The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Education

**ETHNOGRAPHY OF ADOLESCENT LITERACY:**

**SOCIOCULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF LITERACIES,**

**PLACES, MATERIALS, AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

A Dissertation in

Curriculum & Instruction

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2013

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ABSTRACT

Literacy, an ideologically rooted social practice, has been researched as reading and writing word-based language; however, literacy and literacies continue to be highly contested. Social practices are dynamic, evolving in response to sociocultural life. Research and policies identify divergences among in and out-of-school adolescent literacy practices and call for research to reconsider definitions of text and what it means to read and write in the 21$^{st}$ century. Based on a twelve-month ethnography of adolescent literacy with the collaboration of fifteen participants (students, teachers, and an administrator) from one northeastern U. S. high school, this study explored the question: How might the study of sociocultural beliefs and understandings about place, social relationships, and material objects inform understandings of adolescent literacy? Representing a portion of the study, this dissertation reports findings from three adolescent participants (all seniors) and their teachers: Tasha, a Haitian female (basic English literature); Colin, a White male (advanced placement English); and Simone, a White female (academic/mid-level English literature).

Traditional, multimodal, and multisensory methods were used in a participant-responsive design. Multimodal and multisensory methods included multiple forms of mapping (hand-drawn, hand-tracing, and digital video/photo maps) and walking tours. This study adopted an interdisciplinary theoretical framework and offers a new journey epistemology to explore sociocultural persistence through places, place-oriented social relationships, materials, and adolescent agency implicated in meaning making. The findings contribute to scholarly understandings of texts, reading, and writing and also question established situated definitions literacy events and literacy practices. This

research offers literacy purposes as multisituated, traveling with adolescents and influenced by place-oriented, but not place-bound, social relationships. This research also contributes to scholarship seeking understandings about how multimodal literacies entangle with adolescents' lives. Finally, this study shows how participant-responsive, multimodal research design can be used in conjunction with traditional ethnographic methods to conduct research consistent with participants' ways of making meaning.

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FN          Fieldnote

HDMI        Hand-Drawn Mapping

HTMSS       Hand-Tracing Mapping Sensory Self Among Materials

LLSI        Literacy Life Story

RQ1         Research Question 1: How do individuals define literacy, and how are those understandings embodied in social practices in places?

RQ2         Research Question 2: How are adolescents' beliefs about literacy embodied in material objects in places?

RQ3         Research Question 3: How are social relationships in places embodied in literacy practices?

VPM         Video/Photo Mapping Literacies in Life

WT          Walking Tour

Acknowledgments

This ethnography would not have been possible without the support and guidance from my dissertation committee and my family. Thank you, Dr. Staples, for advice, encouragement, detailed readings, and for pushing me to question my assumptions about literacies, adolescents, and ethnography.  Thank you, Dr. Powell, for encouraging me to explore my interest in places, multisensory research, and mapping methods. Thank you, Dr. McDonald, for pressing me to consider the places and spaces that construct learning environments and what it means to be a part of a learning community. Thank you, Dr. Carpenter for encouraging me to press the boundaries of visual research and representation and to explore definitions of terms.

Thank you Tasha, Simone, Colin, Jackson, Natalie, and Nate. Your stories made me laugh, fall silent, and hunger for more. You humbled me daily. Thank you Ed, Jack, Diane, Rachael, Carolyn, and Shelia for the minutes and hours when you had few to spare. Thank you for taking risks in your classrooms and for looking for opportunities to help voices emerge.

As research unfolds, life continues to move forward. During the final stages of this work, my dad's journey on earth ended. I am grateful that he was a part of my journey and that my mom accompanies me as we press forward. Finally, thank you Steve and John for listening, for being there each day, and thank you David, Michael, Glory, and Bob for the many text messages, emails, and countless conversations.  For my guys, as you engage with life's journey, may you embrace learning along the way valuing all that you encounter.

**Chapter I**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Problem Statement: Literacy as an Evolving Construct**

Attempts to define literacy, literacies, and what is means to be literate continue to challenge researchers and educators. Understandings of these terms related to literacy are contested and continue to evolve. For the purposes of this dissertation, literacy, as recognizable design used to communicate meaning to a particular audience, is understood to be ideologically rooted and practiced according to sociocultural expectations (Street, 1984) and through social practices valued by particular communities (Heath, 1983). An individual's sociocultural life incorporates multiple communities valuing varied social practices, and consequently, individuals are generally understood as multiliterate, able to use multiple literacies[1] effectively (Cope & Kalanztis, 2000; New London Group, 1996). Individuals also frequently communicate multimodally using varied sign systems (Kress, 2000; 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) and material artifacts (Pahl & Rowsell, 2006, 2010). Literacy has been associated with situated understandings of social contexts and particular events that inform how literacy as a social practice is enacted (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; New London Group, 1996). Through these researchers, literacies have been primarily associated with reading and writing word-based language alone or word-based language used in conjunction with other sign systems known through social practices.

However, social practices are dynamic and evolve in response to sociocultural needs, practices, and beliefs. Consequently, literacies and literacy practices also evolve as

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[1] Further discussion of terms as they relate to this research is found under What is Literacy?

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facets of social practices rooted in sociocultural life. Researchers have observed that in-school practices frequently fail to reflect the complexity of meaning making that students encounter and use in their lives outside of school (Alvermann, 2009; Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009a, 2009b; Hagood, 2008; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Kress, 2010; Leander & Sheehy, 2011; National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2009; National School Boards Association [NSBA], 2007; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006, 2010; Snyder & Bulfin, 2008). Innovation and sociocultural life in the 21$^{st}$ century prompted researchers, educators, and policy makers interested in adolescent literacy to reconsider definitions of text and what it means to read and write in order to learn more about how adolescents receive and create meaning and what that might mean for educational contexts and adolescent learning in schools (Christenbury, Bomer, & Smagorinsky, 2009; Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, & National Writing Project, 2011; NCTE, 2009).

**Purpose of the Study**

This study reconsidered definitions of texts and what it means to read and write through an ethnography of adolescent literacies, places, materials, and social relationships. Designed as participant-responsive research, the ethnography incorporated participant choice, multisensory, and multimodal data collection methods that supported participant-driven interests to represent understandings. This study also intentionally focused on the places where adolescents received, created, or recreated and distributed meaning. As will be discussed under What is Literacy, the terms meaning and meaning making were adopted to open space for participants' definitions of literacy and literacies. Consideration of where, how, and why literacy happened for adolescents implicated the

practices of adolescents, their teachers, and an administrator in one Northeastern United States high school. Fifteen participants collaborated with me in this investigation over a twelve-month period that followed two years of exploratory observation at the high school. This dissertation explores the findings from three of the adolescents involved in this study. Additional information related to the focus of this dissertation appears at the close of this chapter and in Chapter III, Methodology.

**What is Literacy?**

For the purposes of this ethnography, in a broad sense, *literacy* is a social practice intended for meaning making that involves receiving, interpreting, and sharing understandings through recognizable designs based on a particular target audience's sociocultural expectations and beliefs. Rather than limiting this definition to word-based language, I use recognizable designs to open possibilities for examples of what literacies might look like and how they are used in adolescent life. This section establishes the foundation for understanding how *literacy* was used in the ethnography's design and further defined through the course of the study. First, I will establish general parameters for the term. Then I will discuss the component parts of my definition for literacy that frames this investigation. The component parts include how social practice, language, and design fit into this study's literacy frame. I will use examples from the adolescents to illustrate these terms. However, as the intent of this study is to challenge barriers rather than to form them, I am careful to maintain broad definitions in order to discern how the adolescents in this ethnography come to define, understand, and enact literacies. I also wish to challenge future research to continue to adopt broad definitions for these terms as social practices and available materials continue to evolve. Particular, adolescent-

constructed definitions for literacy and literacies are discussed further in the findings and implications chapters later in this document (Chapters IV through VII).

Literacy has been used to describe concrete and abstract attributes. Literacy as a concrete, observable skill is the ability to effectively communicate using particular materials in a particular context, for example, to write a legal brief in a sponsor-expected format using particular paper, margins, and font (Brandt, 2009; sponsor-expected in this example would be that law office or to meet a court's expectations). Literacy has also been used to describe more general proficiency and in this sense has been associated with sign systems other than word-based language alone (Christenbury, Bomer, & Smagorinsky, 2009). Describing literacy in proficiency terms has been associated with broad applications and labeled visual literacy, music literacy, numerical literacy, and media literacy, among others (Christenbury, Bomer, & Smagorinsky, 2009; Kress, 2010; NCTE, 2009).

As asserted, this ethnography adopted broad understandings of literacy in order to allow participants' definitions to emerge and to avoid unintentionally excluding participants' perspectives. Literacy includes literacies, literacy purposes, and literacy practices. *Literacies* are the tool-oriented, sensory-perceived materials for communication. For example, *Literacy purposes* are the sociocultural reasons for meaning making. *Literacy practices* involve social engagements with literacies in places to make meaning according to literacy purposes.

Literacy becomes observable when individuals select literacies to fulfill literacy purposes for meaning making through literacy practices. Literacy practices use language and artifacts that are recognizable and designed to be interpreted and understood by a

particular audience in a manner that fulfills the literacy purpose. For example, all adolescents in this study noted that word-based language was used verbally and in printed form in classrooms for the intended student audience. Classroom uses for literacy also included multimodal forms of literacies through films, video clips, and presentations. Further, adolescents in this study observed that word-based language and imagery were used together to create messages intended for varied audiences and delivered through Facebook postings, bathroom graffiti, and Twitter and Pinterest posts. However, imagery, language, body movement and sound were also used simultaneously, in a cohesive design through musical performances to tell fictional stories, to convey messages about transitions to high school that would appeal to new students, and to pursue individual affective purposes like prayer or entertainment. Consequently, the target audience and literacy purpose influence the choice of literacies and the expectations related to how language and artifacts are incorporated through design and shared through literacy practices to fulfill the literacy purpose. Regardless of the literacy's form, all literacies in this study were enacted as facets of social practice and used some form of audience-recognized language and artifacts. Further discussion of social practice, language and artifacts, and recognizable design follows to clarify how literacy is framed.

**Social practice.** Social practices are the activities that individuals enact independently or with others as a function of being associated with life among people, places, and ideas. In this study, literacy is viewed as social practice consistent with Street's (1984, 1993, 2003) ideological model that describes literacy as an aspect of social practices imbued with cultural significance. Street (2003) explains the ideological nature of literacy as,

… [T]he ways in which people address reading and writing… rooted in

conceptions of knowledge, identity, and being… always embedded in

social practices, such as those of a particular job market or a particular

educational context and the effects of learning that particular literacy will

be dependent on those particular contexts (p. 78).

Further, this study builds upon Street's definition to clarify that those social

practices engage the use of literacies, language, and artifacts in a recognizable

design according to cultural beliefs about people, places, purposes, materials, and

social relationships. Cultural beliefs may be varied among individuals who share

in social practices but cannot be separated entirely from social practices. The term

cultural beliefs refers to the values and philosophies that influence how

individuals perceive and engage with others, enact social and individual goals,

and come to know and assign meaning to objects and experiences.

**Language and artifacts.** Through literacy practices, language and artifacts are

designed to deliver meaning that is recognizable, understood, and able to be interpreted

for the purposes of a particular target audience. That audience may not be the only

audience to receive the message; however, other audiences may not recognize,

understand, or interpret the meaning in the same manner as the intended audience.

*Language* includes spoken and inscribed words that are ordered or combined according to

conventions to form meaning for a particular audience.  In this study, *language* also is

used to denote a pattern of signs and symbols that may include visual images and sound

(music). For example, in this study Colin used music as a literacy in a similar manner to

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how he read novels. Colin read music to discern patterns, to note and appreciate

unorthodox constructions, and then to create his own meaning (see Chapter V).

Although other scholars incorporate gestures into language (Gee & Hayes, 2011)

or communication practices (Kress, 2010), those aspects of expression are not included in

this dissertation. Gee and Hayes (2011) observed that literacy is a delivery system for

language. This study's definition of literacy practices builds upon these ideas and also

incorporates research that acknowledged the roles of artifacts in the social practices

associated with literacy (Bartlett, 2006; Bartlett & Holland, 2002; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

*Artifacts* (material objects and ideas) include aspects of social and cultural life

that hold meaning within the context or community and together with language are a part

of what Barlett and Holland (2002) refer to as figured worlds.  In their work, figured

worlds were "invoked, animated, contested, and enacted through artifacts, activities, and

identities in practice" (Bartlett & Holland, 2002, p. 12).  This study adopts Bartlett and

Holland's assertion that the objects and ideas (acting as cultural artifacts) that are

meaningful in particular contexts or communities will be incorporated into the figured

world of literacy.  Pahl and Rowsell (2010) also contributed to the conversation

surrounding artifacts as they observed that artifacts were a part of embodied experiences

in life and inseparable from making meaning. Artifacts, they asserted, blended with social

practices in ways that were taken for granted or that existed unnoticed without critical

examination.  For example, food functioned as nourishment and literacy for Tasha in

Haiti. As discussed in Chapter IV, food as a literacy was used to communicate

competency, leadership, and to enhance oral storytelling.  Additionally, ceramics, paint,

and film were literacies for Simone as she sought to combine them to create layered,

intertextual meanings related to her identity, human interactions, and social justice (see Chapter VII).

**Recognizable design.** To unite these elements within the definition of literacy, *design* is used to indicate *the intentional combination of language and artifacts* to create meaning for a target audience. When the *design* is expressed through language and artifacts in a manner that the senses can perceive it, I will say it has been *written* or that it is making meaning. In this study, the sensory perception of *written* designs take the form of word-based language, oral storytelling, musical performance, and multimodal representations implicating visual elements among other senses. *Writing* or *making meaning* consequently is viewed in a broad sense as the representation of language and artifacts that conform to the conventions expected by a particular audience.

Decoding the *written* message involves recognizing, understanding, and interpreting and is called *reading.* Street (1984/2007) observed that "what the particular practices and concepts of reading and writing are for a given society depends upon the context, that they are embedded in an ideology and cannot be isolated or treated as 'neutral' or merely 'technical'" (p. 115-116). This study uses Street's emphasis on contextually-dependent, sociocultural understandings and builds upon his work to explore how adolescents select materials and consider language and artifacts as a part of their literacy practices and purposes. To form scaffolds among classroom-oriented understandings of reading and adolescent life that engaged literacies in different ways than the classroom, I adopted language with adolescents that used reading in conjunction with the term *meaning making* in order to use language in different ways to challenge assumptions. The adolescents used the phrases meaning making and making meaning

interchangeably but tended to be more comfortable with that language than using more academic terms like literacy. Simone, in Chapter VI, perhaps best defines adolescent literacy in the 21$^{st}$ century as continually reading and interpreting surroundings that include printed word, people, objects, images, and sensory life as components of the multifaceted texts she encounters. For Simone, as will be discussed in Chapters VI and VII, reading was receiving a message and interpreting was making meaning about that message as it applied to her life.

**Why Ethnography?**

      **My journey to question and research.** My journey as the youngest daughter in a large family and my professional life in three major metropolitan areas[2] fostered my appreciation for observation and my understanding that the voices heard rarely represented all the voices present. In 1996 I began my work with young children in schools. Their stories, play, sense of adventure, and openness intrigued me. They invested themselves in the materials available in school to create new play scenarios and to augment their stories. Sometimes other children or adults were a part of these adventures, but often, individual intent guided decisions. For several years, I was fascinated with their adventures, but I grew to be increasingly troubled with the dichotomous ways that schools assigned value to children's practices. My work as a teacher-educator with the National Writing Project provided me with more stories and insight from teachers in Pre-K, elementary, secondary, and university classrooms. My

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[2] My classification of cities as "major metropolitan areas" is based on U. S. Census Bureau population standards (Forstall & Fitzsimmons, 2011). Prior my work with young children, I lived and worked in densely populated areas that were undergoing demographic changes and sociocultural tensions consistent with population growth and economic stress within cities and surrounding areas.

early research emerged from these experiences and my interest in how children and their teachers defined, created, and expressed meaning and how that meaning was assessed in schools (Schappe, 2005). Based on an early childhood context, this work emphasized the need to use assessments that honored the complexity of students' performances and to develop teacher education to support pedagogically and ethically sound assessment practices.

As a researcher, my early work sought ways to look beyond traditional boundaries to seek answers. As a secondary English educator, I continued to question boundaries that defined what was valued in school assignments and what was appropriate in school as social practices. I listened to my students who voiced frustration with school, the rules, the assignments, the doing of things that differed from what they wanted to do, what they wanted to say, and how they understood and wanted to experience life. I witnessed my students and those in other classrooms becoming increasingly disinterested in the materials and practices associated with school-oriented meaning. I heard the voices from my past experiences in different cities and the voices from teachers in different schools and felt the tension between institutions and individuals. The questions for this research evolved as a part of my journey and my life-long interest in exploring how boundaries might be blurred or permeable to foster voices, to come to know and understand more about what adolescents want to do, what they want to say, and how they want to say it as they experience life.

Studying as life is experienced became more important to me through my exploratory work associated with this research. I remember walking in the hall with two students who would later join the study as participants and hearing about the latest

student bathroom wall posting that had administrators in an uproar. I heard about students

covertly taking photographs during class and another student who sought out the

bathroom to contact his family in secret because he did not know if he could make it

through the day[3]. Curious students offered to show me places that mattered to them in

school – places that were not traditional classrooms. During this site exploration, I

learned that school as a place contained many places. Students, teachers, and

administrators talked about places that they thought I might want to see. As I listened to

their voices, I began to wonder how they saw those places differently and how they

defined what was appropriate or acceptable to do there. I began to wonder how these

understandings of people, places, and practices had meaning for individual students and

their teachers.

I walked the halls of West High School many times while designing this study. I

noticed empty corners, long corridors, and brick after brick climbing the interior walls

and running the distance of the two main halls (Figures 1.1 and 1.2).



*Figure 1.1.* Main corridor, second floor of West High School (Schappe, WT, October).

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[3] This story also resurfaced in a later participant interview (Schappe, FN, April 9).

*Figure 1.2.* West High School stairwell. One of four main
stairwells, all similarly constructed (Schappe, WT, April).

