can do this by messing with the frames on their page.

**Teacher Modeled Analysis (3-5 min)**

- Blankets Warped Panel Slides - This is from a text called *Blankets*. The author is telling a story about his brother and their childhood imaginations.



- The author has been typically using traditional square frames. What do we see here though?
- “Most of the frames are normal rectangles. On page 407 however, the author bends and warps the frames when he’s telling us about a childhood memory. By bending the frames, the author creates a fantastic, other-worldly mood that shows us this is just imagination.”

#### Student Group Work with Frame Analysis (12-15 min)

- *Pass out Close Reading Frame: Group Work* packets
- I’m now passing out a packet to each table. As a group, your job is to read the short graphic novel passage, then fill out the graphic organizer together. Be ready to share because your table will most likely be called on. You have 10 minutes.
- Describe for students the introduction and directions on the first page of packet
  - *Distribute individual frame work packets as students are working in groups*
- Tell students to start wrapping up towards the end of the 10 minutes,
- Ask the class “ok, so what did you put in the first box of the graphic organizer?” ... “how about the second?” ... “ok, what kind of mood did this frame choice make? What might the author want us to feel while reading this?”

#### Individual Work with Frame Analysis (10-12 min)

- As you were working before, I passed out another short example where an author uses frame to create a mood.
- For the next 12 minutes, your job is to read the instructions, read the short passage, and then fill in the graphic organizer. You’ll then write a 2-3 sentence analysis. How does the author’s choice of frame create a mood in this piece?
- Once students are done, come back together as a class and ask students to share. Go through each question on graphic organizer calling on students who volunteer.

#### **Activity #3 Close Reading Word Bubbles and Typography**

- Now you guys are starting to get close reading. We look closely at a text and figure out the *specific choices* an author makes to create a mood.
- Now let’s learn about how authors can use word bubbles and fonts. What kinds of things do you think an author could do with a font to create some sort of effect?

#### Teacher Modeled Analysis (3-5 min)

- Project and read slide 13
- Ask students “What stands out to you here about the word bubbles?
  - Yea they’re overlapping. Why do you think the author did that? What kind of mood do you get from this page?

- Yea, slide 14
  - Normally, authors don't overlap speech bubbles. On page 178 of *Blankets* however, the author chooses to put the narrator's thoughts on top of the dad speaking in the scene. In the next panel, the author also puts the dad's words outside of the car. These choices shows that the boy and girl are so lost in their own world together that they are ignoring the father's words.

#### Group Bubble/Font Analysis (15-18 min)

- *Distribute Close Reading: Words and Bubbles* packet
- Just like before, you're going to work in your group to read the directions, then read the passage, then fill out the graphic organizer. Then your group will write a short analysis paragraph describing how the author creates a mood using speech bubbles or fonts. You will have 12 minutes. Be sure to write all group members' names on the packet.
  - As students are working, distribute *Close Reading: Words and Bubbles Individual*
- After 12-15 minutes, bring the class back together and have a group or two share their responses.

#### Individual Bubble/Font Analysis (10 min)

- In this last part of the class, you'll complete one more example on your own. Read the directions, the short passage, fill out the graphic organizer then write a short analysis paragraph. You will have

\*\*\*COLLECT ALL STUDENT WORK\*\*\*

#### Closure:

- Door slammer - Post it note "How would you define close reading?"
  - Students will "slam" this on the door on their way out of the classroom.

# Close Reading Diction, Syntax + Posttest

4/8/16

9 ELA

## Overview:

- In this lesson, I will continue teaching my close reading mini-unit used for the PAL project and my senior thesis. I will first model what analyzing diction looks like. Students will then work in a group to analyze the diction of a passage, then work individually to do the same. I will model what analyzing the syntax of a passage looks like, then students will do so individually. At the end of this sequence, students will take a 30-40 minute posttest analyzing their ability to analyze a similar-level prompt for how diction and syntax work together to create a mood in a literary piece.

## Essential Question(s)

- How do authors create meaning in their work?

## Concept:

- Close reading for mood

## Objective(s):

- SWBAT close read a short literary passage and analyze how the literary elements of diction and syntax contribute to the piece's mood

## Rationale:

- Last class, we learned how to close read visual texts, analyzing how the visual elements of frame and typography can create mood in a short graphic novel passage. Today we will transfer that critical eye into the world of pure-text literature passages. This sequence allows students to develop a close reading eye for how elements work together to create mood first in a visual form, which I have hypothesized is easier than jumping straight to text where there is little visual component.
- This class will build up students' close reading skills as we move into *Of Mice and Men* in one week. We will use this to analyze the animalistic characterization of Lennie through Steinbeck's diction choices.

## Applicable Standards:

Reading, 9-10, Standard 1

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Reading, 9-10, Standard 4

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

<b>Before Class Preparation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22 Copies of Close Reading Diction Individual</li> <li>• 7 Copies of Close Reading Diction Group</li> <li>• 22 Copies of Close Reading Syntax</li> <li>• 22 Copies of Posttest</li> <li>• Powerpoint slides Senior Thesis Slides for IRB Approval</li> </ul>	
NA	<b>Physical Room Set Up/Placement of Materials</b>

**Introduction/Hook: Word Categories (3 min)**

- To start off class, give each group a different *Word Categories* paper.
- Give students 60-90 seconds to read the words and decide as a group the mood those words create together.
- Have each group share their words and the moods they identified.

Transition - "This was pretty easy when they're all next to each other. Now let's see if we can do this when they're in a regular piece of literature

**Activity #1: Close Reading Diction (Teacher-Group-Individual) (25-30 min)**

**Let's take a look at this example. Slide 18. What words in this passage stand out to you? Write student responses on the board.**

- Important words to include if not said - charged, pointed, cruel, betrayed, attacked, clashed, slashed, wicked, enemy

**What kind of images do these words bring up? Allow students to respond. Right, so let's write a few sentences.**

- In this passage, the author includes many aggressive and angry words such as "cruel, pointed, slashed, and wicked." This choice makes the reader feel the boy's fear and creates the intense mood of the passage.