Bulletin boards placed near stairwells whispered local news, showcased photographs

from sporting events, and encouraged students to attend upcoming events (Figure 1.3).

Cradled above those boards, near the juncture of the brick and the acoustical tile rested

small video cameras angled to gaze at the nearby bathroom doors.



*Figure 1.3.* Bulletin board displays (Schappe, WT, April & October).

During those days before the study began, I would often arrive early to talk with the Vice Principal, Shelia Novak, or the English department chair, Ed Kent[4]. Walking through the halls in the early morning, the long corridor on the second floor was often dark, still slumbering before the first buses arrived. Multiple switches controlled the lighting in sections. On those mornings, small beams of light appeared as one or two students arrived, flipped a switch, and settled onto the floor beside a locker to sleep, listen to music, connect with others through a cell, or open a forgotten or postponed assignment. I rarely observed students talking in that hall during those early moments. Only the librarian's arrival and the glow from the library lights flooding the hall seemed to trigger movement and conversation as students gathered and waited to enter. There were at least a dozen mornings when this ritual was repeated. The students never flipped multiple switches to cast light on the entire hall, only the one or two, just enough it seemed. Whether it was a sense of peacefulness or loneliness or something else, I do not know (see Figure 1.4 Library in the early morning).



*Figure 1.4*. Library in the early morning (Schappe, WT, April).

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[4] Pseudonyms.

During this period of site exploration, two students who I met and came to know died, one while still a student, the other after his class graduated. Both died at their own hands, through self-inflicted gunshot wound and drug overdose. I witnessed the school's efforts to provide support, to open access to guidance, to talk, to listen, to abandon bells and hall passes briefly as a way, it seemed, to mark that the school was different on those days, that the routine needed to pause. I watched as students quietly gathered or walked alone.

West High School was a life place where people gathered (Figure 1.5). The students, teachers, administrators and staff were touched by the excitement of winter weather, the smell of tacos and buffalo chicken, the anticipation of senior pranks, the tension of exams, the quiet in the morning, and even the sense of loss, questioning, and anger that follows death. Among the highs and lows of daily life, I knew *school* was happening. School to me was the daily routine of classes, bells, and movement that drove each day. However, I wondered what school meant to the people who gathered here. I wondered how learning more about what school as a place with many places might help me understand how adolescents find and make meaning.
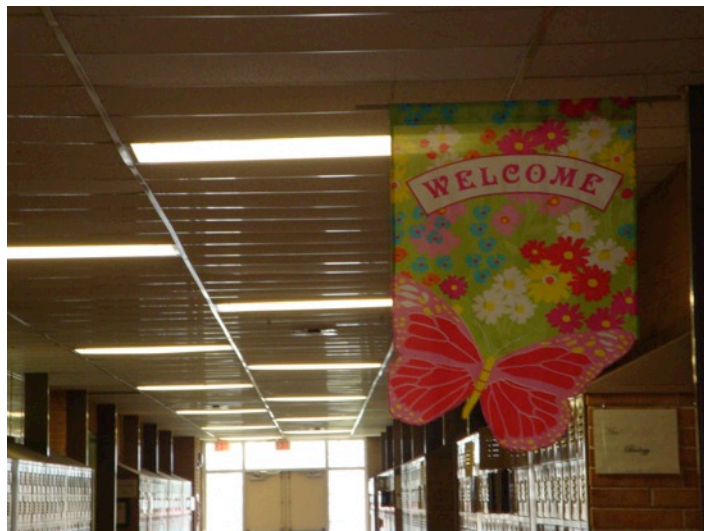


*Figure 1.5.* Banners welcome students and signal change of seasons (Schappe, WT, April).

**Exploration to research design**. Through my preliminary site exploration, I realized the complexity involved in forming relationships with participants, learning about their ideas, and finding ways to represent their understandings. Ethnography was selected as the methodology due to affordances for extended time in the field and the implementation of participant-responsive research design. Extended time in the field became central to developing collaborative research relationships and to implementing the research design in ways that supported my goals to ethically represent participants' understandings and limit validity concerns. Ethnography as a way of being present and coming to understand participants in their sociocultural surroundings provided a framework to integrate multiple methods of data collection over time (Atkinson, Delamont, & Housley, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Wolcott, 2008).

As will be discussed in Chapter III: Methodology, I purposefully selected a high school, due to the age of potential student participants. Based on my observations as a teacher in secondary school contexts, junior and senior level students tended to experience greater independence in their adolescent lives than the middle school students I encountered. This independence typically was rooted in two primary sociocultural factors associated with age: legal access to personal transportation, if available, and potential access to choices in life that come with greater personal independence and less oversight from parents or guardians for older students. Further, Chapter III discusses the methods used in this research and how they were designed in a participant-responsive manner.

**Research Questions**

Ethnography was designed to involve the collaboration of adolescents, teachers, and an administrator at West High School, located in the northeastern United States. Fifteen participants collaborated with me to explore the overarching research question: How might the study of sociocultural beliefs and understandings about place, social relationships, and material objects inform understandings of adolescent literacy?

This question was segmented into three researchable sub-questions:

RQ 1.    How do individuals define literacy, and how are those understandings embodied in social practices in places?

RQ 2.    How are adolescents' beliefs about literacy embodied in material objects in places?

RQ 3.    How are social relationships in places embodied in literacy practices?

The research questions have been assigned ordinal markers for ease of reference throughout this document; ordinal markers do not suggest status or importance.

**Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to theoretical perspectives concerned with adolescent literacy, sociocultural persistence through places, and the dynamics of place-oriented social relationships. This study is significant in the field because the methods were used in a participant-responsive manner with adolescents constructing definitions for literacy and selecting representational forms consistent with the ways they lived their lives. Findings based on the participants' definitions for and selection of materials related to literacies, literacy practices, and literacy purposes across places contributes to scholarly understandings of texts, reading, and writing and also questions established notions

surrounding literacy events and the situated nature of literacy practices. Further this study

embraces an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to generate theory related to the

formation of a journey epistemology as a means of engaging in educational research and

pedagogy. Finally, this study impacts disciplines beyond literacy studies as it shows how

participant-responsive, multimodal research design can be used in conjunction with

traditional ethnographic methods to conduct research consistent with the ways

participants engage in sociocultural life.

**Dissertation Focus within the Ethnography**

The subsequent chapters present a review of literature that supports the

epistemological and conceptual framework, the methodology, and the findings related to

three of the six total adolescent participants. The lessons learned from the findings and

implications for theory, pedagogy, and research close this dissertation. Appendices

include the protocols for data collection and a sample of coded data. Excerpts from

transcripts and participant provided visuals are included in the findings chapters;

however, due to efforts to maintain a focused discussion of findings, other raw data has

been reserved for future publications related to this research.

This study encompassed the collaboration of fifteen participants including six

adolescents, eight teachers, and one administrator. A full discussion of this study that

would include all participants is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Data collected

through multiple methods and events totaled over 300 logged events during the twelve-

month study. Consequently, with dissertation committee support, this dissertation

presents the framework and methodology for the full study and discusses the findings

related to three adolescent participants (Tasha, Colin, and Simone) and their teachers as

needed to clarify representations of understandings.

**Chapter II**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Ontological and Epistemological Framework**

Ontologically, this ethnography frames the high school as a complex social and cultural place (a physical location) with adolescents, teachers, and administrators interacting through artifacts (both material objects and ideas) and social relationships. These interactions include multisensory and multimodal practices that are mediated through sociocultural understandings. Sociocultural and constructivist epistemologies guided the formation of research questions and the conceptual framework.

**Conceptual framework.** The conceptual framework for this ethnography relies upon particular understandings of literacy (defined in Chapter I) and place. The term *place* is used throughout this study in a distinct manner from the term space. Usage of the term *place* is highly variable throughout the literature and is often used interchangeably with the term *space.* Although *space* may be used to capture both concrete and metaphorical locations in recent work associated with literacy (Leander & Sheehy, 2011), this study specifies *place* as distinct from, but closely related to, *space.* My use of place indicates physical, virtual, and social locations where life happens. Places then might be a location on a map, like a library, a street, or a school. Places can also be virtual locations where adolescents might meet, like Facebook, or seek to gather materials or engage with multimodal literacies, like iTunes or YouTube. Finally, places may erupt spontaneously within other places. Individuals unexpectedly encounter each other or an individual is suddenly inspired to take advantage of a social and physical opportunity to make meaning, say in a stairwell or during a quiet moment during class. I refer to space

in a limited manner as the possibility or opening for some interaction or meaning to occur; however, place is the primary focus of this ethnography. For this study, *place* begins with Ingold's (2011) anthropological frame of place as a gathering point. Place, although possessing a physical, material nature, is not characterized as always a static location, but rather, as a part of the paths that people encounter or form as inhabitants.

Consequently, place is used to refer to known sociocultural destinations (like the high school, workplace, or bedroom) and multisituated locations that form as a result of individuals gathering (texting forms a virtual gathering place but also encompasses the physical locations of the individuals involved). For example, the hallway in the high school becomes a physical place within the larger high school place when teachers or students meet and incidentally initiate meaning making. Thus places can be both physically perceived through the senses and socially perceived through human interaction or the opportunity for human interaction.

In order to explore how literacies are selected and how literacy practices are enacted, it is important to think about what *where* means. In this study, places were the physical locations where literacy purposes were determined or communicated. Places were also the physical locations where participants selected or were given access to materials. Further, this study also explored how places as facets of sociocultural memories from the participants' life journeys persisted and influenced current practices, understandings, and values.

**Journey epistemology**. In order to understand how places, social interactions, materials, and place memories are a part of literate lives, I expanded upon Ingold's theory (2007, 2011) that individuals come to know life through their journeys. I use

sociocultural and constructivist epistemologies to form a journey epistemology as a framework to explore how the participants constructed meaning and sought opportunities as they moved through their lives among places, people, social practices, and cultural beliefs to gain access to particular materials and social relationships. Place-oriented memories from the participants' life journeys encompassed social relationships, materials, ideas, and varied definitions for literacies, literacy purposes, and ways to enact literacy practices. The larger ethnography explores how all of the participants' journeys—adolescents, teachers, and the administrator—contributed to how they interacted in school, valued literacies, and constructed literacy practices and purposes. In this dissertation, the findings chapters will show how the three adolescents' journeys through life contributed to how they sought opportunities and engaged with literacies as adolescents.

Coming to know participants through a journey epistemology consequently helped me to understand how foundational experiences in early childhood, early adolescence, and more recent experiences in places including the high school contributed to understandings that underpin literacies as a part of an individual's life. As will be discussed in Chapters IV through VII, adult social relationships emerged as pivotal facets of adolescent literacy practices for Tasha, Colin, and Simone. As this ethnography progressed, adolescent data underscored the influence of adults among the places in adolescents' lives. Adopting the journey epistemology helped me to come to know adolescents through their individual stories about what, how, and why literacies formed in their lives and how experiences in classrooms fit within their individual frameworks for understanding meaning making.

Based on journey epistemology, the lines in Figure 2.1 represent the paths that individuals create as they journey along in their daily lives. Each line represents a different individual's journey. Those journeys, as lines, periodically intersect with another individual's journey. The locations where people journeying on their paths meet are the locus or nexus of interaction and occur in physical locations, *places*.
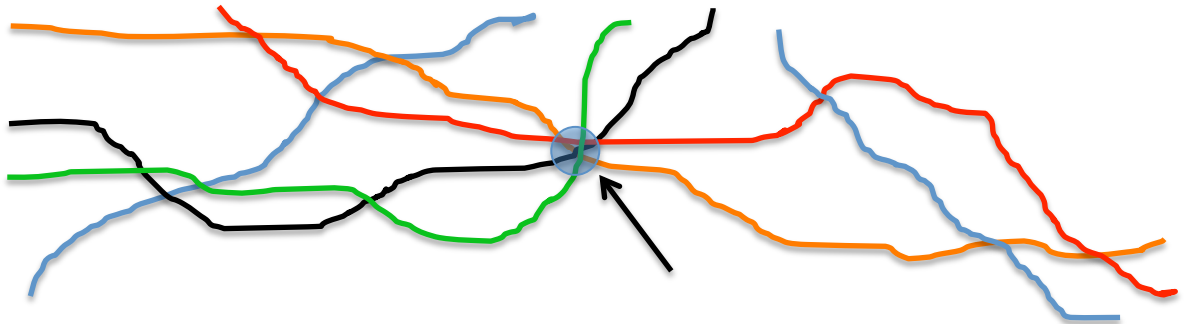


*Figure 2.1.* Individual journeys intersect in places. Each line represents the path an individual has taken. The arrow directed at the shaded point indicates a place as the point of meeting.

Places then carry significance culturally and socially because they come into being as points of gathering that have meaning for inhabitants, "Where inhabitants meet, trails are intertwined, as the life of each becomes bound up with the other" (Ingold, 2011, p. 148). Homes, schools, churches, the post office, and the corner in the hall, all become places socially and culturally because the people on their life paths gather to interact and perhaps lead to other places. "…Habitation… takes people not across the land surface but along the paths that lead from place to place" (Ingold, 2011, p. 149). Exploring the significance of place through literacy research with this perspective guided my research design to incorporate life story questions and opportunities for participants to share past journeys in varied ways. Reflexively, the journey epistemology guided me to question my own assumptions and interpretations of participant understandings and served as a

constant reminder to explore the relationships among individual place-oriented understandings.

The journey as a metaphor to construct meaning has been used in research as a type of container metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In their individual works, Lakoff (1980) and Ingold (2007, 2011) referred to the journey as implying a path. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) asserted, "One thing we know about journeys is that a journey defines a path" and usually a purpose or destination (p. 90). Lakoff and Johnson continued to discuss journeys as metaphors that move along surfaces and made the metaphorical entailment to assert that life itself is a journey. Ingold (2007, 2011) moved this idea forward to say that instead of coming to know individuals only through their destinations, researchers benefit from studying individuals as they persist along those paths.

My work forms the journey epistemology as an outcropping of sociocultural and constructivist epistemologies. I view an epistemology as how I come to know the world and also how I come to be in the world. By forming the journey epistemology in this way, I view the participant's life progression as her/his path. I use the metaphorical entailment to say that life is a journey, which is also to say that individuals' lives progress, move along. As lives move along, paths are formed based on where they go and whom they interact with, among other social and cultural facets. As an individual's path moves along, the past is not erased. The progression continues, and as a whole, past, present, and intentions for future, forms the journey of that person's life. If I am to come to know an individual better through studying in terms of the progression of life's journey, I am better positioned to honor the complexity of that journey and how it plays

roles in the ways that individuals construct meaning within varied sociocultural communities.

Metaphorically, I consider the individual's path, the journey, as creating threads that build as life moves forward. These threads grow as individual journeys intertwine with experiences, people, ideas, and materials. An individual's threads are formed through cultural beliefs, including their own and, to varying degrees, the beliefs of others they encounter. Those beliefs, rooted in varied social and cultural experiences along their paths, impact how individuals interact in social relationships, form place-oriented beliefs, and assign value to materials and social practices.

As an educational researcher interested in better understanding what 21$^{st}$ century social practices might mean for adolescent literacy, it is important to me to adopt broad definitions of literacies, places, materials, and social relationships. Although the journey metaphor is a type of container metaphor, the frame it offers is larger than the traditional literacy research associated of in and out-of-school studies or word-based or visual literacy studies. Engaging broad definitions for literacy and investigating the research questions through a journey epistemology, supports my interest in participant-responsive research design. This framework privileges participants' understandings, definitions, and experiences and supports stronger, ethnically supported understandings of the roles that places, materials, and social relationships play in adolescents' encounters with meaning making in school and through life journeys.

Consequently, the conceptual framework for this research (Figure 2.2) centers on the relationships among each participant's sociocultural beliefs and understandings as

understood through that individual's journey (center block) and the definitions of literacies, beliefs about materials, and social relationships in places.

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │  Definitions of │
                    │ literacy & social│
                    │ practices in places│
                    └─────────────────┘
                         /    │    \
                        /     │     \
              ┌──────────────┐│┌──────────────┐
              │ Sociocultural ││
              │  Beliefs &    ││
              │Understandings ││
   ┌─────────────┐└──────────────┘   ┌─────────────┐
   │ Beliefs about│                  │Literacy practices│
   │literacy embodied│               │embodied through │
   │in material objects│             │     social      │
   └─────────────┘                   │  relationships  │
                                     └─────────────┘
```
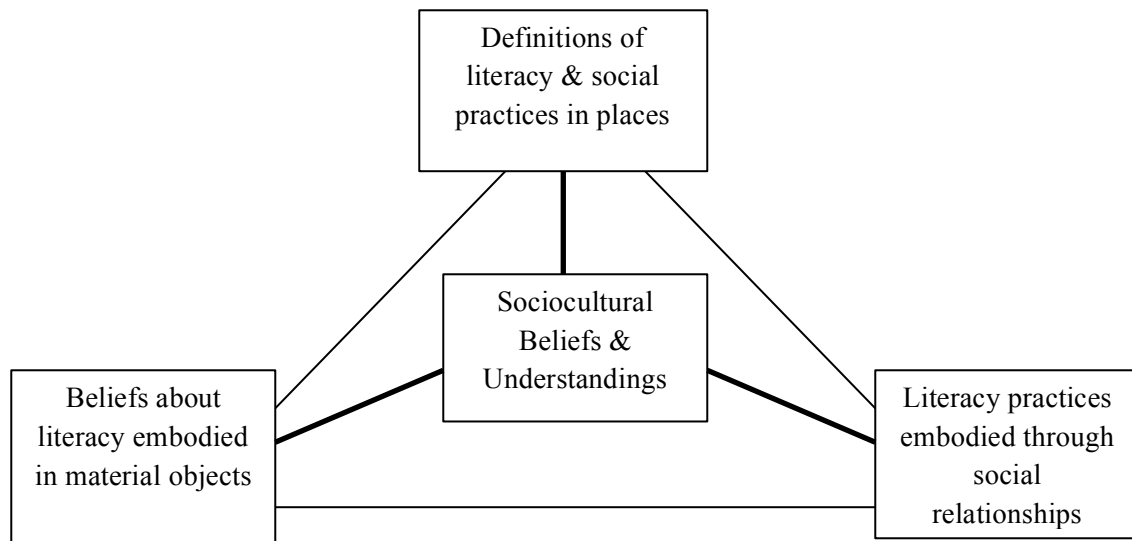
*Figure 2.2.* Conceptual model for adolescent literacy ethnography.

**Theoretical Basis for Research within Literacy Studies**

Literacy research, specifically work in New Literacy Studies, has established the tradition of exploring literacy practices in distinct situated contexts in and out of school settings (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; Heath, 1983; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Street, 1984).  Situated contexts explored in literacy research frequently examined varied understandings of authority channeling or defining particular types of activity (Brandt, 2009; Moje, 2011; Soja, 2011; Wilson, 2011).  This study acknowledges the influential nature of social relationships and explores how adolescents make decisions related to literacies based on their journeys and their understandings of place-oriented beliefs and social practices.

In a call for further research, Atkinson, Delmont, and Housley (2008) asserted researchers

> Need to move beyond the sense of place as a background to or setting for social action… the analysis of spaces and places goes well beyond an appreciation of the mere appearance of places… It also implies a thorough appreciation of how social action is structured in accordance with the material domains in which it takes place, and the spatial topography of its enactment (p. 155-156).

Hence, places are significant as they are central to and entangled with movement and social practices but also cultural beliefs about *how* to physically be and interact in places as structured sites for social practices. Consistent with Ingold's (2011) theory discussed earlier, Atkinson et al., also established the link between places as points of action and therefore meaning, "Actions only make sense in the appropriate social context… Place can be constitutive of cultural as well as merely physical contexts" (2008, p. 164).

Pondering implications for literacy research and referencing the multidisciplinary perspectives of geography, art, anthropology, and archeology, Soja (2011) discussed the realization in research that 'space matters' and asserted that "exploring their subject matter from a critical spatial perspective often opened up significant new empirical insights and challenged long-established frameworks of disciplinary theory and practice" (p. ix). Soja further commented that this aspect of literacy research previously taken for granted is now understood to be of core importance to the social construction of life and should be considered with historical influences when exploring how lives are shaped. This need brings the research community, particularly ethnographers, to explore "the many modalities of action and organization: sensory, discursive, spatial, temporal, and

material" (Atkinson et al., 2008, p. 2). Theoretically extending the notions of place as constituted by and constituting the social construction of adolescents' literate lives raises the question of how individual life histories, social practices, and cultural beliefs of students, teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and communities entangle to affect the literacy practices that happen in and around schools as places where people gather.

Anthropological discussions about the value of artifacts, ideas and the material, in social worlds is likely to inform literacy research centered in places as sites of social and cultural life (Atkinson et al., 2008; Heath & Street, 2008; Leander, 2011; Moje, 2011; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010; Sheehy, 2011; Sheehy & Leander, 2011). The collection of artifacts that are integrated with social and cultural activities in places serves multiple purposes across participant groups. Artifacts, discussed in Chapter III: Methodology, include documents from school administrators and teachers, maps of movement and social networks of literacy and multimodal representation in places, and representations or objects related to student-participant experiences or meaning making. Artifacts as ideas that hold cultural meaning included participants' stories and video/photo mapping of literacies in adolescents' lives (consistent with observations in: Bartlett, 2006; Bartlett & Holland, 2002; and Pahl & Rowsell, 2006, 2010).

As literacy continues to be contested in different places, Heath and Street (2008) asserted, "Ethnographers benefit from awareness of the origins and purposes of institutions... [to try to understand] how cultural patterns support, deny, and change structures and uses of language and multimodal literacies" (pp. 5-6). Student-participant artifacts ground studies of literacy in the students' material worlds and the potential uses or construction of places for particular practices (Atkinson et al., 2008; Pahl & Rowsell,

2010). This material connection to literacy, multimodality, and places is only sparsely explored in current educational research. Sheehy and Leander (2011) call for research in this area as,

> …little work has been done on the circulation of paper in classrooms and media practices, on the boundaries for literacy shaped by walls, desks, and neighborhoods, and on the ways in which material participants in the world – such as bodies – become sites for the writing of myriad texts (p. 3).

The notion of "bodies" as "sites for the writing of myriad texts" expands the traditional, autonomous view of texts as print-based on paper or in book form (Kress, 2010). In this sense, individuals may engage not only in concrete 'writing' as a form of meaning making but also 'writing' on each other as well in a metaphorical sense to control or channel others and places through social practice and/or in cultural ways.

> Literacy in modern societies has often so restricted who can publicly express themselves, who can publish and who cannot, and who can produce knowledge and who can only consume it, that the deep desire humans have to express themselves, produce and not just consume, and to be vital parts of and contributors to their societies is often stunted or frustrated (Gee & Hayes, 2011, p. 22).

Literacy research has struggled to define the roles of varied literacies in schools as places for meaning making noting that roles associated with particular literacies may conflict with social practices and cultural values that define place-oriented acceptable practice (Gee, 2004; Gee & Hayes, 2011; Hagood, 2008; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Sheehy & Leander, 2011). For example, literacies that incorporate video games (Gee & Hayes,

2011), popular culture (Hagood, 2008), and digital tools (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009a, 2009b; Snyder & Bulfin, 2008) have been contested among educators and policy makers as potentially inappropriate or of questionable value for school-based practices.

Research in the last decade increasingly focused on literacy practices and events outside of school as socially complex and integrated with identity formation, collaborative processes, multi-literate practices (multiliteracies), and expressed multimodally (Hagood, 2008; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006, 2010; Snyder & Bulfin, 2008). Multiliteracies means that individuals were able to communicate using a range of practices applying them in context and community-appropriate ways to make meaning that included "modes of representation much broader than language alone" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p.5; see also New London Group, 1996). For example, in university-level art education contexts, researchers have explored how to integrate hypertext approaches to develop collaborative paths to think about making and interpreting meaning using multiple literacies intertextually (Carpenter & Taylor, 2006). The term intertextual is used in this study and signifies a text created for a particular audience that is composed from multiple texts that could be read independently but that together create new meaning. Increased access to digital resources affords adolescents opportunities to encounter and create intertextual and multimodal representations (Leu, O'Byrne, Zawilinski, McVerry, & Everett-Cacopardo, 2009; NCTE, 2009). Multimodality explored representational modes of meaning making that included text (written language), images, sound, and spoken language and became a key point in conversations surrounding literacy as digital mediums provided new avenues to create and distribute meaning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee & Hayes, 2011; Knobel &

Lankshear, 2007; Kress 2000, 2010; Kress & Street, 2006; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006).

Adolescent literacy research has also advocated the use of visual arts and literacies (Zoss,

2009) and digital tools (Snyder & Bulfin, 2008) in high school English literature

classrooms. However, these researchers also cite the need to continue to investigate how

classroom uses of these literacies might be implemented and how they might have

meaning for and impact adolescent learning.

Further, the literature also problematizes studies of literacy restricted to contexts

that suggest discrete experience (Alvermann & Moore, 2011; Bartlett, 2006; Bartlett &

Holland, 2002; Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Delpit, 1995/2001; Greenhow, Robelia, &

Hughes, 2009a, 2009b; Leu et al., 2009; Staples, 2008). Sociocultural ways outside of

school have been acknowledged but are still largely kept out of school places (Alvermann

& Moore, 2011; Greenhow et al., 2009a, 2009b; Leu et al., 2009). Recent research and

policy briefs identify valued (according to their sponsorship standards) behaviors and

skills associated with out-of-school practices and call for investigations into the ways

learning happens across settings and the opportunities or barriers that may exist among

literacies, literate practices, and social ways (Council of Writing Program Administrators,

National Council of Teachers of English, & National Writing Project, 2011; Greenhow et

al., 2009a, 2009b; Hagood, 2008; Leu et al., 2009; NCTE, 2009; NSBA, 2007).

Consequently, the theoretical frame for this ethnography seeks to establish a lens that is

sensitive to sociocultural understandings that impact place-oriented social practices

associated with adolescent literacy.

The following methodology chapter offers additional research perspectives that

support this study's participant-responsive, multimodal research design. The goals for

research design will be discussed as will the rationale for the inclusion of multiple

methods and the protocols that I designed prior to the start of the ethnography and in the

field as understandings began to emerge.

**Chapter III**

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design Goals**

Based on calls for research to contribute to scholarly and pedagogical understandings, this methodology pursued three research design goals:

- First, to engage in qualitative research in a manner that honored the study of literacy as entangled with social practices and cultural beliefs across the places and social relationships in participants' lives

- Second, to engage in a longitudinal ethnography that facilitated my status as participant-observer and researcher-collaborator to gather data and represent participants' understandings and my interpretations through ethical research practices

- Third, to engage in an inquiry that honored the complexity of literacy in contemporary educational contexts and incorporated multimodal forms of data collection as means to better understand and represent the multimodal ways participants lived and selected for meaning making

**Research Site & Participant Selection**

West High School was purposefully selected (Maxwell, 2005) due to previous encounters with the administration and teachers in my roles as an educator and teacher educator. This shared history contributed to the participants' willingness to collaborate in this work.

A high school as a primary place for study was chosen due to the ages of students and the high school's perceived role as a community authority to instruct students in

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literacy practices. The selection of students at the junior and senior level was important to me as given the greater likelihood that students aged 16-18 may have access to independent movement without significant adult oversight or direction among the places they frequent.

The participants represented a purposeful sample (Creswell, 2008, 2012) from the three social groups involved with adolescent literacy practices situated in the high school: administrators, teachers, and students. As noted in Chapter I, fifteen total participants participated in this study: six adolescents, three English teachers, and one administrator as full participants; and one teacher each from art, library, choir, band, learning support, and the principal as participating through incidental interactions. For the purposes of this dissertation, three student participants and the teachers most frequently mentioned in their data or movements were selected for discussion and included in the participant listing in Table 3.1.

One administrator, Sheila Novak, Vice Principal, informed understandings regarding the creation and perpetuation of institutional goals, values, and processes involving literacy practices based in school. This administrator was the school's overall authority in curriculum decisions and teacher course assignment. Shelia provided all school policy documents related to this research. Three English teachers served as a sample of the teachers who were institutionally responsible for coordinating materials and constructing literacy practices for senior and/or junior students in English classrooms at the basic, academic, and honors/AP levels. I purposefully selected the three teacher participants, with advice from the vice principal, due to the teachers' course assignments (junior and senior level students) and strong teaching evaluations.

The student participants were selected in the field through snowball sampling based on recommendations of the teacher and/or administrator participants and the students' interest in begin involved in the study (Creswell, 2008, 2012; Maxwell, 2005). For the purposes of this study, the term *snowball sampling* is based on both Creswell (2008, 2012) and Maxwell (2005) and refers to selecting participants who are recommended via other participants in the study. Given the size of the school, 650 students, and the size of the English department, six teachers, through direct contact or shared knowledge, the teachers come to know students in ways that may not be common in larger settings. Consequently, their input was considered. The students' academic performance was not a determining factor in participant selection; however, the resulting student participant pool did reflect all three English class course assignment levels in the high school (basic, academic, and advanced placement; see Table 3.1).

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to the start of this ethnography. Letters indicating informed consent were obtained from adult and minor participants prior to beginning their involvement with the study, consistent with Institutional Review Board policy. All participants were assigned pseudonyms. All participants provided approval via the Informed Consent documents to share their photographs and video recordings in publications and for educational purposes resulting from this study. Efforts were made to protect the participants' identities; some participants volunteered images that contained physical likenesses or materials that may allow them to be identified. They shared this information under their pseudonym understanding that identification may be possible.

The school is geographically located in an area that draws from suburban and rural areas with low-middle, middle, and upper-middle class socioeconomic statuses (see note 'a' in Table 3.1 related to SES). The geographic region was experiencing suburban growth prior to and during data collection; this growth meant that new developments were encroaching on formerly rural areas. This means that the adult and student participants experienced varied types of home communities. The participants' home communities in addition to gender, race, and SES were self-reported and appear on Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1.** *Participants*

| Sociocultural Role in Place | Years Completed In Position at WHS | Gender & Race | SES[a] | Home Community |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **STUDENTS** | | | | |
| Tasha Senior Basic English (Teachers: Stemple & Hughes) | 3 | Female Haitian | Unreported | Association: Rural Physical: Unreported |
| Simone Senior Academic English (Teachers: Taggert, Stemple, & Hughes) | 3 | Female White | Lower-middle class | Suburban |
| Colin Senior Advanced Placement English (Teachers: Taggert & Kent) | 3 | Male White | Middle class | Suburban |
| **TEACHERS** | | | | |
| Ed Kent Teacher AP English English Department Chair | 32 | Male White | Lower-middle class | Urban |
| Rachael Stemple Teacher English Senior Basic & Academic Levels New teacher pursuing Instructional II certification | >1 | Female White | Middle class | Rural |
| Jack Taggert Teacher English Junior Basic, Academic, Honors Levels | 30 | Male White | Middle class | Suburban/ Urban Border |
| Diane Hughes[b] Teacher Art | 20 | Female White | Lower-middle class | Rural |
| **ADMINISTRATOR** | | | | |
| Sheila Novak VP – Vice-Principal Administrator Also a history teacher | 7 Plus 11 years teaching elsewhere | Female White | Lower-middle class | Urban |

[a]Classification status based on Pew Research Center (Morin & Motel, 2012) reporting of annual income. According to the Pew study, in excess of 50% of the population in the United States self-identify as some sub-type middle class (lower-middle or middle with increasing numbers identifying in the lower-middle range). Assignment to a range of middle class in this table is based on my discussions with the participants and their self-described status.

**Reciprocity.** During site negotiations, the teachers expressed the desire for my active involvement in curricular planning concerns, adolescent learning concerns, and general mentorship activities. My experiences as a university-level teacher educator, English educator, National Writing Project Fellow, and former high school teacher were viewed as assets. I maintained a flexible position to reciprocate as much as time and ethical considerations allowed. I restricted my teacher assistance to meetings where students were not present to limit unforeseen effects on students. The principal and vice-principal supported my collaboration with the teachers on these issues.

Given their teaching styles, I periodically participated during classroom observations as a member of a student group. Whether I participated in discussions or not, I was aware that adolescents could mark me as 'other', 'adult' immediately. In the past, I have found that owning up to who I am, being honest about my role, generally places adolescents more at ease with the 'newness' of me on the scene. Keeping this in mind, I used the extended time in the field to allow students time to observe me in the halls and moving about the places within the school prior to active participation. Further, this start of the study came after two years of exploratory work at the site that involved periodic visits and meetings with adults in common areas that the students frequented. By the start of the study, all of the participants had at least seen me in the building overtime even if they had not spoken to me at length.

**Methods**

**Data Collection**

Data collection included five methods: Mapping, interviews, observation, walking tours, and artifact collection. Each method category included multiple sub-types. Mapping methods included participant produced artifacts and accompanying interviews: Hand-Drawn Mapping of Literacies in the high school (HDMI), Video/Photo Mapping of Literacies in students' lives (VPM), Hand-Tracing to Map Sensory Self Among Materials (HTMSS), and researcher mapping of places and social practices in the school. Interviews were conducted during data collection related to all mapping activities. Interviews also included the semi-structured and incidental interviews throughout the course of the research. The Literacy Life Story Interview (LLSI) served a hybrid data collection purpose as a semi-structured interview and as a verbal means of mapping each participant's literate life journey. The LLSI appears under the interview section of this methods discussion.

Observations included four classroom observations of each participating student and that student's English teacher. Classroom observations took place in the English teacher's classroom and incidental classroom observations in the art room, halls, cafeteria, library, and school grounds. Data collection protocols are described in the appropriate section for each method in this chapter. Protocols are referenced where appropriate and appear in the appendices associated with this dissertation. As noted in Chapter I, over 300 data items/events were logged through this research. The rationale for the data collection and data analysis will be discussed in this chapter as it will inform the reader's understanding of how the various methods were utilized and to better understand

participants' representations. A notation will be made when limiting the discussion to the three student participants discussed in the findings (Tasha, Colin, and Simone).