**So here, I noticed a pattern, provided examples of that pattern, and described how that pattern creates an image and mood.**

**Group -** Now it's time for you to try in your small groups. I'm going to read the passage on "Figure 8 Close Reading Diction Group." As you listen/read along, think about the words or phrases that stand out. Once you've got a few, use the graphic organizer to organize your thinking.

- Read aloud
- Then give students 7-10 minutes to pick out the word choice, and use the graphic organizer to organize their thoughts
  - *Distribute Close Reading Diction Individual packet*
- Come back together and ask for student answers in each box

Individual

- Now let's do one on our own. Remember to look for the words or phrases that stand out, particularly adjectives and verbs, and discuss how they create a mood for the piece.
- Give students 10-12 minutes
- Come back together and ask for some answers. Discuss as necessary

## **Activity #2: Close Reading for Syntax (18-25 min)**

Teacher model

- We've learned about how authors make specific words choices to create images and a mood Now we're going to learn about how syntax, or sentence structure can do that as well.
- Authors can use their sentence structures to create meaning. For example, if an author uses a lot of very complex sentences in a row, and then one really short one, our attention is drawn to that short one because it stands out. Or maybe, an author can use a lot of short, simple sentences to create a serious mood where there's no room for extra frills. Let's take a look at this passage and think about the sentence lengths.
- Slide 21
- **What kinds of sentences do we notice here? Long, short? Students respond. Right, we see a lot of shorter sentences in this one, which along with the content, give the piece a very somber feel. So here's what I would write,** "In this passage, the author uses many short sentences in a row such as "I stayed in bed like she used to do." These short sentences make the narrator sound very serious and sad, therefore creating the sad mood for the story.

Individual

- *Distribute Close Reading Syntax Individual*
- Now this time I want you to work on this piece just individually, and without a graphic organizer.
  - At this point, you know what to do. Read this passage, and then write a short paragraph about *how* the author's choice of sentence length creates the mood of a piece.
- Give students 10-12 minutes as necessary.

- Come back together and have students share. Encourage/critique as necessary.

**Activity #3: Posttest** (35-45 min)

- *Distribute “Analyzing Literature” post test sheets*
- Read directions for post test
- Students take post test

\*\*\*COLLECT ALL STUDENT WORK\*\*\*

**Closure:**

- Ask students to take out a quarter sheet of paper and write what helped them learn this material, and what would help them learn it better/what didn't help them learn this material.
- If time allows, answer student questions from last class on sticky notes

## Appendix B

### GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Close Reading Frame: Group Work

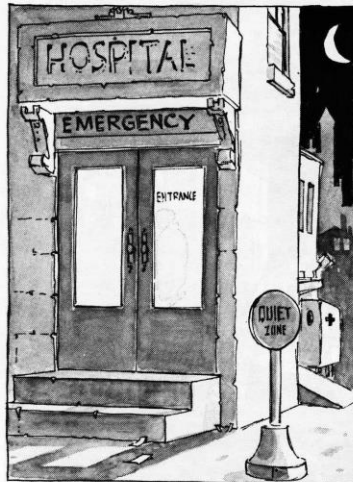
This example comes from Will Eisner's *New York: The Big City*, a collection of short stories about city life in the comic form.

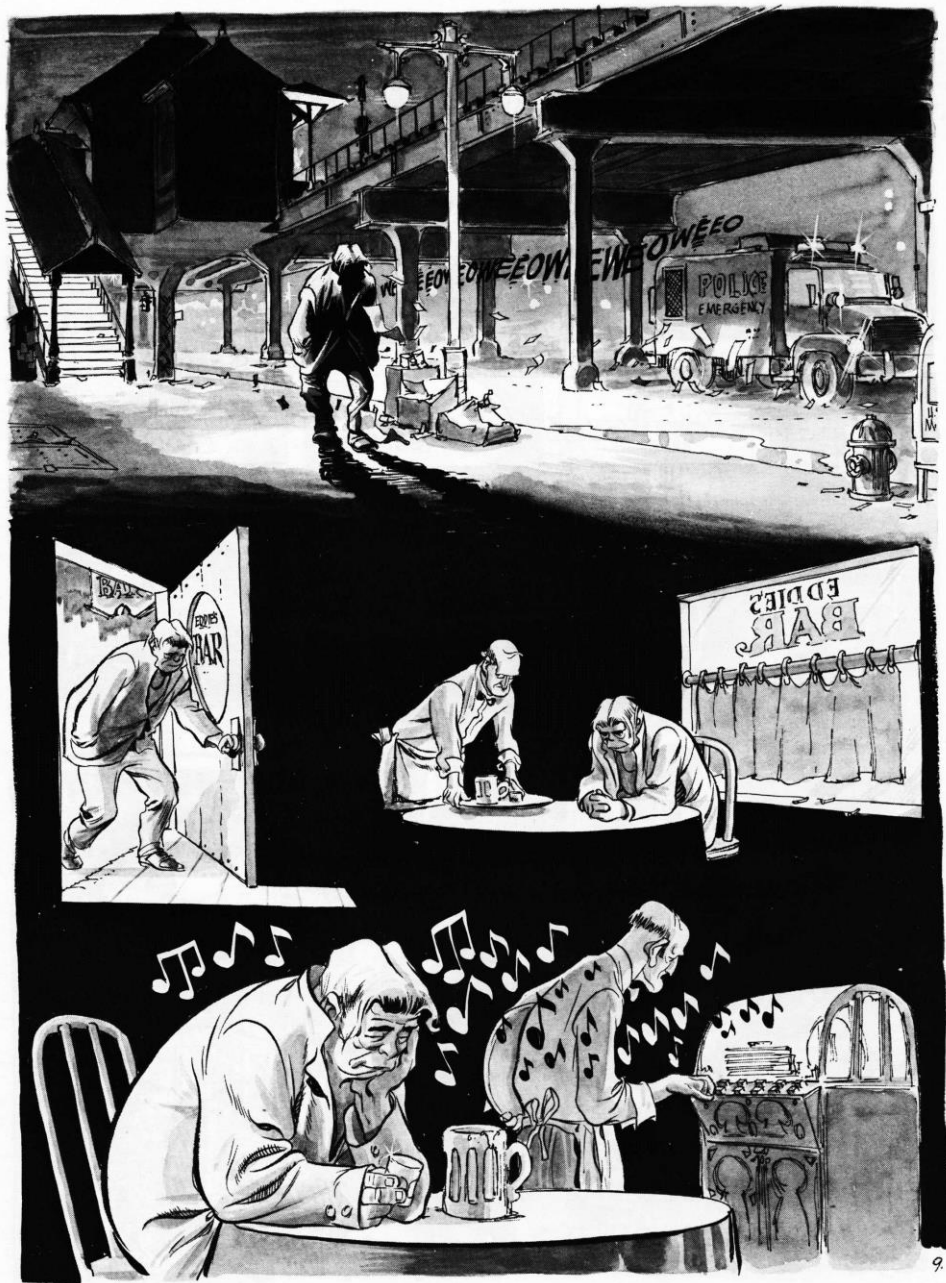
Directions: Read this passage called "Opera" and use the graphic organizer to guide your thinking. How does the author use framing (or lack thereof) to create a mood?