**Data collection flow.** The ethnography spanned a twelve-month period from March of one school year through March of the subsequent school year. This calendar year flow rather than academic year (September to June) provided a full year of seasonal and school rhythms that facilitated research flexibility to collect data at the participant's chosen pace. Further, this flow provided student participants extended time to observe me and to join as a participant at her or his own pace. For example, Simone, who had casually talked to me during the exploratory phase, began in the first month of the study and asked to meet with me over the summer. Similarly, Shelia Novak, the administrator, preferred to meet in the summer due to demands on her time during the school year. Our school-year contacts were much shorter in duration than the summer meetings.

Consistent with my goal to conduct participant-responsive, collaborative research, the flow of data collection varied according to participant. As a matter of protocol associated with IRB informed consent practices, I reviewed all of the data collection methods with the participants prior to data collection with one exception, the Hand-Tracing elicitation. The Hand-Tracing (HTMSS) elicitation evolved in the field and was used with Tasha and Colin as a means of supporting their efforts to think about how materials played roles in their lives away from school. As an ethnography incorporating participant collaboration, some data collection events, like the HTMSS, evolved during work in the field with participants following interviews and observations (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Heath & Street, 2008). Following the consent meetings, if the participant did not voice a preference, I offered suggestions,

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and the participants then selected the method. This served to level the researcher-participant power relationship and to reassure the participant of the voluntary nature of all facets of this research.

All student participants discussed in this dissertation (Tasha, Colin, and Simone) chose to complete the Hand-Drawn Mapping of Literacies (HDMI) in the school first. Two of the three teachers, Jack Taggert and Rachael Stemple, selected the Literacy Life Story (LLSI) and the third, Ed Kent, selected the HDMI. Although the HDMI was a single data collection event, all other mapping methods spanned multiple event dates. This process evolved over the course of the study. The participants' interests in adding to their story as well as my interests as a researcher to conduct member checks and to ask follow-up questions drove the recursive nature of data collection (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Heath & Street, 2008; Pink 2007, 2009; Wolcott, 2008).

**Co-constructed language.** As a central component to my intended participant-responsive design, shared understandings of language as spoken and visual tools emerged as essential aspects of this study. I adhered to the broad definition of literacy discussed in Chapter I as the entrance point for participant collaboration. Discussing how terms might have meaning in individual lives not only contributed to ethical representation but also functioned as a means to continually express data and findings in the participants' voices and with their intended meanings. All of the participants—adolescents, teachers, and the administrator—preferred using terms like reading, writing, or meaning making to literacy when discussing texts, practices, and purposes for literacies.

I used listing strategies with the participants to introduce them to varied ways to talk about some of our topics and to engage with the mapping methods. The participants then used that list basis to help scaffold my understanding when relating how they defined literacy in places, evaluated materials, and described social relationships that played varied roles in their meaning making practices. I found that using listing strategies provided verbal resources for the participants and positioned each individual as the knowing expert to select a term I offered, to form her/his own new term, or to redefine a term to better fit the purpose or literacy under discussion.  When language appeared to be insufficient, as it was with Tasha when discussing her life in Haiti, I brought in visuals that I located on the web.  Our visuals included physical maps of Haiti, photographs of rivers and other landmarks she discussed, and sketches that both she and I made to help us construct scaffolds to reach shared meaning from the actual words and images we were using.

Periodically, details from the participant's life journey differed significantly from my own life experience. To bridge these divergent experiences, I frequently researched social, historical, or geographical information prior to follow-up interviews. This supplemental research helped me to form new questions and clarify my understandings. Some examples of research included military history related to Jack Taggert's data references, geographic and cultural research related to Tasha's Haitian data, literature and musical research related to Colin's discussion of patterns in varied literacies, and visual arts research to inform my understanding of Simone's processes and materials.  The need to research and form common language emerged in the field and continued throughout the course of the study.

**Mapping.** Mapping was used in three ways during the course of this ethnography. The purpose of the mapping elicitations, the creation of representational artifacts, is to better understand ways that literacy practices are embodied and emplaced as social practices and processes (RQ 1) rather than relying upon interview alone (Atkinson, Delamont, and Housley, 2008). As Powell (2010) observed, "Mapping can offer researchers a view into how people… see their world, what is important to them, what their lived social relations are, and where they spend their time" (p. 553). As a part of visual methodology, mapping provides participants with alternative ways of sharing their understandings and ways of being (Kress, 2010; Powell, 2010; Prosser, 2011). Using a visualization mode (Kress, 2010; Prosser, 2011; Psathas, 1979), participants in this study communicated in ways that they were not able to using language alone. Further, mapping indicated paths (the term paths references the Chapter II discussion of Ingold, 2011) involved in the selection of materials and places, the construction of literacy practices, the pursuit of particular types of social relationships (RQ 2 & 3). Participant involvement in mapping events is noted within each subsection.

***Hand-drawn mapping literacies in high school places (HDMI).*** The three English teachers and all students participated in hand-drawn mapping activities during the course of one semi-structured interview conducted in the school building. All student participants chose to complete the HDMI as their first data collection event. Follow-up interviews were scheduled, as needed, to clarify questions or observations. Interviews and mapping were conducted on a one-on-one basis with the researcher to allow each participant to engage with the activity in the way that best fits with her/his needs to ask questions, move about, or to use preferred materials without the influence or concerns

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about judgment from other participants. Individuals have different levels of comfort with visual modes of representation; mapping may not have been an effective means of communication for all participants (Packard, 2008). Consequently, to support ethical representation, all participants engaged with multiple methods of data collection, and I initiated follow-up meetings to confirm my interpretations and ask additional questions. As Creswell (2012) noted, periodically participants prefer group meetings. Although focus groups were not used in this study, one participant, Simone, chose to bring a friend to her HDMI event. That individual is not a part of this discussion and did not contribute to her responses noted here.

Interviews associated with all mapping collection events or interviews for mapping narration purposes were digitally recorded via audio devices with participant permission. Even though the IRB document noted this practice, I asked the participants prior to any recording for their permission to record that day's event. In our initial meetings, I explained that recording would help to form a transcription that accompanies the material artifact of the map as a form of narration. During the mapping process, I took notes using my iPad on the fieldnote template (see Appendix A, Fieldnote Format & Storage Protocol) that documented the participant's engagement verbally and in an embodied manner. Mapping process notes included: the physical process that the participant selected such as the drawing tool, physical position in the room, gestures, facial reactions, and questions during the process. Notes were suspended if it appeared that my writing was distracting the participant (Creswell, 2008, 2012). In those situations, notes were taken immediately following the interview.

The HDMI elicitation interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions that were intended to promote thinking about literacy in the high school place at different times of day with different people (see Appendix B, Hand-Drawn Mapping Protocol). The mapping protocol was intended to provide general a structure for each interview. The language, specifically the terms, used during mapping and interviews was modified in the field over the course of the study as I worked with each participant to collaboratively define meaningful ways to talk about what literacy means (see Co-constructing Language earlier in this chapter; also see the roles of language as a medium for communication in Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Consequently, the protocols in this proposal use the term *literacy* but this term was modified in the field; however, the nature or focus of the term, referring to participants' reading, writing, and meaning making remained consistent. The intention was to create a relaxed atmosphere, acknowledge that drawing feels different for many of us, and to reassure the participant that there were no performance expectations, no judgments about the degree of artistry in the representation.

Once the map was complete to the participant's satisfaction, the interview continued with participant narration and our discussion of the observations, locations, and topics presented on the map and explanatory information that the participant chose to share but did not depict. Language used in conjunction with visualization provided an opportunity for the participant to clarify her/his intent and the message (Atkinson, Delamont, Housley, 2008; Kress, 2010; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010; Pink, 2008, 2009). Periodically, the participant returned to the map to add a detail or to gesture to a location. The maps were collected at the conclusion of that day's interview. The HDMI did not remain in the participant's possession, nor did any of the participants ask to modify it

following the initial event. Fieldnotes and recordings were transcribed and stored in a password-protected, computer database. The participant maps were logged in an Excel-based material collection log dedicated to documents pertaining to this study and stored in a dedicated, locked device away from the site, in the my office, with other catalogued materials related to this study.

***Digital video/photo mapping literate life (VPM).*** The digital video/photo mapping involved only the student participants and was completed after the initial HDMI. The same ethics protocols practiced for the hand-drawn mapping elicitations were used also with the VPM (participant voluntary involvement and secure storage of material artifacts). Participant-generated digital video/photo material was stored on a password-protected, computer hard drive with access limited to the researcher-only. The strength of the participant created video map is that it acknowledges the importance of the image in modern communication (Creswell, 2012; Kress, 2010) and empowers the participants to design visualizations that they prefer to represent their ways, ideas, and perceptions of social practices related to literacy in their lives (for participant representation through video means see Crampton, 2010; Creswell, 2012; Packard, 2008; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010; Prosser, 2011). The digital video/photo maps were used to inform understandings surrounding the places and material artifacts associated with each adolescent participant's literacy practices away from school. The rationale and advantages of incorporating video/photo mapping in addition to interviews and other document collection is perhaps best articulated through Prosser (2011).

A limiting factor of interviews conducted verbally is the narrow parameters of responses and that they favor the articulate. One of the strengths of visual research

is the wide range of response possibilities and their capacity to harness the

creative abilities of researchers and participants… can comprise complexity and

contradiction… can describe, reflect, and evoke emotion… can help us

(researchers, participants, and interested communities) imagine what it might be

like to live that life… a tool for thinking and a very powerful means of expression

and promoting discussion… employed to access sensory phenomena that are

highly meaningful in ways that are ineffable and invisible using conventional

text-based methods (p. 488).

Prosser's (2011) insights applied direct to Tasha who embraced the use of the camera and

integrated her selected images into multiple data collection events. The focus of the

digital video/photo map is on the student-participant and how that participant chooses to

identify and represent aspects of their literate lives that have importance. Kress (2010)

stated, "There is a need for careful considerations of designs for meaning and knowledge-

making: the shaping of routes and environments of meaning-making and production of

knowledge and, in this, the shaping of 'inner' semiotic resources" (p. 27). Through the

digital video/photo map, I gained a deeper understanding of the material aspects of Tasha

and Simone's lives than I did through interviews alone. Selections from Tasha and

Simone VPM efforts are included in their associated findings chapters.

 As a precursor to the data collection event, I discussed the confidentiality

protocols for the study. If the participant included another individual or individuals in

their video map, then those individuals completed the necessary informed consent

documents for photography (see snowball methods of participant identification in

Creswell, 2008, 2012).

I met with the student participants individually to talk about the some possible ways to create a digital video map, and I provided them with the Digital Video/Photo Mapping Protocol (see Appendix C). Participants had an opportunity to share their experiences with creating videos and taking photographs. I purchased and provided digital cameras for each participant's use and demonstrated how to operate the device. If this technology was new to participants, they were given the opportunity to 'try-it-out' during the meeting or later with their peers as resources to limit the researcher-as-power-figure (see Packard, 2008).

After the digital video mapping was complete, each participant met with me in a one-on-one interview to narrate their experiences and the video/photo footage. I asked open-ended questions to clarify the representations and how they relate to social practices and cultural beliefs associated with literacy practices (see: Validity, participant self-reporting, member-checking, pp. 53-54). Clarifying questions may include reactions or descriptions of events or activities associated with peer relationships, family, work, faith, or community life. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed after each meeting. Fieldnotes were taken during the interview as the setting and discussion permited. Transcription and additional notations conformed to the protocol established for the hand-drawn mapping elicitation (HDMI) described earlier.

***Hand-tracing mapping of sensory self among materials (HTMSS).*** This method evolved in the field in response to my need engage participants who focused on shorter responses in earlier interviews or who provided little variation in their examples. My concern was to make sure I was conducting the study in an ethical manner that promoted participant senses of safety and openness. This method was used with Tasha and Colin.

Colin had provided specific, direct answers to my questions in earlier meetings. However, after having the camera in his possession for about one month, he hand not completed the VPM activity. I decided that he may respond to the hand-tracing as it is an unusual mode of representation for a high school student. I have used this technique in other settings as a teacher educator and found that it helps to relax participants, activates touch memories, and opens conversations about materials in their lives (Schappe, manuscript in progress).

Tasha knowing and showing her journey through sensory terms prompted me to try this mapping activity with her as well. My intention was to attempt to provoke some memories surrounding objects in her daily life that might help me understand her a bit more. Earlier data collection events raised my awareness of Tasha's hesitancy to talk about 'dark things.' I believed that I needed to respect Tasha's cultural signals that indicated speaking of potentially negative topics might alarm her. Consequently, I chose to seek ways to establish contexts for our conversations where Tasha was the knowing expert who could decide what to share and what to omit. I understand that that there is no objective way for me to verify what she chose to tell me. However, as I was interested in what and how she chose to communicate meaning, I believe that looking for potential paths to open communication would be more likely to produce insight as to what strategies might help me understand her literate ways and benefit her in learning situations in school.

My instructions indicated that sensory perceptions are intertwined, not distinct. I provided each participant with a blank piece of paper and a choice of writing utensils. I then asked the participant to place her/his hand on the paper and to trace it. I used this

notion of multisensory experience in the elicitation activity itself as well as my talk about what to do. "…when you trace your hand you feel the pen on your fingers, right?" The participants took great interest in this activity and through words or facial expression indicated their pleasure with the act of tracing and the novelty of being a senior in high school and tracing. Once they completed the tracing, I asked them,

> I want you to think about the things that you encounter - maybe even when you got up this morning, or when you're home on the weekend and you don't have school, or when you go home in the afternoon after school. I want you to write either outside of the hand print or inside of the handprint that you drew on the page, things like materials or objects, that are at home that you interact with, that you touch, or things that stand out to you, or that you remember from home. Some things might also be things you see, hear, or taste… (Tasha, HTMSS, November 5; Colin, HTMSS, November 6)

I used a listing and statement rephrasing strategy within my instructions. I did this because I found that, even in casual conversations with Tasha, listing helped her to identify with, or find meaning in, what I said or asked. Through my use of listing similar actions or topics using related phrasing, I hoped to trigger place-oriented memories targeted to the participants' ways of being among materials.

**Interviews.** Interviews conducted throughout this ethnography created opportunities for participants to relate their stories, their perspectives, and the ways that they saw themselves within and among places (Legat, 2008) and interacting with varied power structures through social relationships (Ladson-Billings, 2000). The interviews directly addressed the participants' definitions of literacy and sought to elicit examples of

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practices in places (RQ 1) that were targeted to explore how they made choices to engage

with particular materials (RQ 2) and paths as they pursued particular social relationships

(RQ 3). The interviews for this study took four primary forms:

1. Literacy Life Story (LLSI) recalling literacy experiences in semi-structured,
   one-on-one meetings (see Literacy Life Story Interview Protocol, Appendix
   D).

2. Interviews held in conjunction with material artifact collection, generation,
   and elicitation, specifically, institutional documents and participant mapping
   methods (see mapping methods and mapping protocols in Appendices B & C).

3. Semi-structured interviews held in conjunction with Walking Tours (as
   described above under Observations).

4. Incidental, semi-structured, one-on-one meetings to clarify questions,
   observations, and interpretations that formed through earlier meetings or
   through other means of data collection. The content and questions related to
   incidental interviews were formed on-site, after the study began in response to
   issues and data that arose in the field (Atkinson, Delamont and Housley, 2008;
   Creswell, 2008, 2012; Heath & Street, 2008; Pink, 2009; Wolcott, 2008).

Protocols for the Literacy Life Story and mapping events were designed to elicit

responses based largely on Spradley's (1979) seminal work, *The Ethnographic Interview,*

and the more recent qualitative interview guidelines offered through Kvale and

Brinkmann (2009). Incidental interview techniques drew from both of these works to

elicit participant-provided descriptive details and processes; examples that illustrated how

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the participants' social practices were structured within place and social relationships; and to confirm researcher interpretations, connections, or to explore new directions.

Most interviews were digitally recorded via an audio device. Some incidental interviews were not recorded. In those cases, fieldnotes were made immediately following participant meetings. All of the interviews were individual in nature; consequently, video recording to differentiate speakers was not necessary. I explained that recording would help me as a part of the research process to document our conversation as it unfolds and to check my notes following our meeting as I endeavor to represent the participant's ideas ethically and appropriately.

***Literacy life story interview.*** The purpose of the Literacy Life Story Interview was two-fold. First, this event was the initial scheduled data collection event for some of the participants (Jack Taggert; Shelia Novak). As an initial event, this interview not only served as a means to collect data but to establish ways of being together (researcher and participant) in a welcoming context that set the tone of open dialogue, respect, and value. Second, this interview was the primary data collection event to inform the investigation of Research Question 1: How do individuals define literacy, and how are those understandings embodied social practices in places? Further, the data collected through this interview also provided foundational perspectives to begin to consider aspects of the other two research questions. Specifically, through participant stories, material culture (RQ 2) and social relationships (RQ 3).

The participants' stories about how they came to know literacy in their lives helped me better understand their ways of being in places and helped me further refine follow-up meetings to clarify my representation of their understandings. The use of the

Literacy Life Story directly connects to my personal and professional experiences and frustrations as a witness to barriers of self-expression. Too often, the structure of social interactions privileges particular individuals or particular ways of meaning making that limit, modify, or ignore personal expression of ideas, experience, or ways of seeing the world.  As a sociocultural theorist, I believe that honoring varied social and cultural perspectives will validate individuals and contribute to the richness of shared experiences as we work together to find solutions to complex problems. As a literacy studies researcher exploring a journey epistemology, embracing the notion of place as a nexus for the gathering of individuals who embody their past experiences, practices, and beliefs, means that place becomes unbounded or permeably bounded.  These Literacy Life Stories revealed ways that individuals came to places, engaged in varied experiences, and developed understandings and practices as a part of coming to terms with place-oriented ways.

All of the core participants (the students, the English teachers, and the administrator) engaged with the Literacy Life Story Interview (LLSI).  The interview generally followed a descriptive question format (Spradley, 1979) that explored general experience questions about self, family, schooling, and interest activities. Further details emerged through guided grand tour questions (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Spradley, 1979) that focused participants on the ways that reading and writing have been parts of their lives.  Specific questions also formed during the course of the interviews and provided examples of how the situations they introduced unfolded or elaborated story points as needed.  Although I use the term literacy in this discussion for consistency purposes, during interviews, I used the terms reading, writing, making meaning, and meaning

making with participants to provoke discussion about what might be meaningful to different individuals in different places and perhaps during different portions of life's journey. Throughout the interviews, I restated aspects of what the participants shared to confirm my understanding and to demonstrate my interest in their perspective (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Spradley, 1979).  The protocol for this interview reflects a semi-structured format intended to present questions that guide the interview in an open-ended manner to promote dialogue and descriptive examples (see Appendix D, Literacy Life Story Interview Protocol).

Each interview varied in duration from 30 to 80 minutes with most interviews spanning multiple meetings either intentionally or because the participant or I found it important to return to topics we had discussed earlier. If the participant appeared to be fatigued or if the school bell indicated the end of a period, the interview was concluded and resumed in another meeting. Following each LLSI, I review the interview transcript and developed follow-up and member check questions to clarify specific aspects and to provide the participant with the opportunity to share any memories that surfaced in the interim that pertained to our earlier discussion.

**Observations.** Observations were documented with fieldnotes (all references to fieldnotes also include sketches) and conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the study (see Appendix A, Fieldnote Format & Storage Protocol). Three primary forms of researcher observation were used: as a *participant* in class activities, meetings, and incidental school social events; as an *observer of setting* (Ingold & Lee Vergunst, 2008; Pink, 2007, 2009) with fieldnotes gathered through sensory walking tours of the facility during varied times of day (morning opening, midday, and dismissal); and as a *silent*

observer (Creswell, 2012) incidentally noting social interactions, embodied activity, and entanglements among the physical surroundings and literacy practices. Three observation categories are discussed in the following sub-sections: observation involving administrator and teacher participants, observation through sensory walking tours, and classroom observation.

    ***Observations involving administrator and teacher participants.*** The following section focuses on the protocol for observing adult participants in contexts with other adults. Contexts involving the entire school community or students will be addressed elsewhere in this dissertation. Although the methods outlined clearly show an emphasis on students, an ethnography of adolescent literacy as situated among varied social practices and cultural beliefs calls for understandings of how these practices and beliefs entangle with cultural-place-based roles and individual perspectives formed through practices and beliefs experienced elsewhere. Place as a nexus for study assumes that individuals (students, teachers, and administrators) bring their practices and beliefs with them; boundaries in this sense are permeable. Observations, consequently, were focused on aspects of individual and group social practices and cultural beliefs embodied in literacy practices and incorporated in to social practices in the high school through adults and adolescents.

    Observations of the administrator, Shelia Novak, began in the summer during course scheduling and focused on the vice principal's processes for determining the master teaching schedule and student schedules. The primary focus was to observe the ways that her processes prioritized particular content areas, particular teachers', or

particular students' schedules. Course scheduling spanned a large part of the summer and as such the times and days for these observations were negotiated with the vice principal.

Observations of teacher and administrator participants in meetings began in August with the faculty orientation meetings prior to the start of the school year. Although the faculty monthly meetings last for approximately one hour each, the August faculty orientation meeting was spread out over a four-day period. My involvement in these meetings varied as the year progressed and as teachers and administrators became comfortable with my presence. I adopted a silent observer role in faculty meetings.

The observational focus for my attendance at all meetings was to note how adult definitions and enactments of literacy practices were embodied in school social practices and policy documents. These practices included ways that expectations were formed, communicated, changed, and enforced (informing RQ 1, 2, 3). The ways that the meetings were structured and facilitated informed how authority was distributed among individuals in the school as a learning community. Topics of interest included addressing adolescent movement, ways of learning, e-reader policies, and access to literacy tools and practices (RQ 1, 2, 3). Fieldnotes were taken using my iPad during all meetings. Follow-up meetings were scheduled with adult participants to complete member checks and share understandings.

***Classroom observations.*** Classroom observations were scheduled during the class periods when and where a teacher-participant and student-participant(s) met in the same classroom for English class. As stated earlier, four observations at a minimum were conducted for each of the student participants. Classroom observations informed RQ 1 to the extent that the classroom teacher's definition of literacy was embodied in the social

practices in the classroom. Further, based on their own definitions of literacy practice, students periodically initiated literacy practices in the classroom. Beliefs related to literacy materials (RQ 2) were evident in the printed matter, web materials that the teachers posted, and through material requirements or resources provided in the classroom or required to acceptable assignment completion. Further, other material objects present and put to use in the classroom influenced students in overt and subtle ways, including channeling movement through posted rules or sign-out sheets and establishing 'acceptable' representations through posted models for assignments or posters that reinforced particular dispositions or representing particular ways of being. These material objects also informed RQ 3 as they influence practices embodied in social relationships and social expectations. During classroom observations, I generally adopted a silent observer role but did adopt a participant-observer role on multiple occasions.

   ***Observation through sensory walking tours.*** Walking Tours were conducted periodically throughout the research. Three were conducted as research-only tours and four were conducted with participants. Mini-walking tours were conducted before each student participant interview as I always met the student in one location and then we traveled to the student's destination of choice for other data collection events. During our travel, lessons were learned about the participants through talk and route. My role varied according to the day's circumstances: silent observer, participant observer, and purposeful documenter of sensed place. The methods associated with the Walking Tour were inspired through walking as a method in Pink (2009), Ingold and Lee Vergunst (2008), and Kusenbach (2003).

The Walking Tours as multisensory data collection events involved observing the flow of people as they engaged in place-oriented practices and the display of materials. These tours informed all three research questions. Specifically, how material culture in place embodies beliefs about literacy practices (RQ 2), how those elements of material culture illustrated definitions that individuals in the school have for 'appropriate' uses of literacy as a social practice (RQ 1), and finally, how physical movement through place supported incidental social relationships and planned diversions in participants' days (RQ 3).

In the initial tours, as a *silent* observer, I walked through the school halls during various intervals in the day:  at the beginning of the day (7:45 to 8: 10) as students were arriving, visiting lockers, and gathering in homeroom for announcements; midday, during the lunch periods (three periods in the middle of the day for different groups of students); and finally, during dismissal (2:40 to 3:00) as students returned to lockers, gathered in the halls, and met in the bus port or parking lot.

Sensory perception was the primary means of observing the contexts and the movement and interactions of people.  As the senses cannot be separated, visual observations were combined with auditory and olfactory elements (Pink, 2008, 2009). Given that some places in the building, the cafeteria, for example, necessarily incorporated eating and social interaction, taste and touch also became a part of the tours. Adults and non-participating students offered me candy and cookies on multiple occasions. The pathway of the tours varied according to the observed circumstances at the time but consistently included the main hallways, the lobby areas, cafeteria, band room, the library, the art room, faculty areas, the main office, and outside grounds,

particularly entry and exit points.  The purpose of the Walking Tours was to explore the places that together form what the participants understood as the 'place' of school. Particular attention was paid to circumstances or surroundings and how they were a part of participant literacy activities or processes in some perceivable manner (Ingold & Lee Vergunst, 2008; Pink, 2008, 2009; Till, 2005).

I adopted the role of *purposeful documenter* in my solo tours and the tours with students and teachers. I encouraged the participants to assume this role at any point during the study. Both Tasha and Simone conducted their own tours and used the camera I provided to document those events in a multimodal, multisensory manner (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010; Kress, 2010; Prosser, 2011).  Transcripts and fieldnotes were prepared following walking tour interviews and digital video/photo material was stored according to security protocols previously discussed.

Incorporating participants as collaborators helped to 'story' the halls and places within the school as sites of active or remembered literacy happenings and social interactions (Kusenbach, 2003; Legat, 2008; Till, 2005). Incorporating participant's storytelling about experiences contributes to the ethical practice of representation (Ladson-Billings, 2000). The participant and researcher tours as collaborators follow paths through the space that inspired by interview discussions or in-the-moment observations (Ingold & Lee Vergunst, 2008; Kusenbach, 2003). "This 'walk and talk' method shifts data collection from research 'on' to research 'with' and 'by' children. Such participatory methods are becoming central to contemporary visual research" (Prosser, 2007, p. 18).

**Artifact collection.** Artifact collection included school documents and participant-offered artifacts (examples included essays, photographs, various materials, and in Simone's, case a ceramic mug). Following the initial Literacy Life Story Interview with the administrator, three documents were collected that served as examples of embodied institutional beliefs of appropriate, place-associated literacy practices: Student/Parent Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and Course Offerings.  These documents provided data that helped to define how the administrators' place-oriented beliefs about literacies, literacy practices, and literacy purposes were incorporated into expected practices in the high school (RQ 1, 2, 3); how the documents acted as parts of material culture in the school (RQ 2); and how the documents contributed to social relationship construction (RQ 3). Incidental semi-structured interviews evolved in the field following document review throughout the course of the study. Those incidental interviews included questions related to structure (term verification, Spradley, 1979) and description of how the documents were authored, published, and if appropriate, enforced (guided tour questions, Spradley, 1979).  Some document collection events and follow-up interviews lead to new documents in snowball fashion.

In addition to this planned document collection, incidental document or material object collection as aspects of social practices and expectations for literacies and social relationships emerged in the field throughout the study.  Such incidental events included teacher-produced materials (papers and website data), institutional updates to processes or expectations issued by the administration, and student-produced or re-appropriated material objects or processes related to literacy practices.

**Data Analysis**

Data collected throughout the study was catalogued in a digital log stored in a password-protected computer for my sole access. The log contained the data type code, data type description, data source, collection period or date, collection context (location, surroundings, people, and other context features, if appropriate), and the storage location (computer-based file folder tree location and physical location, if appropriate). All physical data were stored in a secure cabinet with access limited to the researcher. All names and locations were assigned pseudonyms to ensure ethical and confidential treatment of participant data.

I used Microsoft Excel to maintain a digital data log of collection events, documents, fieldnotes, transcripts, digital files, and artifacts. Dragon Naturally Speaking software assisted with fieldnotes, documenting observations, and generating interview transcripts. Apple iPhoto was used for data management and production of album collections related to participant/researcher Walking Tours and Video/Photo Mapping. Microsoft Word was used for fieldnote templates, coding, and secure storage for related data analysis. Software use assisted with data storage and coding in a way that allowed me to determine codes, cross-codes, and assign flexible categorization and tags for document retrieval including PDF and text files, transcripts, and digital files (audio, still image, and video). Microsoft Word and Apple iPhoto were also used to aid in creating visual displays of the data and findings. The data were backed up digitally and physically.

**Coding Strategies.** Consistent with ethnography methods, data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection (Atkinson, Delamont, & Housley, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Pink, 2007). First, fieldnote, transcripts, documents, and

other material artifacts, including maps, photographs and videos were *read and reread* to develop emerging thematic codes in a constant comparative manner (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). "As this process of systematic sifting and comparison develops, so the mutual relationships and internal structures of categories will be more clearly displayed" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 165). The data were considered by participant, time of collection, type of data, among situational contexts and places, and across observable notations of social processes and embodied behaviors. The data were read based on the three core sub-research questions. Namely, categories related to the research questions are likely to emerge centered on these observable criteria: How participants define literacy in places (RQ 1) and how beliefs about literacies are embodied in material culture (RQ 2), and literacy practices are embodied through social relationships in places (RQ 3).

The (researcher and participant) mapping of participant activities, processes, and interactions were compared to coded narratives that accompany participant interview transcripts, observational fieldnotes, and artifact analysis (institutional documents, maps, videos, and photographs). Visual data were read in conjunction with participant interviews and consequently took two forms, the visual itself and the transcribed participant narrative from audio files. Contextual factors associated with the data was also examined. This cross-data reading searched for parallels, connections, and oppositions or silences among the data in particular contexts. For this study, *contexts* included the participants, settings, and circumstances of the data-gathering period as well as the circumstances, people, and happenings detailed as the examples in participants' explanatory descriptions. My interpretive structure was based not only on participant

discussion of intent and/or reaction to surroundings but also on embodied

movement/practices and responses understood through sensory means of observation,

walking methods, and material artifacts (Pink, 2009; Prosser, 2011). Additional diagrams

were created to integrate data including the manner in which social networks within and

across places carryout processes. These diagrams represent the overall interpretation of

participant data and appear in the findings chapters of this dissertation as Literacies

Among Places and Social Relationships (see Chapters IV, V, & VI). These diagrams

included in the chapters as tables display the student participant's literacies and literacy

practice purposes across places and social relationships. As found in other scholarly

work, researcher mapping in this manner elucidated complex social relationships

(Emmison & Smith, 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Schensul, LeCompte, Trotter,

Cromley, & Singer, 1999).

 Consequently, the data analysis included reading and rereading distinct types of

data, thematically coding in a constant comparative manner within those data types.

Then, second, the data were read across data types to examine parallels, connections

(Maxwell, 2005), divergences, and/or perhaps absences/silences (Peshkin, 2001) among

the data.  Coding within and across categories allowed for triangulation of findings,

opened new paths for investigation, and illuminated findings in a manner not possible

through a singular coding method alone.

 During the coding and data analysis process, both color and word-based codes

were applied to the data. The text within fieldnotes, for example, was highlighted and/or

modified with a colored font according to coding patterns (see Appendix E, Coded Data

Sample). The fieldnote protocol was modified during the course of the study to reflect

coding practices. Generally, any data emphasizing place or place definitions of literacies were coded with green highlighting or green font (RQ 1). Data related to materials, beliefs about materials, or content processes that emphasized materials in the practice were coded with blue highlighting or blue font (RQ 2). Data primarily emphasizing social relationships and/or authority efforts to control, promote, or channel literacies, literacy purposes, or literacy practices or to develop expectations for social relationships were coded with red font or boxed in red borders (RQ 3).

Three additional codes emerged through data analysis: participants' social reactions to expectations (yellow highlight), participant data directly related to journey epistemology (grey shading or grey box border), and researcher actions/decisions/methods (magenta font). It became apparent when the first interview was coded that the answers to the research questions were integrated. This means that the data showed how the research questions related to each other and consequently how participant sociocultural understanding and decisions regarding literacies were complex and rooted in individual journeys, places, and social relationships with others.

Although I did find relationships across coded data, some of the data have indeterminate value. As I continue to explore the vast amount of data associated with the ethnography, I expect that unforeseen meaning will surface from some of this data. Or perhaps, some of the data will provoke further inquiry rather than connections on their own (Emmerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Mason labels this type of data "unfinished resource" (2002, p. 157). It will be interesting to look further into this data to determine if "unfinished resources" appear across or within thematically coded data. If so, that aspect may provide something interesting to look at, a 'silence' of sorts to question.