# OPERA









## Close Reading Frame: Individual

This example comes from Craig Thompson's *Blankets*. In this section, two teenagers in love reunite after months apart.

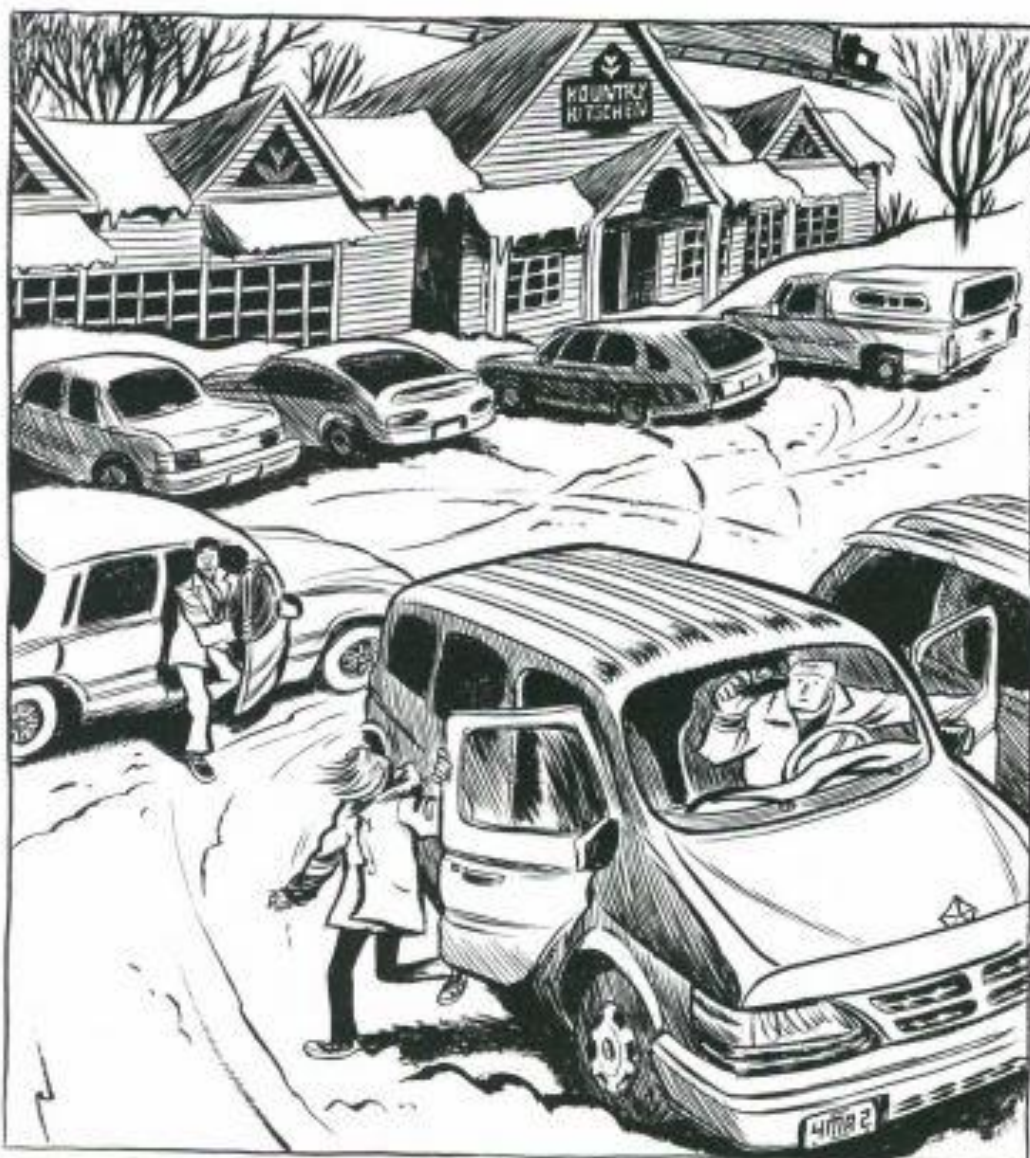
Directions: Read this passage from *Blankets* and use the graphic organizer to guide your thinking. How does the images create a mood?