**Reflexivity.** During the data collection process and initial data analysis, reflexively, I considered my position as a researcher and former teacher as well as my experiences with literacy in different social and community contexts (Coffey, 1999; Spindler, 2006). I considered how I was interpreting the data and then sought to confirm those interpretations through member checks, interviews with my participants, and through examination of different types of data I collected (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Basso, 1996; Powell, 2006). I endeavored to be alert to my tendency to look for social connections, reactions, or entanglements as the basis for action when individual purposes may proven to be at the center of agentive processes. Through recursive study of the data, I endeavored to see *with and through the data* as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 168) recommend.

Epistemologically, the codes were applied to literal understandings in that they reflected actual sensed experience, action, or reaction in a particular social practice; however, the reason for that sensed experience, action, or reaction was often a part of interpretive coding. Reflexively, I was aware that the degree to which I empathized with a participant may have influenced how I interpreted the data (Mason, 2002, p. 156). Consequently, multiple data collection methods and member checks were important components to this ethnography.

Further, I considered the data holistically, by participant with my overarching roles as participant-observer and former teacher in mind. This analysis may or may not inform the ways that literacy is a part of generational social and cultural practices. In this manner, within the ethnography, I have several, simultaneous case studies as well. The case study data for a participant would include her/his life story interview, the map of

literacy in school places, fieldnotes from observations and walking tours, video maps or photos from literacy in places other than school (student participants only), and transcriptions of interviews related to cultural beliefs and social practices that arose during the study. As an examination of the school as an institution, data included the participants' thoughts on the school's policies and curriculum related to literacy practices as well as the participants' individual decisions and pathways to practice forms of reading, writing, and meaning making. Exploring what was apparently *routine* informed my understandings of the entanglements of social practices and cultural beliefs associated with adolescent literacy in, across, and around places.

**Visual representation of findings.** Diagramming my interpretations of student participants' literacies and literacy purposes across places and social relationships enhanced my understanding of the dynamics in the study and revealed additional findings related to those individuals and to place-oriented practices and social relationships. These dimensions are discussed further in the findings and implications chapters.

Participant provided artifacts, particularly the Video/Photo Mapping artifacts offered understandings beyond those in interviews alone. A selection of the participants photos appear in the findings chapters for Tasha and Simone. Colin's photographs do not appear due to copyright restrictions. Additional photographic data related to walking tours and participants VPM were collected and will appear in future publications. Similarly, participant-generated artifacts are described as necessary in the findings chapters but have been excluded from this discussion due to space limitations and the intended focus on a limited number of participants. I believe that I will be able to compensate to some degree with rich description of the context, observable material

elements of the scene, and participant's narrative quotations obtained through interview transcripts (methods to compensate in this manner are discussed in Atkinson et al., 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Pink, 2007, 2008, 2009; and Wolcott, 2008).

IRB protocols were followed to obtain informed consent for the use of visuals, video, audio and other types of artifacts collected in conjunction with this study. Efforts were made to protect the identity of the participants and the school. The participants are aware of the risk that some element of their data may be familiar to a reader or member of an audience with personal knowledge related to the data displayed. All participants consented to have their data shared in educational contexts and research publications that I may generate in the future.

**Visuals and findings presentation for the dissertation.** Constant comparative data analysis indicates the participants' definitions of literacy in places (RQ1) formed in conjunction with material beliefs (RQ2) and social relationships in those places (RQ3). Consequently, the findings are presented according to adolescent participant to facilitate integrated responses to research questions. After data collection and analysis, the three participants (Tasha, Colin, and Simone) were purposefully selected from the pool of participating students to reflect varied peer interest communities and academic levels of English classes within the school (peer interest communities were associated with each participant's self-identified preferred literacy place, see Table 3.2). The students are listed in their order of appearance in chapters to follow, Tasha in Chapter IV, Colin in Chapter V, and Simone in Chapter VI.

Table 3.2

*Student Participants' Preferred Literacy Places in School*

| Student | Senior English Class Assignment | Preferred Literacy Place |
|---------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Tasha | Basic Level – Stemple | Choir Room |
| Colin | AP Level – Kent | Band/Strings Rooms |
| Simone | Academic Level – Stemple | Art Room |

Although the study spanned an extended period of time and all participants were interviewed and observed on multiple occasions, I am not suggesting that participants' literacies or literacy practices are limited to these dimensions. I am offering representations of literacy practices that they affirmed through data collection and that I found support for through constant comparison across data types.

Through participant talk, imagery, and researcher interpretations, the following chapters present the participants' literacies and literacy practices. Each participant chapter includes the participant's understandings of literacies, my observations, teacher-participant data, or supplementary elicitation data that helped me come to understand how literacies and practices were supported, limited, or enhanced as the participant journeyed to the high school from early childhood and traveled across places in her/his daily life during this study. Based on constant comparative review and analysis across methods and collection contexts, each student participant's life places and social relationships were identified and charted in table format to facilitate further analysis and interpretation of literacies and literacy practice purposes. Each of the findings chapters contains that adolescent participant's table detailing the adolescent's literacies among

places and social relationships. Color shading indicates the literacy enacted. The letter

within the shading identifies the participant's prevalent purpose for enacting the literacy

practice in that place, with that person or social group. Blank spaces within the table

indicate that the participant was silent on this practice, in that place, or with that

individual or group.

**Validity Concerns & Strategies to Limit Threat Impact**

Overall, I limited threats to validity through planning and detailed design that

included an extended period in the field, detailed documentation of data collected, and

multiple methods of data collection that represent varied aspects of social practices and

individual participant-engagement with literacy practices. Further, my design

incorporates data analysis approaches that constantly compare findings within and across

contexts to look for parallels, inconsistencies, and silences that provided opportunities

throughout the course of the study to return to the field and to individual participants to

re-check interpretations and potentially launch new lines of inquiry (Freeman, de

Marrais, Preissle, Roulston, St. Pierre, 2007; Maxwell, 2005).  As a part of my

representation of findings, I incorporate participant data (material artifacts and narrative

quotation) and rich contextual descriptions (Coffey, 1999; Emmerson, Fretz, & Shaw,

1995; Freeman et al., 2007; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Wolcott, 2008). However,

regardless of planning, there is no way to eliminate every threat to validity.

This discussion of potential validity threats rests on the assumption that "Neither

research participants nor researchers can be neutral, because… they are always positioned

culturally, historically, and theoretically" (Freeman et al., 2007, p. 27). There were four

validity threats that I purposefully attempted to limit through research design. These

threats do not cover all potential concerns but were paramount in my mind.

1. Limited focus on the English department.

2. The site of a high school as a significant source for direct researcher participant-
   observer data collection.

3. Participant self-reporting throughout the study.

4. My own, researcher bias as former teacher, now researcher.

The following subsections address each of these potential threats to validity and my

efforts to limit these threats as much as possible through the processes of study design,

data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings.

**Limited focus on the English department.** My selection of an English

department as a focus for teacher participants may privilege particular definitions of

literacy and particular types of literacy practice in school contexts. Although literacy,

when defined primarily as reading and writing, can be clearly associated with the

curriculum and activities in the English department, it was likely that other teachers, in

other departments within the school, also impacted the ways that students thought about

and enacted literacy practices among the places in their lives.

*Strategies to respond.* Pragmatically, my study design focused on teacher-

participants associated with the English department as a way to reasonably reduce the

number of teacher-participants and purposefully focus teacher-participant selection in a

relevant, meaningful manner; however, my student-participants and administrator-

participants also interacted with other members of the school faculty. Feasibility, given a

one-researcher-based ethnography, dictated that I sought ways to limit the study's focus

yet still conduct the ethnography in a manner that permitted me to understand literacy practices and processes within, across, and around places and social groups.

I chose primarily English teachers as the teacher-participants given the dominant social and cultural understandings in the United States of literacy as associated with school-based reading and writing activities and with state board of education standards that predominantly channel reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills into benchmarks for English language and literature instruction. Although literacy is increasingly defined through subsets (numeracy, media literacy, computer literacy, music theory, etc.), I did not want to enter the study with preconceptions or assumptions about how the participants would define or segment literacy.

Consequently, to address this potential validity threat, although the teacher participants were predominantly English teachers, through open-ended questions associated with the Literacy Life Story Interviews, the Walking Tours, and the mapping activities, I encouraged all participants (students, teachers, and administrators) to define literacy on their own terms through examples from their daily lives. Specifically, the students' hand-drawn maps indicated places in the school other than English classrooms where they thought literacy happened (for example, as the findings chapters discuss, for Tasha, the choir room; for Simone, the art room; and for Colin, the band and strings rooms). Follow-up interviews and interviews conducted as participants narrated their maps provided opportunities for me to inquire *how* literacy happened in classrooms outside of the English department and in other places in the school. This data was supplemented with my own incidental observations of the school community and through Walking Tours on my own and in collaboration with participants. Further, the strong

associations that participants had with the library and the art room prompted those teachers to join the study as participants. This provided me with opportunities to gather data that would support triangulation of findings.

**The high school as a principal place for researcher-based data collection.** My purposeful selection of the high school building and grounds as my primary place of observation limited my ability to directly observe adolescent literacy practices enacted in other places.

*Strategies to respond.* Again, pragmatic concerns called for design limits; however, my interest in limiting my interference in participant experiences also influenced my decision to focus my direct observations within the high school as a place. Although my physical observations center on the high school, I attempted to compensate and reduce this validity threat as I asked the student-participants to represent their understandings of literacies and literacy practices in places other than school through their Literacy-Life Story Interview and their digital mapping activities (VPM). Through constant comparative data analysis, I endeavored to identify inconsistencies among the data obtained via my own observations and data that the participants provided from contexts other than school.

**Participant self-reporting throughout the study.** My interest in participant self-reporting (through the Literacy Life Story Interview and mapping activities) potentially risks developing inferences based on what participants thought I would like to hear rather than what they actually perceived and/or did in various social situations.

*Strategies to respond.* Through multiple forms of data collection that encompassed both self-reporting, researcher observation, and artifact collection, I

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attempted to limit these concerns.  Two of the methods were particularly susceptible to self-reporting/answer-crafting concerns: the Literacy Life Story Interview and the hand-drawn mapping activity.  Answer-crafting as a specific facet of self-reporting was of concern for me given that the nature of the study is at its core self-reporting how you use literacy, where you use it, under what conditions you use it, and how it is embodied.  Answer-crafting suggests a constructed response to please the researcher or to create an image of the participant that may not be true-to-circumstances.

Through a comparative analysis of interviews, artifacts, and field observations, I searched  to identify inconsistencies and conduct follow-up interviews with participants to confirm my understandings.  Asking open-ended questions and then follow-up questions (member checks) focusing the participant on providing mini-tours or examples related to the issue of concern helped to clarify my findings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Spradley, 1979).  The Literacy Life Story was begun early in the study and served to constantly ground my understandings and provide a basis for other participant discussions as new data were gathered throughout the study.  Discussions (formal and informal, incidental interviews) springing from the Walking Tours served to confirm or redirect representations on the hand-drawn maps (similar to strategies for member-checking as a part of transactional validity discussed in Cho & Trent, 2007).

**Researcher bias as a former teacher.** Reflexively, I was concerned about my own researcher bias as a former teacher and as such have formed assumptions about students, teachers, administrators, and schools as communities. Reactively, it was also likely that as an adult in a school setting, the students may have reacted to my presence as a perceived power-holder.  Eliminating this perception entirely was impossible

(Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Maxwell, 2005); however, my selection and design of methods was intended to minimize power concerns when possible.

   ***Strategies to respond.*** Researcher bias is an unavoidable aspect of participant-observer-based ethnography as my own social and cultural experience influence my ways of being in the world (Spindler, 2006; Wolcott, 2008). My situation was complicated through my professional history as a former high school English teacher. Throughout the study, I attempted to be mindful of how my presence and interpretations might have influenced participants' actions and communication (Freeman et al., 2007; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and "how this affects the validity of the inferences" I formed from the data (Maxwell, 2005, p. 109).  Although I did not have previous 'teacher-like' interactions with the student-participants, my role as a former teacher could have influenced how they saw me. I attempted to limit my own bias and my influence over participants through two main avenues: the length of the study and the use of participant-driven and collaborative methods.

   Conducting this study as an ethnography spanning a twelve-month period allowed me to be a regular part of the school routine.  Organizing my data collection techniques in a way that placed the Literacy Life Story first or early in the research intentionally placed the participant in the position of 'knowing' or as the 'expert' speaking about their life experiences (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Spradley, 1979; Wolcott, 2008). Using the Literacy Life Story in this way benefitted both the participant and my own perspective.  The initial interview questions, although semi-structured (and inherently biased through my research perspective) to encouraged retelling of experiences, provided participants with some sense of control over how examples would be shared and how contexts were described

(Coffey, 1999; Spradley, 1979), albeit within the research context I unavoidably constructed (Wolcott, 2008). As I did not have personal (outside of school context) histories with any of the participants, I entered this aspect of the research process as a 'learner' and hoped to limit inadvertent guided responses or conclusions.

Likewise, conducting other data collection methods in conjunction with interviews (classroom observations, mapping, and artifact or document collection) or as collaborative efforts (Walking Tour) facilitated sharing of ideas and provided opportunities for me to confirm my understandings with participants and to check for conflicting understandings or interpretations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; similar practices are referred to as member-checking in Freeman et al., 2007, and transactional validity in Cho & Trent, 2007). As an ethnography based on sociocultural and constructivist epistemologies, validity is a construct that serves as a constant reminder to center the interpretive process within participant understandings and across varied findings from material artifacts and observations rather than an objective, positivist truth to attain (for theoretical connections to interpretations of validity in research see also Cho & Trent, 2007).

**Chapter IV**

**FINDINGS: TASHA**

**"Don't speak about the dark things"**

(Tasha, LLSI, September 26)

When Tasha warned, "Don't speak about the dark things," during one of our initial Literacy Life Story Interviews, I did not understand the full impact of her statement. Ultimately, as will be shown in this chapter, her assertion emerged as the underlying principle transmitted in her early life that helped her to channel how she pursued meaning making in her life. This chapter shows Tasha's story through Tasha's selected imagery and her talk about what, who, and where she finds meaning. My efforts to come to better understand how Tasha defined literacy, selected literacy materials, and engaged in relationships associated with literacies ultimately relied upon my ability to construct a supportive participant relationship. We needed to form a common language and shared practices.

**The Journey to Construct a Participant-Responsive Research Relationship**

During the two exploratory years that preceded the ethnography, I met and talked with many students. Some students greeted me in the halls or talked to me openly about their days at school. Many students, including Tasha, neither went out of their way to talk to me nor seemed to avoid me; perhaps to them I was just another adult in the school. When I encountered Tasha during this period, she politely smiled and nodded as we passed each other in the hall or cafeteria. I had been in the school long enough to learn some anecdotal information about many of the students and teachers. I learned a little about Tasha through my own general walking tours and incidental meetings with the

teachers during the exploratory period and the early stages of the ethnography. Tasha was an English language learner, and consequently, I periodically saw her in the Instructional Support classroom among the students who received support services.

The Instructional Support (IS) coordinator was familiar with my researcher role in the school and was proud to share her admiration for Tasha's involvement in school music performances and her role as a peer mentor for freshmen students. Tasha's IS coordinator highly recommended her for participation in the study believing that participation might help Tasha continue to develop her language skills and open opportunities to think about reading and writing with someone other than her teachers. Although Tasha remained in basic level English classes, she noted that Tasha worked very hard to continue to learn English and that she had made great progress in her previous three years as a high school student (Schappe, FN, September 7). Although my student participant recruitment plan centered on recommendations from Shelia Novak, Vice Principal, and the English teachers, the Instructional Support coordinator's words resonated with me. She spoke to me just days after I had watched Tasha perform with other upperclassmen to welcome the new freshmen to the high school (Schappe, FN, August 27). During that student assembly, Tasha was animated, danced, and gave a solo vocal performance. She smiled throughout and appeared to be relaxed and enjoying herself with her peers onstage.  After receiving Shelia, Ed, and Rachael's support, I spoke to Tasha. Tasha was already aware of my researcher role; she remembered observing me in the school and heard me speak to her English class. Tasha appeared to be surprised when I told her that her teachers and the Vice Principal had recommended her —smiling and responding, "Really?" (Schappe, FN, September 7).

Tasha's positive demeanor and surprise that her input would be valued persisted throughout our time together.  In our early meetings, she deferred to me to make decisions about where and when we should meet and even where we should sit (Schappe, FN, September 12; Tasha, HDMI, September 25; Tasha, LLSI, September 26). Through these early collaborative meetings, I recognized that Tasha had observed me in the building as a silent observer (Creswell, 2012) and that she was open to talking with me and sharing experiences in ways that ethnographers commonly refer to as participant-observation (Atkinson, Delamont, & Housley, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Wolcott, 2008). However, my researcher-actions needed to move beyond participant-observation if I intended a participant-responsive ethnographic design.  Although my data collection methods as described in Chapter III supported individual participant's choices about how to engage with methods, I believed that constructing a participant-responsive, researcher-participant relationship needed to become a part of our routine together.

Constructing this relationship meant that I had to be aware of potential role assumptions that might affect the way participants storied their experiences. For example, in my early encounters with Tasha, I observed that she nodded and smiled frequently but that she asked few questions (Schappe, FN, September 12).  In order to disrupt this pattern, I worked to identify our shared experiences and examples of situations I observed or remembered from her talk where Tasha was the knowing expert. For example, in an effort to establish Tasha as a knowing collaborator, I asked her questions about school activities that the IS coordinator mentioned (peer mentoring and music performances) or that I had witnessed (her August 27 assembly performance). Tasha told me that she loved being a part of the school's plays and singing for an audience. She noted that she

performed in plays every year at West High School (Schappe, FN, September 12). I brought up her participation in the opening student assembly to mark a place—literally, the memory of the auditorium, and figuratively, her performance—to talk about a shared experience within the school context. I also wanted to communicate that I valued her willingness to participate in a public performance and to note that she was able to do something that I have not done—a place and social relationship that positioned Tasha as the knowing expert to teach me about how she viewed herself and her interactions in places within the larger school place. Consequently, through this talk, I sought to establish shared experience, her strength as an individual to perform, and her skills and confidence that mark her as a master and me as a novice in need of her perspective to better understand how she was able to do these things.

My purposeful pursuit of opportunities to make her role as master or expert apparent continued throughout our work together. As will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter, Tasha's talk about learning English and her frustrations with writing word-based language contributed to instances when she questioned her ability to express herself according to adults' expectations, primarily her teachers (Tasha, HDMI, September 25; Tasha, LLSI, September 26; Schappe, FN, November 6). I believed that effective participant-responsive design relied upon the flow of our research relationship as a continually constructed place for Tasha view herself as a knowing, valued contributor to teach me and to express her thoughts, understandings, reactions, and life stories. I learned to note not only her smiles and nods as signposts to vary my approach, but also signal phrases, such as "and stuff like that" that appeared in nearly all of our meetings. Although linguistic analysis is beyond the scope of this dissertation, Tasha's

frequent use of "and stuff like that" appeared in conjunction with the end of her stories, allusions to "dark things" in her life, or attempts to describe events, people, or experiences that she may not have fully processed. As I reflect on our research relationship and Tasha's engagement with the various methods, I realize that the early stages of our relationship involved my actions to elicit her talk to a greater extent than Tasha's later work with the camera during her Walking Tour and Video/Photo Mapping that she pursued on her own. Beginning with the recruitment and then consent meetings, I attempted to discuss the roadmap for our research and described each data collection method, including the mapping, interview, and observation methods. Then, at the beginning of each subsequent meeting, I reviewed some possible activities and incrementally worked to encourage Tasha to take over the decision-making as our relationship developed.

**Literacies and Engaging with Making Meaning**

Tasha's beliefs about what literacy should be emerged through her oral storytelling practices, imagery, and talk about social relationships in different places and her multisensory interactions with materials. Unlike Colin and Simone, Tasha's life journey encompassed living in two countries, Haiti and the United States. Her physical journey not only changed her living places, but also her access to forms of language and social relationships. Tasha's life journey was significantly different from my own. Although my journey encompassed living in various cities, my life did not include unexpected removal from my home, family, language or culture. The Literacy Life Story Interviews helped us find ways to situate our talk in Haiti and in the U. S. to construct the

scaffolds that we found necessary to form common understandings about her ideological beliefs and social practices that drew her to particular places, people, and literacies.

In her first Literacy Life Story Interview, Tasha used my questions about her early life and language that we had in common—words like stories and myths—to help me understand how her early literacy experiences remained with her. Tasha used her journey as an epistemology, a means of helping me come to know how she found meaning.

Tasha: I don't remember them [her mother and father] reading stories.

Julie: What about telling stories? You know, in some families, maybe they tell stories…

Tasha: Oh! Yeah! Like when they tell you what they did when they were kids. (Smiles) Yeah, um, hum, they did that. A lot of time they did that. Yeah, they told me a lot of stories about how when they were young how they didn't have like the (pauses to struggle with word choice)—in their time, they could go out whenever they want to. They wouldn't worry who would come in and rob the place and everything. Then they tell me like myth. If you see that saying, that one thing, whoa, it means war, that one! Yeah, that's what they tell me… If you see a black cat, I don't know (laughing) that means don't do that! Go the other way!

(Tasha, LLSI, September 26)

Tasha's early journey was filled with cautionary oral stories that emerged from her parents' journeys and oral myths that transmitted cultural teachings about interactions with her physical and spiritual journey. Tasha used terms like "stories" and "myth" that were also used in her English classes. I have been in her classroom observing when these

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terms were used. Tasha nodded as she used this language knowing that we have a shared understanding. She also referred to a cultural superstition about black cats that she knew was common to U.S. and Haitian cultures. I built upon Tasha's efforts to begin to construct a place of shared meaning to encourage her to teach me something new about her early experiences that might help me better understand her.

Julie:   We have the black cat here, right?

Tasha:  Yeah! (Smiles)

Julie:   That is like a story. What kind of things like that might you remember from home?

Tasha:  Like myth! Yeah, I remember. Like when you're at night, and you don't have lights, when you see something, don't, don't tell what you see (quiet voice). Because one time I saw a like a rat on the—like a big rat, and I saw the eyes. It was like going to the line cord (gestures with her hands to indicate the travel along the line) to the other pole, and I saw it. And my mom said, "Don't say anything! You didn't see it! Don't say you saw it!" (Eyes wide shaking her head)

Julie:   Why can't you say you saw it?

Tasha:  I don't know. You just don't say it at night. You don't say anything that you saw. I was like, oh (worried grimace).

Julie:   Was it like a sense of—maybe that bad thing?

Tasha:  Yeah, yeah (nodding). I think so probably. (pause) Because it was bad. The rat was huge. It was so creepy.

Julie:    Yeah, that would be creepy. Is it like sometimes at night there are dark

spirits? (I used this phrase, 'dark spirits,' because we has used in when

talking about Greek mythology readings from her English class as we

walked to this meeting place.)

Tasha:   (Eyes wide and nodding) Yeah! Yeah! Don't say anything you saw at

night—just be quiet. Don't speak about the dark things.

Julie:    When you came here (referring to the U. S.) was it different?

Tasha:   No, no (shakes head).

Julie:    Your aunt?

Tasha:   (Nods her head) She did the same thing.

Julie:    She did the same thing?

Tasha:   Yeah, she do the same thing, but it was like a different environment that's

it. But it was the same thing. (Tasha, LLSI, September 26)

"Don't speak about the dark things." Her mother transmitted this cultural belief to

her just prior to her sudden removal from her home in Haiti at age 10, and her aunt, also

Haitian, reinforced this teaching in the U.S. (Tasha, LLSI, September 26).  As a young

child, Tasha deferred to her mother's guidance. In spite of the physical distance and her

seven years of immersion in new social practices and sociocultural beliefs, ideologically,

Tasha retained and integrated her mother's teaching into her personal beliefs about social

relationships and engagement with literacies (Tasha, LLSI, September 26; Tasha, WT,

October; Tasha, HTMSS, November 5).  Tasha's images, displayed later in this chapter,

show how she identified and valued places and literacies that supported her affective

goals for positive literacy associations. Further, her stories and related imagery will also

underscore her reliance upon adults as mentors to learn appropriate ways to make meaning and engage with literacies.

Literacy research has emphasized the value of community literacies (Heath, 1983; Street, 1984) and associations between stories and senses of place (Basso, 1996; Bartlett, 2006; Feld & Basso, 1996). However, as Heath and Street (2008) and NCTE (2009) observed, little is known about how community literacies and practices are a part of adolescent socialization and adolescent literacy practices in schools. Learning about Tasha's ways through her journey among Haitian and U. S. homes, relationships, and communities, helps to not only articulate Tasha's story, but also to show how her internalized lessons from her early childhood became a part of her affective goals and the ways she continued to be socialized through social relationships at home and in school as an adolescent.

For the past seven years, Tasha's U.S. journey limited her access to social relationships in places other than school to support and develop her access to and practices with preferred literacies.  Consequently, since the fifth grade, her literate life encompassed changes in language (French-Creole to English), materials, and entirely new value systems for literacies. Rather than oral storytelling, reading and writing word-based English language texts became the exclusive literacies valued in school and established as her central purpose at her aunt's U. S. house, her new home (Tasha, LLSI, September 26; Tasha, HTMSS, November 5; Tasha VPM, November 6). During our collaboration to help me understand her perspective, Tasha used multimodal literacies including oral storytelling, music, imagery, and talk about films, food, and material

artifacts.  For example, she used oral storytelling to offer an example of the difficulties she faced when transitioning to U.S. school culture.

> One time in fifth grade, I had just came here, and I forgot it was gym day, and I didn't wear my uniform. So I went to the class, and I was crying, and Miss A. said, 'It's okay. Don't cry. It doesn't matter if you have your uniform or not'… It was different. It was really different. Different people—like when I came, I didn't know [what] they were saying. I just heard gibberish. (Tasha, LLSI, September 26)

Tasha's story emphasized that understanding and performing social expectations in school was associated with written language through weekly updates the teachers sent home. However, she relied upon oral language and supportive adult mentorship during the learning process as a new student transitioning into a new sociocultural place and community. To participate in the Discourse of school (referring to Gee, 1989/2001) meant that she needed to acquire and understand oral and written word-based language as well as social expectations related to place-oriented, school activities. Her Haitian childhood journey that guided her developing practices in her home country's culturally valued literacies and language were no longer a part of accepted social practice in her new sociocultural surroundings.  Expectations in her U.S. school were communicated through word-based written communication through notations on classroom boards, letters sent home, and the school's website. These literacies and modes of distributing meaning were not a part of her Haitian journey. Her new school place and the social relationships she encountered at school and at her U. S. home marginalized the value of oral storytelling and multimodal meaning making through music, food, images, and

interactions with people and places. Those practices that had been central to her Haitian experiences remained in her life but were retained for her personal use when she returned to Haiti once every few years or in a limited manner at her aunt's home (Tasha, HTMSS, November 5).

Speaking about writing in her home languages (French and Creole), Tasha commented, "I did that when I first came here but not anymore. I'll do it with my cousins. I'll write in Creole and French to them—my family—but not like in school. I don't adapt" (Tasha, LLSI, September 26). Tasha's disrupted journey oriented her meaning making practices almost exclusively to school-valued literacies and literacy purposes. Her displacement, from Haiti to the U.S., represented a pivotal point in her literate life. The two places represented stark differences in valued literacy practices and also in who acted as knowing authority, mentor, or collaborator. Her efforts to seek affirmation and to build positive social relationships contributed to her actions to marginalize her own history, literacies, and familiar materials. Tasha worked to master a new language and used school as the place that would help her define literacies and literacy practices through place-oriented sociocultural expectations and opportunities. As I considered Tasha's talk and artifacts related to her physical and literate journey, I realized that she viewed her life in terms of two place-oriented journeys, Haiti and U.S. Through that lens, I understand why Tasha valued school-based definitions for literacies as parts of U.S. social practices she hoped to acquire (RQ1); she marginalized practices that might disrupt her efforts to seek acceptance and affirmation through school-based social relationships (RQ3). I intentionally note that she marginalized home (primarily Haitian) practices; she did not eliminate them.

**Social Encounters with Literacies in Places**

Throughout her life, Tasha's encounters with literacies were predominantly adult mediated, sociocultural practices[5]. As a child in Haiti, music lessons in the community (not at school), her grandfather's and her mother's storytelling, and her mother's cooking as a community resource modeled definitions, materials, and practices for valued meaning making. The adults in her early childhood also provided access to social relationships that constructed literacies and opportunities for literacy practices for sociocultural transmission purposes. In Haiti, Tasha complied and participated in these meaning making practices.

When she was displaced, consistent with her reliance on adult-mentor social relationships in Haiti, she looked to the adults in her U.S. life to continue to direct her practices. Her aunt, her U.S. guardian and also originally from Haiti, deferred to Tasha's elementary teachers to define all English language-based literacies, materials, and social practices. Although some artifacts (occasional meals and stories) persisted, the physical, community-based places and social relationships that provided definitions, purposes and beliefs for practices were gone.

Seven years later, as a senior in a U.S. high school, she continued to position adults as all-knowing guides. Although other adolescent participants quickly assigned affective labels to literacies in places, Tasha tended to defer to adult authority figures in all places except internal places where she held memories and periodically retreated to think about her own beliefs and to define herself through decisions about how to engage in her current life. Although rarely evident in this research and unknown to her teachers,

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[5] LLSI, September 26 & October 19; Audition observation, October 22; HTMSS, November 5; WT artifact collection and interview, November 5; VPM collection and interview, November 6; Classroom observation, September 7 & 12, October 2 & 23, November 5 & 28.

her guarded, internal places surfaced through talk, imagery, walking, and sketching during her independently conducted school Walking Tour (multiple events in October), her independently constructed Video/Photo Mapping of Literacies in Life (multiple events in October and November), and through our collaborative work with the Hand-Tracing to Map Sensory Self (November 5 with follow-up on November 19 & 28 and in December).

Tasha's literacies among places and social relationships are depicted in Table 4.1. When selecting literacies or engaging in literacy practices socially across places, Tasha adopted place-oriented social practices (RQ1) and desired to meet adult's expectations (RQ3). School places, literacies, and social relationships dominate her literacies, literacy practices, and purposes (C – denotes class-related purposes). When she was in a place, she consistently used school-place guides to help her make decisions related to material and social affordances that would help her accomplish literacy-based purposes. Tasha's literacies and literacy practice purposes frequently crossed physical and social boundaries. For example, Tasha used reading printed, word-based language (grey shaded) with teachers. If she did not complete the literacy practice's purpose in school, then she determined if her teacher as the authority expected continuation of purpose with modified practice or a pause in meaning making. Literacy practices that were initiated in school places consistently required the participating adolescents to make decisions that would bring the literacy practice's purpose along with the student or pause the practice until the social relationships among students and the teacher resumed their bounded classroom experiences.

Table 4.1

*Tasha's Literacies Among Places and Social Relationships*

| Tasha | Literacy Practices & Associated Social Relationships Indicators: Shading-repeated practice & Letter-purpose | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Places** | **Individual** | **Peers** | **Teachers** | **Mother & Grandfather** | **Cousin** |
| **School** | A (gray), A (blue) | L/S/C (red), S (green), L (gray), L (yellow), L/S (blue) | C (red), C (gray), C (yellow), C (blue) | | |
| **Art Studio (school)** | | S/C (red), S (green), C (blue) | C (red), C (green), C (blue) | | |
| **Choir (school)** | A (blue) | S/S/C (red), S/S/C (green), C/C/A (blue) | C (red), C/C/A (green), C (blue) | | |
| **Home-Local (aunt's)** | A/E/F (green), A/E (blue) | | C (gray), C (yellow) | | C (red), C (gray), C (yellow) |
| **Social Gathering** | | | | | S (blue) |
| **Florida (brother's residence)** | | | | | |
| **Haiti** | A (red), A/S (blue) | | C (green) | A/S (red), C (green) | A/S (blue) |
| **Virtual** | A/F/E (green), E (blue) | T (gray), T (yellow) | C (gray), C (yellow) | | |

| KEY - Literacy Agentive or Assigned | Verbal Oral Storytelling | Music Listening & Performance | Reading Printed Word-Based language | Writing Word-Based Language | Multimodal Literacies & Artifacts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Literacy Practice Purpose** | A-Personal affective C-Class related S-Social L-Peer Mentor | A-Personal affective goals C-Class related S-Social E-Entertainment F-Faith | A- Personal affective C-Class related L-Peer Mentor T-Texting & Facebook | C-Class related L-Peer Mentor T- Texting & Facebook | A-Personal affective goals C-Class related S-Social E-Entertainment L-Peer Mentor |

As will be discussed further in Chapter VII, Tasha's literacy purposes were multisituated, physically, socially, and culturally. Consistent with Brandt (2009), she was

aware of her teachers' and the school's expectations as literacy sponsors, for particular literacy purposes; however, her social relationships and access to materials varied as she journeyed among the places in her life. Consequently, Tasha's ways with literacies contribute to redefine notions related to situated practice offered through Cope and Kalantzis (2000) as adolescents increasingly find themselves using literacies across physical, social, and cultural contexts for varied purposes. Thinking about Tasha's literacies as multisituated also helps to consider how place contributes to the flow of material resources (questioned in Leander & Sheehy, 2011) and social resources, essential components of meaning making for Tasha.

Recognizing the role of adult teacher-mentors, Tasha relied upon her understanding of her teachers' expectations to decide whether to pause or continue class-related practices. For Tasha, continuing class-related literacy purposes meant that she would modify her literacy practices to involve her cousin as mentor at her aunt's house (Tasha, HDMI, September 25; Tasha, LLSI, September 26 & October 19). Her materials for these modified practices enacted at home included paper and writing tools. A computer with web access was also available for her if the teacher required a typed document or online submission. However, unless the teacher required students to continue the practice's purpose, Tasha stopped all class-related literacy practices when the bell signaled the end of class. Her decisions to cease practices were repeated in English, social studies, science, and math classes. Music was the sole literacy that, regardless of teacher-stated expectations, traveled with Tasha beyond the bell (Tasha, HDMI, September 26; Tasha, LLSI, September 26 & October 19; Tasha, Auditorium

Observation, October 22; Tasha, HTMSS, November 5; Tasha, WT, October &

November 5).