*My mother drove me; her father drove her; and we planned to meet HALF-WAY, at the border of Wisconsin and Michigan.*



*That must be it.  
A red van in the  
KOUNTRY KITSCHEN  
parking lot.*









Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Frame Graphic Organizer

Describe what most of the frames look like (size, shape, placement on page).



Is there one frame that seems different from the rest? What makes it different?



What effect does this different frame have on the reader/what might the author want us to feel when reading this/what is the mood?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Close Reading Words and Bubbles: Group Work

This example comes from Will Eisner's *New York: The Big City*. It is a single-page story in a collection of stories depicting life in the city.

Directions: Read this passage and use the graphic organizer to guide your thinking. Afterwards, write a short paragraph that describes how the author uses words and bubbles to create a mood.



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

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

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Close Reading Words and Bubbles: Individual

This example comes from a kid-made comic I found at a Philadelphia summer camp. While the content may seem silly, it is a great example of intentional authorial choices enhancing the story. How does the author use the size/shape/color of the words to create an effect in the reader? What is that effect?

Directions: Read this piece, use the graphic organizer to guide your thinking and to help you write a short paragraph like we have on the board.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Words/Bubbles Graphic Organizer

Describe what most of the words/bubbles look like (size, shape, placement on page).



Is there a moment or pattern where the text or bubbles stand out? What makes it different?



How does this choice of word/bubble create a mood? How does the author want us to feel during this panel?

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

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

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Close Reading Traditional Text (Word Choice): Group Work

This example comes from a Chinese-American students' reflection on his trips to Chinese school.

Directions: Read this passage and use the graphic organizer to guide your thinking. Afterwards, write a short paragraph using your observations.

Every day at 5 P.M. instead of playing with our 4th and 5th grade friends, my brother and I were made to go to Chinese school. We could not go out into the empty lot to hunt ghosts and animal bones, and no amount of kicking and screaming or pleading could convince my mother. She wanted us to learn the language of our heritage.

Forcibly, she walked us the seven long, hilly blocks to school, depositing our defiant, tearful faces before the stern principal. My only memory of him is that he swayed on his heels like a palm tree in a storm. He always clasped his impatient twitching hands behind his back. I recognized him as a repressed maniacal child killer, and knew that if we ever see his hands we'd be in big trouble.

We all sat in chairs that were pinched and small in an empty auditorium. The room smelled like Chinese medicine, a far away mustiness. It was a smell like ancient mothballs or dirty closets. I hated that smell and I had to face it every day.

The emphasis of the school was language—speaking, reading and writing—but the lessons always started with an exercise in politeness. With the entrance of the teacher, the best student would tap a bell. Then everyone would get up, kneel and touch the ground with our foreheads, and chant, “Sing san ho,” a way to say “How are you, teacher?”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Close Reading Traditional Text (Word Choice): Individual

This example tells the story of a boy traveling away from his home. Pay attention to the effect of the adjectives and verbs.

Directions: Read this passage and use the graphic organizer to guide your thinking. Afterwards, write a short paragraph using your observations.

Lewis Barnavelt fidgeted and wiped his sweaty palms on the seat of the bus that was roaring toward Newtown, Michigan. He looked down at his purple corduroy trousers, the kind that go whip-whip when you walk. He put his hand up and rubbed it across his hair, which was parted in the middle and slicked down with Wildroot Hair Oil. His hand was uncomfortably greasy now, so he wiped it on the seat again. His lips were moving silently, like he was saying a nervous prayer.

It seemed to Lewis that all he could think of these days were questions: Where am I going? Who will I meet? Will I like them? What will happen to me?

Until recently he had lived with his parents in a small town near Milwaukee. But his father and mother had been killed suddenly one night in an auto accident. He was now going to live with his Uncle Jonathan, whom he had never met in his life. Of course, Lewis heard a few things about Uncle Jonathan, like he smoked and drank. His aunts had warned him about Jonathan, and he hoped the warnings would turn out to be unnecessary.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Diction Graphic Organizer

What words seem to stand out in the passage (adjectives and verbs are good places to look). Write them here.



What pattern are you noticing? How would you describe the types of words you're pulling from the passage?



What emotion/mood do these word choices give to the passage?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Close Reading Traditional Text (Syntax/Sentence Structures): Individual

This passage comes from Eve Bunting's piece called *The Wall*. It tells the story of a young boy and his father visiting the Vietnam Memorial wall in Washington, D.C. The wall holds the names of every dead and missing soldier from the Vietnam war in the 1960s.

Directions: Read this passage and write a short paragraph that describes how the piece's syntax creates a mood.

Dad is searching and searching. "Albert A. Jensen, Charles Bronoski, George Munoz," he mutters. His fingers stop moving. "Here he is."  
"My grandpa?" I ask. Dad nods.  
"Your grandpa." His voice blurs. "My dad. He was just my age when he was killed."  
Dad is rubbing the name, rubbing and rubbing as if he wants to wipe it away. Maybe he just wants to remember the way it feels.

## Appendix C

### PRETEST, POSTTEST, EVALUATION RUBRIC

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Analyzing Literature - Pretest

**Introduction:** People who think and write about literature know that authors often include clues in their works that can serve as signals to a reader about what a piece of literature means. Authors include these in their works to help readers to find meaning. These choices serve as evidence for an author's meaning.

**Directions:** Please read the following passage and think about the specific choices of language the author makes. Afterwards, write a short essay (2-3 paragraphs) analyzing how the author's use of language affects the reader. Don't worry too much about introductions or conclusions. I am more interested in your analysis of the author's language choices. You may use this paper to plan however you see fit. You will have 45 minutes for this task.

### Passage:

John Gray had been dreading going to school for the last few hours, and when the alarm rang in the early morning gloom, he pulled the covers over his head to block out the blue sky and green grass and the early morning sun that had leaked in through a gap in the curtains.

He closed the curtains and buried into his dark brown comforter on his bed. "Are you getting up for school, honey?" his mother asked with a springtime note in her voice. "It's almost seven and the bus will be here in another 15 minutes."

"Yeah," John replied. "I'm up."

John pulled the covers away and was shocked by the golds, blues and greens when he pulled open the curtains and tried to look for his favorite brown corduroys and his muted turtleneck in the glare. After walking slowly to the bathroom, he stared at his complexion, especially the dead circles under his eyes, made worse by reflection on the lime green paint in the bathroom. He did not like what he saw and it made his mood even dead.

When he went down for breakfast he saw that his mother had fixed fried eggs, the bright yellow yolks shining in the spring sun. He hated eggs and had told her about it.

He grabbed a pop-tart, and a juice box, grabbed his pack and headed toward the door, glad to be out of the house. But when the jolly yellow bus, made almost florescent by the morning sun, roared into sight, he felt cramped and crumpled inside like an old newspaper. The lush lawns of his development laughed as he found his seat.

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

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

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Analyzing Literature - Posttest

**Introduction:** People who think and write about literature know that authors often include clues in their works that can serve as signals to a reader about what a piece of literature means. Authors include these in their works to help readers to find meaning. These choices serve as evidence for an author's meaning.

**Directions:** Please read the following passage and think about the specific choices of language the author makes. Afterwards, write a short essay (2-3 paragraphs) analyzing how the author's use of language affects the reader. Don't worry too much about introductions or conclusions. I am more interested in your analysis of the author's language choices. You may use this paper to plan however you see fit. You will have 45 minutes for this task.

### Passage:

None of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes glanced level and were fastened on the cruel waves that swept toward them. These waves were the color of slate, except for the tops, which were foaming white. All of the men knew the color of the sea. It came at them, like a tiger. It seemed especially aggressive because of their current predicament. Many a man ought to have a bathtub larger than the lifeboat which the men rode in that day. As each slate grey wall of water approached, it shut everything else from the view of the men in the lifeboat. It was not difficult to imagine that this particular wave was the final outburst of the ocean, the last effort of the grim water. There was a terrible grace in the movement of the waves. They came in silence, except for the growling of the jagged crests. There was a fierceness in each waves' toothed grin.

## Primary Trait Rubric - Pre and Post tests

1	<p>Lacking Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay may only summarize or describe the passage without addressing mood or literary choices of diction and syntax</li> </ul>
2	<p>Underdeveloped Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay identifies a mood, but does not use textual evidence to support claim</li> </ul>
3	<p>Minimally Developed Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay identifies a mood and uses 1-2 pieces of textual evidence to support claim.</li> </ul>
4	<p>Developing Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay identifies a mood and uses 1-2 pieces of textual evidence to support claim. Essay partially explains how chosen pieces of evidence work to create a mood. Essay may only reference diction or syntax, but not both.</li> </ul>
5	<p>Strong Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay identifies a mood and uses 2-3 pieces of textual evidence to support claim. Essay clearly explains how chosen pieces of evidence work together to create a mood. May only address diction or syntax.</li> </ul>
6	<p>Exemplary Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay identifies a mood and uses 2-3 pieces of textual evidence to support claim. Essay clearly and persuasively explains how chosen pieces of evidence work together to create a mood addressing both diction and syntax</li> </ul>

## Appendix D

### STUDENT ESSAY EXAMPLES

~~4/4/16~~  
P.S. 1A

In this passage the author adds language. This use of language affects the reader by telling how the person in the story is tired and angry. The author also tells the person's morning.

The author's use of language describes the person's feelings about school. Readers of this passage can relate to the person in the story because of the use of language in the story. The mood of the is tired and mad.

1B  
~~4/4/16~~

This passage has a mood to it. The mood is created from the choice of words and the sentence structure. The mood of this passage is dangerous.

The word choice and sentence structure create the mood. The words are words of danger. Some of the words are grim, terrible, aggressive. The structure of the sentences is long with pauses in the middle of the sentences. This structure to the sentences with the word choices creates the mood of danger.

## 2A

The author talks about John Grey's bad morning. He wakes up late and is blinded by the brightness of the sun. He tries to find his clothes with the sun in his eyes.

John's morning goes from bad to worse as he sees that he has bags underneath his eyes and he felt worse and worse, especially when his mom made eggs, which he hates.

## 2B

The mood that the author was creating was one of ~~excitement~~ <sup>sadness and excitement.</sup>  
The passage described, basically, a beach but through the eyes of people that can't see color. Color ~~isn't~~ usually depicts feelings such as happy, sad or mad. However, there is a colorless sky and waves, which are in black, white, and slate, dull colors.

The word choices are cruel, swept, predicament, outburst, grim, terrible, growling, jagged, and fierceness. They are words of excitement, fear and a bit of sadness.

Many of the sentences are long. They describe the vibe and try to paint a picture of a colorless ocean or beach. The waves are crashing but instead of being blue, it's slate. The sky has no color. The waves of raging water were intense.

3A

## Analyzing Literature

~~4/4/16~~  
4/4/16

CP English

Pd. 5

The author's choice of words and use of language affects the mood and the reader because in paragraph one it's stating that John Gray is dreading going to school meaning he either doesn't want to go or he hates school and never wants to go. Also John Gray has circles under his eyes making him look "dead" that's saying that he got no sleep the night before.

John Gray sounds almost annoyed that he's up so early and that his mom is making him breakfast he doesn't like by the way the author wrote that paragraph

3B

~~4/12/16~~

4/12/16

pd. 5

The authors choice of words is very emotional like with the word slate meaning dull and boring and the way the author used the word fierceness as a way to get to the reader. The sentence structure was very outgoing and it created the mood of sadness just by the way the first sentence is structured "None of them knew the color of the sky and also the by the 8<sup>th</sup> sentence as each slate gray wall of water approached"

Also most of the sentences are mostly short but some are long and confusing just because of the words the author choose to use in that sentence.

The colors dark blue, gray and black are categorized as the "sad" colors in the world.



4A

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
EIA

The authors choice of language affects the reader by giving good details. It helps the reader vision the passage better. The author used some ~~words~~ ~~that~~ ~~are~~ ~~not~~ ~~clear~~.

4B

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

The authors word choice created mood by using the word slate it gave the story like a sad mood.

5A

u/a p.5

~~XXXXXX~~

The mood of the story is of a kid don't wanting to go to school. It's spring time and he's really tired and just want to stay home.

The language the author uses is explaining how tired and tired looking the kid feels. He also explains how nice the day is outside.

# 5B

The author was using the words grim and aggressive etc. to make the mood seem dark and bad. In the passage the sea "came at them, like a tiger." gave some of the mood on how fierce it was.

The sentence structure is short and to the point. An example of that gives the mood would be "Their eyes glanced level and were fastened on the cruel waves that swept towards them."

# 6A

4/4/16  
pt. 5

The author uses descriptions on how the person mood is for example it says "when the alarm rang in the early morning gloom, he pulled the covers over his head to block out the blue sky and green grass and the early morning sun that had leaked in through a gap in the curtains." this means he didn't want to go to school on such a beautiful day out. Also describing their tones for example "his mother asked with a spring-time note in her voice." This means she was in a happy mood.

The author then use a simile for example in the passage it says "he felt cramped and crumpled inside like an old news paper." He also used another mood for John Gray it says "He did not like what he saw and it made his mood even deadlier."

# 6B

## Analyzing Literature

4/12/16

Pcl. 5

In the passage the use of diction the author used were aggressive, growling, grim, jagged, and fierceness. Now the sentences are more descriptive, short, and serious. For example when the author wanted to describe the waves it says "These waves were the color of slate (a gray), except for the tops, which were foaming white". Another one was "there was a terrible glare in the movement of the waves." Also "As each slate grey wall of water approached it shot everything else from the view of the men in the lifeboat".

Now based on the word choices and the sentence structure between those two things they have created a scared / nervous mood. This is because the word choices are describing fear. Also the sentences were making me anxious and nervous from how the author is describing the waves.

# 7A

4-4-16

The author is using parenthesis to tell the reader that a character is saying something. And the author is telling everything that is going on and how the character is feeling or how the character is seeing in the story.

~~7A~~ 7B

The author made us think and imagine what the character was doing or how was the character in the story for example: "It came at them, like a tiger" that tell us that the character was seeing everything like a tiger. Its sad because the boat is sinking and their in a lifeboat and waves are coming in.

8A

Analyzing literature: Mood

The author conveys the negative mood that is represented through John Gray because John is upset and every thing around him has a radiant glow and make John feel worse about everything about himself.

John does not like his features and his bland appearance which is seen from his favorite brown corduroys and his muted turtleneck. He notices everything negative in a setting so beautiful.



# 8B

The author uses the combined efforts of diction and syntax to create the mood for the reader. The mood of this passage is gloomy & dull yet full of fear and ~~panic~~ <sup>panic</sup>. It is difficult to tell because the words themselves were dull which made me uncertain what the mood was because it could point in any direction. The author makes the passage like this by using certain sentences such as "None of them knew the color of the sky" and "These waves were the color of slate, except for the tops, which were foaming white." This word structure made it seem as if the men were colorblind. However the ~~diction~~ the author uses slightly contradicts this.

The author uses certain word choice that makes the setting feel like it is actually night time. Some examples of this are "their eyes glanced level and were fastened on the cruel waves that swept toward them." and also "all of the men knew the color of the sea. It came at them like a tiger. It seemed especially aggressive because of their current predicament." ~~This makes it seem like it is night~~ The mood at this point seems like anxiousness, ~~but~~ however the length of each sentence changes this because it goes from short to long, short to long then long until the last two sentences where it is short. Thinking about it this pattern makes me think of someone thinking of all of the worst possible outcomes. And this portrays the final mood of panic.

9A

English

April 4, 2016  
Period 5

## Analyzing Literature

John Gray was dreading to go to school and when his alarm rang he covered his head to block everything out. He had dead circles under his eyes, which made his mood even deadier. His mother made eggs; he hates eggs, he felt cramped and crumpled inside like a news paper.

I believe his mood was early morning grumpy that just now people feel getting ready for school early in the morning.

9B

English

April 12, 2016  
Period 5

## Analyzing Literature

In this passage I believe the author's use of diction were meant to explain how everything went down, like the senses of the story. Describing the color, the waves near the men felt about everything for example "Their eyes glanced level and were fastened on the cruel waves that swept toward them!" "Waves were the color of slate" "the tops were foaming white" "the sea came at them like a tiger, especially aggressive, the green water. They came in silence except for the grawling of the jagged crests." These examples show that the author was explaining everything he was saying for the syntax I think some were short and some were long. The mood of this passage to me is adventurous.

# 10A

The author's language choices causes the reader to want to continue reading. It causes this because when the author describes the objects in the story, it normally makes it more interesting. If you're describing grass, you could just say, "the green grass." If you want the reader to continue reading, you could say "the luscious, tall green grass."

Another example is if you're describing what a wall looks like. You could say "the white wall." If you want the reader to continue reading, you would say something like "the smooth, white wall." So if you don't make things more interesting with those types of language, the reader will most likely stop reading.

# 10B

The mood is scared. I know this because it shows words and phrases that prove they're scared. An example is when they say "Their eyes glanced left and were fastened on the cruel waves that swept toward them." This shows that they think the waves are cruel or scary.

The sentences are long and complex. This helps create the mood because long and complex sentences give you more information so it's easier to determine the mood. The adjectives help create the mood because if you don't use the right adjectives then you could say it's a certain mood when it's another. For example, when they say "It came at them like a tiger" if you know the waves are scary rather than if you used a different animal.



114

The author of John Gray's story uses negative vocabulary to describe John's mood towards school days/mornings. The uses the words "gloom" and "dreading" to explain John's negative mood. Even with the description of John's happy/positive surroundings you can feel the negativity. From John glaring at sunny days to the unappreciation of his mother's breakfast.

John was negative from the very beginning of the story. You can imagine him with a dead face, and a scowl on his face throughout the whole story. The author put a well interpreted negative setting.

11B

Analyzing literature is a skill that all readers should have. Knowing the mood a story more in-depth and reliable. By understanding mood a reader can understand the character, and the motive of their text.

In the passage given the author gives a dramatic / suspenseful mood. With the description of 'steep waves' and 'ragged crests', you can feel the danger of the surroundings. By also calling the waves aggressive like tigers the danger is some how simplified in the setting of this story.

Also by understanding the mood of a text you can better understand the characters. They never say in the text of the men fear; but you can feel it from their description of the sea. Of being 'cruel', 'aggressive', and 'grins'. By mood you can better engage yourself in a story. Relating to the characters also makes a text easier to understand.

11B

The author used gloomy and dark words in his text to make the story or men at sea more dramatic. With the author's gloomy words and medium sentences the story is made more dramatic and interesting.

12A

p. 5

4/4/16

The mood of this passage is both uplifting and sad because as the author describes the colors and environment joyfully and vividly the boy in the passage seems to resent the majority of the things described. For example when the author describes the way the mother's eggs shined in the spring sun, making them seem delicious and appetizing, the son says that "he hated eggs and he told her about," making the mood of the setting less joyful than it originally was. The author is very descriptive on purpose it feels. He wanted to show the 2 moods of the passage. The first mood is a beautiful, happy, colorful day that can be enjoyable. The other mood is of a boy who rejects the day and block out the colors that are displayed outside.

The passage also shows a somewhat average morning for a teen. Teens hate mornings and feel cramped on the bus. The way he looked in the morning made his mood even gloomier. It is guaranteed that a considerable amount of teens feel the same. Personally I feel the same in the morning and hate the thought of waking up so early to go to school.

12B

The author made the mood of this passage dark and scary as he describes the colors and situations vividly. He describes how the men are at sea facing brutal waves and how dark and intimidating they are. He states in the passage "As each slate grey wall of water approached, it shut everything else from the view of the men in the life boat." This sentence gives the reader a visual prospective of how this would look in real life. Also it makes you feel like you are apart of the story.

Words like terrible, grim, fierceness, cruel, aggressive, and outburst all show the severity of the waves. The sailors are in a possibly fatal situation and the author makes the reader realize that. The foaming white waves are pushing their life boat that is the size of a bath tub. The waves came silently and continued fiercely.

134

# Analyzing Literature

4/4/16

The overall mood of this story was sad or tired in the beginning. The story says, "The alarm rang in the early morning gloom..." He didn't want to get up. There were also hints of happy too in the second first paragraph they give you a description of what it looks like outside, "He pulled over the covers over his head to block out the blue sky and green grass and the early morning sun." His mother also seems happy talking in a 'springtime note'.

Back to being sad, in the 4 paragraph it mentions him looking in his mirror and seeing the dead around his eyes. It also mentions how he didn't like what he saw and made his mood even deader. The kids not having a good morning and it gets worse when his mum seems to be making eggs (paragraph 5). He has told her before how he hates eggs but she doesn't seem to listen.

At the last paragraph his mood seemed to get better when he left the house but when the bus came he felt like cramped and crumpled like an old newspaper.

So in general the mood of this story is sad or annoyed. The kids not happy to go to school and feels as if everything is going bad for him.

13B

### Analyzing Literature

12/4/16

The mood in this story is angry. You can see this because the story used words like: cruel, aggressive, terrible, jagged, growling, and fierceness to describe the waves in a storm. These words show that the storm is getting rougher and might even attack them at some point. The words in the story were chosen to tell you that the storm is angry.

The syntax for the story are short. Some might be long but most are short to tell you that the story is serious. They used this by saying, "their eyes glanced level and were fastened on the cruel waves that swept towards them." and, "It seemed especially aggressive because of their current predicament." These sentences show that the waters are angry and that it's more serious than funny or happy. The sentences also show a bit of scaredness by saying, "There was a terrible grace in the movement of the waves." The word terrible shows that something bad was happening.

14A

4/4/16

~~14A~~

The author mainly explains that are like dreadful, or like dead, boring. However the mood of the passage is that the boy is feeling bored.

The author literature choices were dreadful and disappointing words to describe his emotions.

14 B

April 12, 2016  
period 5

### Analyzing Literature

In this passage the author's word choice is ~~intense and mysterious~~ like if someone was exploring: cruel, growling, color, fierce. Also I think he used mysterious words.

The mood the author created was ~~was~~ nervous because the words they used was, outburst, aggressive, terrible, as in like something is going to happen. In the passage it says that "they came in silence". I believe they said that because they were scared. Lastly the sentences in the passage a short ending sentences.

# 15A (back side)

Topic/Objective:	Name: [redacted]
Mood	Class/Period: 5
	Date: 4/4/16

Does mood affect the readers

Notes:

In the passage the author's mood is set by the choices of words and how they are describing the moods. The mood is constantly changing. When the author says "dreadful" this affects the reader because this specific choice of word is dark and a negative type of word. It affects the readers mood to be sad and goofy and angry.

"Springtime note" this gives off a happy, bright mood and is one of the positive in this story which is very few. The author gives off in the story "Early morning gloom" pulled the covers over his

# 15A

Notes:
--------

head to block out the blue sky." This gives off a negative and positive mood. This story is filled with positive and negative moods but the majority is negative mood.



(back:ch)

The word choice that the author chooses to use is aggressive and sad. "None of them knew the color of the sky" This paints a picture of sadness because the sky and sun makes you happy but when the clouds are slate it paints a picture of sadness. The author uses quite depressing words and describes the sea as a tiger. Tigers are ferocious and bold and dangerous. The author describes the sea as it has teeth and is fierce. "There was a fierceness in each wave's toothed grin."

The sentence structure is set up as little sentences that all describe the sea as an evil object and describe the men being sad and depressed. "It came at them like a tiger." This sentence is very short but it gives out great emotion. We don't know what it describes so it sets up confusion and it is being compared to a tiger and tigers are fierce creatures. "There was a terrible grace in the movement of the waves." This sentence is short and describes the roughness of the waves. It describes men and waves and their point of view.

The mood that is given off is a very sad and scary mood. The people picture this wave/ocean as a monster. They are afraid of the "beast" but why

(down:ad) KB

are they out in the ocean in the first place? Maybe their ship crashed or it is their job out in the sea and it's a "you have to do what you have to do" kind of situation even though they all miss home and are secretly sad and afraid of the fierce monster they work with. "As each slate grey wall of water approached, it shut everything else from the view of the men in the lifeboat." This text gives you "chills". It shows sadness and frightfulness and you can imagine a dark blue/grey monster that surrounds you and traps every escape. You feel engulfed in the belly of the beast. "All of the men knew the color of the sea." This mood shows that you can tell the men have been doing this for a long time and that the only thing on their mind is life or death. "It came at them like a tiger." When I was a kid I remember being afraid of the ocean since it was aggressive and always came at me. I would run away before it touched me and this is the mood it gives me.



period 5  
9/9/16

16A

## Analyzing Literature

The mood is dark and gloomy. The author created this mood by using words that expressed the characters' dislike for bright things and according to his taste for dark colors. The words that express that it is a gloomy morning is words like "dreaded", "dark", and "cramped and crumpled like an old newspaper." The main character is shown as very unenthusiastic about the morning and feels like the bright colors are mocking him.

16B

The paragraph has a serious and dangerous mood. Something that makes it seem serious is that it starts out with a short sentence. Also the word choice attributes to the mood. For example the word cruel tells us that the waves were not gentle, they were harsh. Another word that is descriptive is grim because it shows that the situation they're in is dire and might be unresolvable.

The text also has a dangerous mood. The dangerous mood is shown in some of the phrasing. This is shown by the phrase, "It came at them like a tiger." This shows the dangerous mood by the reference to a tiger. The tiger shows that the wave came at them swiftly and strongly.

17A

## Analyzing Literature

March 4, 2016  
Class Period: 5

The author uses specific words in his passage to get the reader to understand more of what the author feels or what a character in the passage feels. For instance, in this passage, the author uses words like "dreading", "gloom", and "gloom". He uses these choice words to create a mood toward the reader to understand what the character is feeling. Which in the case, is sad and mad.

The author also uses sentences to explain in more depth or what he wants the reader to feel. In paragraph 4, the author says "He did not like what he saw and it made his mood even darker." He uses sentences like this to show that the character in the story is depressed. Language like this makes the reader feel down and gloomy. But if he used positive words, the author would probably make the reader more happy and brighten their mood. Certain language affects the reader's mood. Because the meaning of words put together will put the reader in whatever mood the meaning of the words are.

17B

## Analyzing Literature

April 12  
CP: 5

Some words or phrases the author uses to create a mood are cruel, for more gloom, aggressive, and anger. These particular words create a depressing mood to the reader. Yes, this is because these words all mean different things, but are all dark and gloomy. For example, the author says "each dark grey wave of water approached." Meaning that each wave was dark in color and grey. Authors also use word structure to create a mood too. The word structure this author uses is long and lengthy at times but short and sudden most of the other times. This also gives the reader a supernatural, sad mood.

The sentences (sentences structure) is also serious more than just short and sudden. They give a supernatural and serious tone saying this passage does not play around. The more serious it is, the more depressing and sad it is to the reader. The author also uses the word jagged to describe motion and hurt.

18A

18A  
20/16

The use of words such as, 'dreading' and 'early morning gloom', help the reader to get a sense of what the character(s) may be feeling. This, in turn, helps the reader decide how they feel about the character, i.e. relatability, interest, etc.

The author's use of imagery in this passage allows the reader to build their own perception of the setting. It allows the reader to better put themselves in the character's shoes, in turn, developing a possible feeling of empathy and/or relatability towards said character, depending on the reader.

18B

The author's use of personification and imagery help to create a mood of intensity within the text. Some examples of this are, once the author compares the size of the lifeboat to that of an average bathtub. Once the author described the perspective of the men and what they saw - huge waves with slate color.

# 19 A

4/4/16

The author uses a lot of exaggerated description of what he sees and it changes my mood as I'm reading because he's in a dull, boring mood from having to get up to go to school. John Gray makes me feel like I'm there experiencing the same thing as him and it helps when he talks about the bright colors of what he sees vs. the dark mood he's in since he just woke up.

This definitely changes emotion and helps you feel like you're there.

Gray uses phrases like "buried into his dark brown comforter", "springtime note in her voice", "jolly yellow bus" to change the mood of the situation.

# 19 B

The author of this passage uses strong dark words like "aggressive", "predicament", "outburst", "silence", "ferocious", etc. These words are describing this situation and really feed into your mind as you're reading. This author also uses a lot of specific color for this passage, like "slate" and "foaming white". As you continue reading, it gets more interesting and makes you curious. All the description has you visualizing it in your head. This is kind of a scary, mysterious mood. This passage leaves on a quick note without much of a finish. The mood is kind of scary because the author uses scary words.