In her first interview, Tasha's talk about reading and writing centered on word-based language experiences that involved both place-oriented sensory qualities and positive social relationships. As I seek to answer the three research questions, this early talk indicated the integrated nature of her definitions for literacies, beliefs about places and materials, and the role of social relationships involved with literacy practices. Tasha articulated how places needed to be constructed for her to read versus for her to write, "I think about a book and having a quiet place where you can go and just read with it. With, writing, I think you need to do it with someone, someone who can help you think about what to say and which words to use" (Tasha, HDMI, September 25). Attempts to read words were consequently intertwined with a physical location's particular characteristics, "quiet," and a place that was away from her current location (RQ1), implying the need for access (RQ3) to move or "go" to the appropriate place to focus, "and just read with it."

Tasha defined writing not in terms of tools (like the book in her definition of reading), but in terms of a social association with a knowing partner who could act as collaborator or mentor, "who can help you think about what to say and which words to use." Her interest in collaborators and mentorship was present across all data collection events and through my analysis of artifacts.

The next two sections explore Tasha's perceptions and understandings of literacies in school places and then through her life journey that encompasses U.S. and Haiti. In Tasha's talk and imagery about school and the progression of her life, places

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figure prominently as signposts to indicate differences in social expectations, cultural beliefs, and access to understanding place-oriented cultural beliefs about how to engage in social practices and who to seek as collaborator or mentor. Although she completed the Hand-Drawn Mapping of Literacies in School according to my prompt, I learned more about what was meaningful for Tasha when she made decisions about what to show me and how to story her experiences through her Video/Photo Mapping and Walking Tours.

**Literacies in school.** As previously noted, Tasha's class-related purposes dominated her engagement with literacies. Her understandings of these purposes will be explored in this segment. However, it is important to note her underlying internal beliefs that mediated how she identified people, activities, and places within the school. Relying upon her cultural belief, transmitted through her mother, Tasha's agentive, individual purposes for literacies in school were to seek positive affirmation in all literacies whenever possible. Tasha's school schedule required her to travel among places in the larger place of school that did not consistently offer affirmation.

Throughout the month of October, Tasha chose to conduct her own Walking Tour of the school. She used the camera I gave her and chose to document places and people that offered her social and literacy-based affirmation. Tasha included images of peers from choir and images of materials in places that signified positive associations. Tasha's talk and artifacts showed how she defined people, places, and materials as texts that she read and interpreted. Her Walking Tour documented places with supportive adult mentor relationships (see Figure 4.1 for her material artifact that embodied her physics teacher's social practices and relationships with students), collaborative peer classrooms (choir and art), and word-based visual displays that offered affirming dispositions for social

practices (posters in physics and English classrooms; see Figure 4.2 for Tasha's English classroom poster).



*Figure 4.1* Material artifact embodying a teacher's personality and social relationships with students.

The three-dimensional smiley-face flower (Figure 4.1) was wrapped around the power post near Tasha's physics teacher's computer. "She's like that. She smiles all the time. She's smiling and nice and everything" (Tasha, WT, October; Tasha, HTMSS, November 5). For Tasha, material objects, like the smiley-face flower functioned as signposts, similar to her mother's caution, "Don't speak about the dark things," that Tasha internalized and used to guide her preferred routes through school. Tasha used the physical object, the material, in multisensory and metaphorical manners—sight, texture, and affective association with the smiling teacher—to mark a positive place for meaning

making in her daily journey.  For similar purposes, Tasha also shared an image of a poster from the same physics teacher's classroom that used visual imagery and word-based language to construct affective goals. "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars!" The word-based language was positioned to flow among astronomical imagery constructed with photography of the moon, Earth, and stars against the black background of planetary space.  Although Tasha's mother's directive was a part of what Bartlett and Holland (2002) would label her figured world, Tasha's Walking Tour reflects her efforts to agentively and selectively use literacies to construct her preferred social relationships and practices. Her pursuit of selective ideas and associations marks the individual as co-constructor of her figured world rather than a participant-observer alone.  Tasha's use of school-oriented physical materials and ideas as artifacts also extends Pahl and Rowsell's (2010) discussion of students' own material artifacts for use with literacy practices to show how place-oriented materials are agentively acquired and socioculturally integrated into adolescent literacy socialization.

Tasha used her teachers' classroom materials to identify preferred places and relationships (as noted with Figure 4.1). However, she also used classroom word-based literacies to affirm her preferred way of being among others and to affirm how she wished to engage in her life's journey. Tasha offered the image in Figure 4.2 to illustrate her affective use of classroom literacies.

*Figure 4.2.* Word-based language display embodying Tasha's affective purposes for engagement with literacies and social relationships.

Speaking of the poster in Figure 4.2, Tasha noted, "This is from my first period class [Rachael Stemple's basic English classroom], and I always see this… I like that [the message]. I saw that and I thought, oh, that's a good thing" (Tasha, WT, October; Tasha, HTMSS, November 5).  Rather than embodying the teacher's personality as in Figure 4.1, Tasha identified this sign as an example of how she viewed life, her hopes for relationships, herself, why she engaged in activities, and how literacies can be used for self-affirmation.

When she completed her mapping of literacy in school (Figure 4.3), she did not

depict any of the required core classes (English, science, social studies, or math).
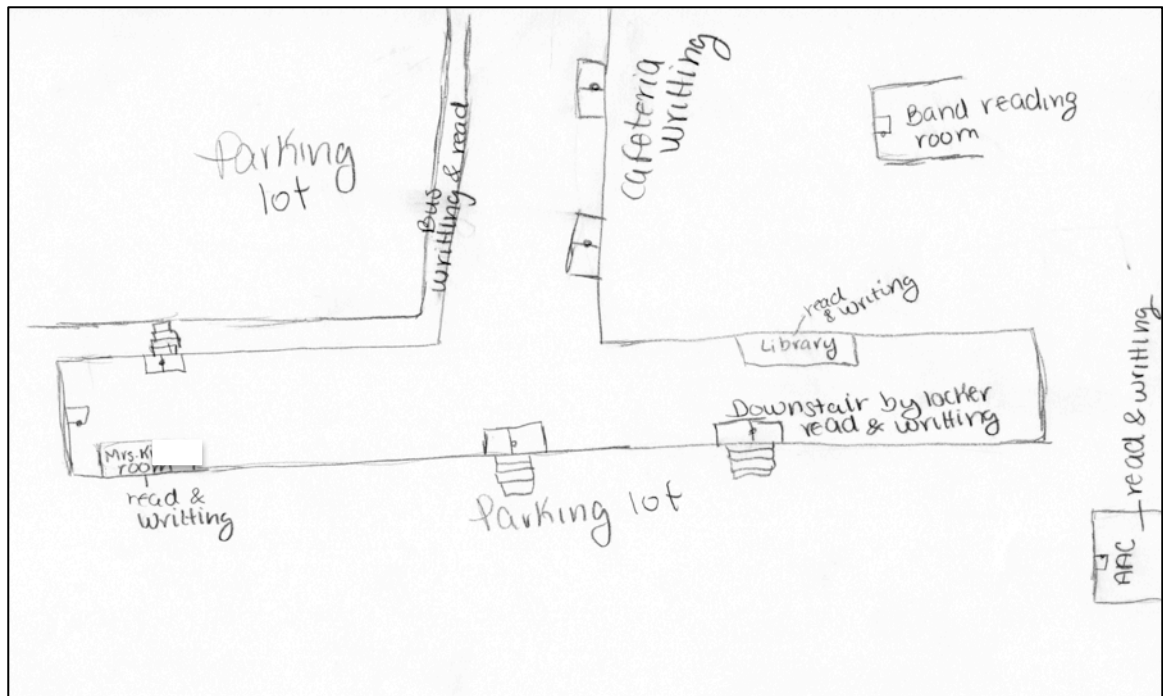


*Figure 4.3* Tasha's Hand-Drawn Mapping (Tasha, HDMI, September 25)

Instead Tasha used her map to indicate places where students encountered supportive

peer of adult relationships and described them with relationship language. For example,

she did include the library and noted, "Mrs. Wright [the main librarian], she's helpful…

you ask questions and everything" (Tasha, HDMI, September 25). She also noted

student-centered school places for homework such as the floor near lockers, the bus

loading zone, the band room, the choir room, and the cafeteria. The only classroom in the

main learning wing (where required classes met) was identified with a teacher's name,

Ms. Kay. "Ms. Kay's room. A lot of people go there to do their homework and to type

and stuff. And they do their reading and stuff with Ms. Kay… She's usually there really

late, and she stays in there… and it's really quiet" (Tasha, HDMI, September 25).

Tasha's descriptive language about places and people supports her definition of contexts for reading and writing. Earlier, Tasha noted that to read and write, she might have to pursue a location (she preferred quiet places to read) or people (she preferred collaboration to write and find the 'right' language). These place-oriented qualities were present in her description of Ms. Kay and the place she constructed for students.

Tasha was one of two students (of the six total participating in the ethnography) who identified the band and choir rooms as places for literacies. She depicted them as physically situated away from the traditional classroom area, an accurate depiction (see AAC in Figure 4.3; the choir room is in the AAC building). When I asked her how she felt about traveling a bit of a distance to get to the choir room, she implicated physical distance, traveling, and characteristics of place-oriented social relationships that were important to her.

Tasha: Yes, it separates you from this whole building (looks around). I like that. I like it there. It's nice.

Julie: Does it feel different being separate?

Tasha: Yeah, yeah, it feels like you're in a new place, and you're doing new things… you see people you know that sing choir and know the same language as you. Yeah, it's just away—to stay away from this whole building (nodding her head). (Tasha, HDMI, September 25)

Persisting among the places, expectations, and materials within the high school was emotionally, physically, and cognitively difficult work for Tasha (FN, November 19). Tasha retreated to the choir room and to her social relationships accessed through music

to recharge and focus on expression in ways that fulfilled her affective goals (Tasha, HDMI, September 25; Tasha, LLSI, September 26 & October 19; FN, October 22 & November 19).

Traveling to places for varied purposes became a part of Tasha's way of being in the world, whether locally within the school places or globally to access Haiti. In school, although she values choir above all other school places, her new exposure to art classes as a senior afforded her another place.

Tasha: I think art is different too from other classes because you have music, you relax, and you do what you like, what picture you like—it's approved.

Julie: So you have some choice?

Tasha: Yeah, you have some choice, not all the choice.

Julie: Can you move around?

Tasha: Yeah! You can move around (smiles).

Julie: But in other classes?

Tasha: NO! (laughs) You have to stay in the same seat. Sit in the same seat (quiet voice). (Tasha, LLSI, September 26)

Tasha notes the physical constraints and sensory opportunities in different places in the school. Note that in Tasha's talk music denoted a relaxed place.

Literacies in her traditional classrooms did incorporate multimodal literacies for teacher presentations (films, PowerPoint delivered media, audio recordings, and imagery) and student products (posters, mixed genre products, and options to create videos). However, Tasha's sociocultural foundation and reading and comprehension skills did not provide the adequate personal resources to engage with understanding. Rather than

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efforts to come to know students' practices, purposes, and meanings associated with various literacies and the sociocultural devices that are a part of literacy practices, her teachers relied upon the school's pedagogical recommendations and in-service training that encouraged adoption of multimodal literacies (Schappe, FN, August 22; Kent, LLSI, November 5 & 19; Novak, LLSI, August 8; Stemple, LLSI, August 9; Stemple, FN, November 5 & 19; additional collection points including multiple classroom observations and teacher incidental interviews on this topic are available).

Tasha illustrated her difficulties with teachers' efforts to communicate meaning through an encounter in her English class with the film *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief.* Tasha talked with me in the hall after English, "I don't get the part how they're like [long pause] how he stole the lightning bolt because he never did. So that's confusing. I was like, why are they accusing him of stealing a lightning bolt?" (Tasha, FN, November 6). The movie's storyline was constructed around Western sociocultural trends that label students in schools, in communities, and within families (Stemple, FN, November 5). Individuals in these groups then make assumptions based on those sociocultural labels. However, the schema that supports this meaning was not explicitly defined in the film or in class before viewing. Tasha's journey did not provide her with the sociocultural experience to acquire these label associations. Consequently, the connotative meaning behind the plot events was never communicated. She noted similar difficulties with film viewing in social studies class and with a film screening for the musical (Tasha, LLSI, September 26 & October 19; Tasha, FN, November 6)

**Literacies along life's journey.** Unlike other adolescents observed in the common areas, Tasha rarely discussed interactions with film or television media, perhaps

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due in part to the noted sociocultural challenges. Maintaining her philosophy that literacies should help her pursue positive affective associations, Tasha's talk about media use at her aunt's U.S. home was focused on uplifting programming on the web and the Disney channel that included *Glee, The Nanny, Fresh Prince of Bel Air,* and the early episodes of *The Voice.* She sought positive experiences and sometimes used memories about these shows to illustrate dynamics in school. Of *The Voice,* a performance-based show wherein the judges cannot see the singers initially, Tasha noted, "I think it's a good idea because you get to know the person before you see them, so that's a good thing… They should do this in school, yeah… [in school, people] They don't know what's inside of them. They just judge" (Tasha, LLSI, October 19). Metacognitively, Tasha used her journey epistemologically to use multimodal literacies in a multisituated manner as she evaluated social relationships and literacy purposes across situated contexts.

As our collaboration focused on Tasha's travels to places other than school, it was frequently difficult for her to articulate her activities and her interests.

> I don't think I do anything for fun (laughing). I don't think so. I don't know. I
> don't go to movies. I don't hang out with my friends that much. Sometimes I go
> to a football game, but I think one time [in her high school years], and that's it… I
> just do my homework, watch TV (those noted above). That's it. (Tasha, LLSI,
> October 19)

Her aunt's house provided limited places, materials, and social support for her practicing her preferred verbal, musical, and multimodal literacies in a social manner. As Table 4.1 indicates, school places and social relationships dominated her U.S. based literacies and purposes for literacy practices. Unlike the other student participants in this study, Tasha

did not seek out virtual practice. Although her aunt provided her access through materials

at home that included a cell phone, laptop, and web service, she typically only used those

material resources to complete teacher-required virtual postings or to submit school

assignments. Regarding personal use, she noted that she had texted and used Facebook,

but when I asked her about her social networking frequency, she responded laughing, "I

have no idea! I don't know. Sometimes I forget about it" (Tasha, LLSI, September 26).

Engaging Tasha in discussion about her life away from school places proved to be more

challenging than with other participating adolescents. Tasha did not express ownership

over objects or preferences for entertainment activities other than the television shows

she identified. As discussed in Chapter III, I chose to try the hand-tracing elicitation to

attempt to guide her to think about her multisensory persistence among materials in her

life. Figure 4.4 depicts her hand tracing (Tasha, HTMSS, November 5). As an

independent artifact, the hand tracing did not carry significant meaning. However, as an

elicitation technique, the hand-tracing method provoked stories linked to her experiences

in Haiti with music and provided an entry point for her use of intertextual literacies and

food as a multimodal literacy that she would ultimately document through her

Video/Photo Mapping of Literacies in her life and that follow in the balance of this

chapter.
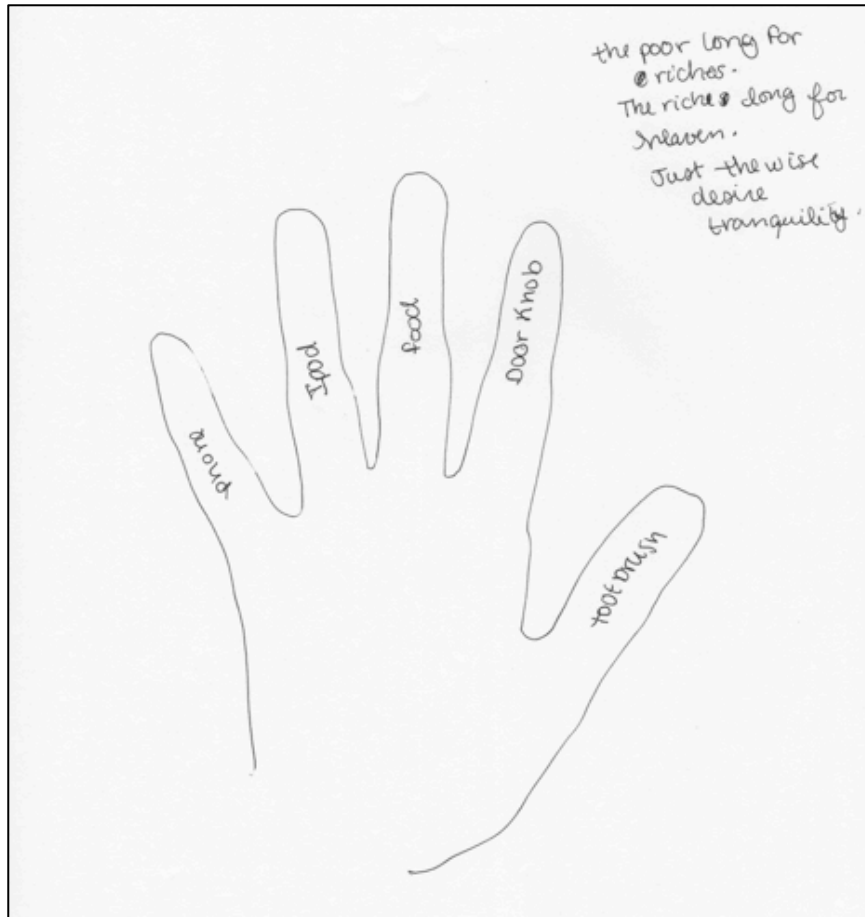
Figure 4.4. Tasha's Hand-Tracing Mapping Sensory Self Among Materials (Tasha, HTMSS, November 5)

***Representing place and meaning in life's journey.*** Tasha used a one-month period (October) to think about and document her literate life among places and people. Her resulting video/photo mapping was a collection of photo imagery that she used in conjunction with oral storytelling to narrate her reasons for documenting artifacts. Her artifacts documented social relationships with peers in school, positive associations with places in her U.S. journey, and multimodal representations that retain her Haitian experiences as a part of how she defined herself and how she identified valued materials and social relationships for meaning making.

Her preferred literacies, rooted in her early childhood experiences, privileged music, community, oral storytelling, and food as community text. Her two favorite images from Video/Photo Mapping are shown in Figures 4.5 and 4.6. These two figures were also referred to on her HTMSS depicted in Figure 4.3 (Tasha, HTMSS & VPM, November 5).
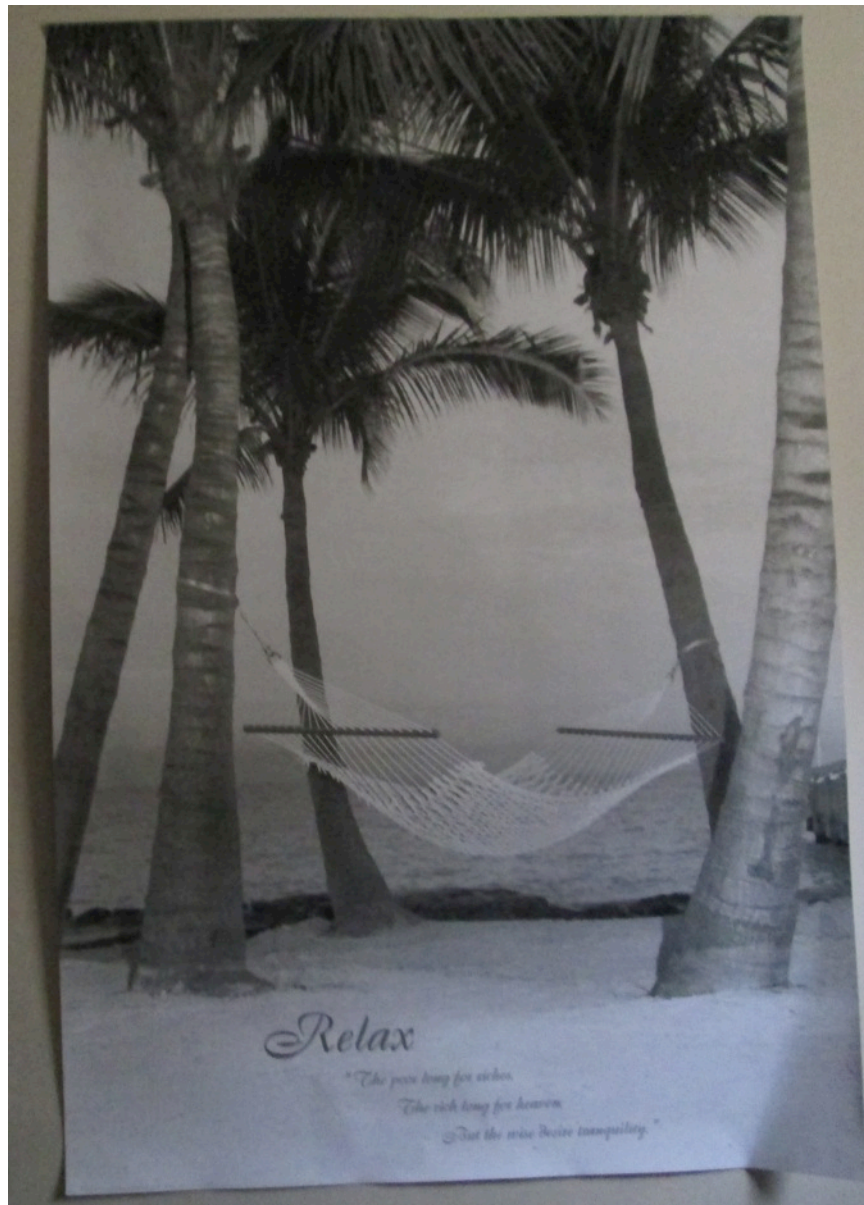


*Figure 4.5.* Imagery and word-based language as Tasha's portal to place, preferred literacies, and sociocultural meaning.

Tasha used the VPM and the HTMSS artifacts simultaneously to discuss how these images helped form meaning in her literate life. Referring to Figure 4.5, Tasha commented that she used imagery in her aunt's home as a portal to access familiar sociocultural places.

Tasha: I see it all the time when I wake up, so it's like right there on the wall (used her hand to gesture at an imaginary wall). (Pointing to the words at the bottom of the image) It says, 'The poor long for riches/ The rich long for heaven/ Just the wise desire tranquility.'

Julie: What is it about the poem and that picture that are important to you?

Tasha: When I see that it's like the islands, the things in my home, the beach, the nice beach, the sand. And when I read that, it's kind of true because people who are poor they want stuff, and the rich they like and want more, but they don't think about giving back to go to heaven... (Tasha, VPM & HTMSS, November 5)

Tasha described the significance of this poster according to place-oriented, socioculturally significant, multisensory details. The artifact triggered meaning through sight, touch, and social memory. She read this intertextual piece through her sociocultural journey that ideologically framed her understanding of language and image to represent the social complexities and characteristics of difference she had come to know through her journey in Haiti and the U. S. Multimodally, the literacy design using image, word-based language, and place intermingled with journey memories as Tasha read this text and as it stayed with her offering layers of complex personal and sociocultural meaning.

***Multimodality and the persistence of life's lessons.*** Additionally, food also acted

as a multimodal literacy artifact that Tasha associated with her mother's mastery of oral

storytelling and food preparation as socioculturally valued practices and tools to make

meaning (see Figure 4.6).



*Figure 4.6.* Food as a multimodal literacy activating place memories related
to social relationships, community meaning making, and personal
confidence.

Food as an artifact, signifying multisensory and cultural attributes, and multimodal

literacy, using recognizable design to communicate meaning to a target audience,

persisted with Tasha in U.S. places (her aunt's home) and acted as a reminder of the

values and practices that originated in Haiti.

> It's chicken with rice and beans, and that's a sauce made out of this beans, like
>
> black beans. They like blend it together. It's really good. (She pauses as she looks

at the picture.) The main cooker in my whole entire family is my mom and my grandma. They are like the best cookers! They make like so good stuff! … [My mom] makes a lot of stuff. She makes Taco Bell. Like one time she came here, and she saw the Taco Bell. And she's like, this is a new invention! (Laughs) And I was like, no, it's not! (Making a face and shaking her head). So she decided to make it in Haiti. And she's telling the old people that came to buy it–because we used to have a club and have food for people to come and buy food. And she's like, Oh, this is Taco Bell! And she tell them, you put meat, ground beef, and she's like, put little tomatoes on it. This is my new invention Taco Bell! I would like, oh, okay (Shakes head), but she make it good. She make it healthy and everything. (Tasha, VPM & HTMSS, November 5)

This story about her mother celebrated her mother's confidence to take an American meal, tacos, back to Haiti and to talk with local Haitians as if she invented it. Her mother found something meaningful, the taco, claimed ownership over it and rebranded it as her own. Tasha's talk earlier in that interview referred to her mother's ability to make "like scratch" which signaled that her mother was a knower—a master of how to make meaning with food. Her mother also experienced social acceptance through her designed use of food and language; she was seen as an authority among the adults in her community. Tasha noted that her mother not only transferred the food item, but transformed it to make a better product for her community. Her mother was able to accurately assess her community's needs and interests and the limitations and affordances of the literacy tools—the food and her use of language—to create a valuable artifact for

her community. Culturally valued materials and social relationships were a part of using food to make meaning.

In school, Tasha's teachers may have been pursuing similar goals or ideas through lesson design (Stemple, FN, November 5); however, the tools, practices, and modes differed from Tasha's sociocultural journey in ways that made scaffolding unavailable to her to construct on her own. Adopting broad definitions of texts, reading, and writing helped me to better understand how food is not only a culturally valued material for nourishment, but also a means of using recognizable design in ways that are meaningful for a particular audience to impart socially and culturally relevant meaning. Not only does this understanding inform adolescent literacy socialization, but it also emphasizes the importance of extending the meaning of popular culture (offered in terms of new literacies in Hagood, 2008) to include students' culturally valued, meaning making practices that might differ in form and function from modes common to school modes or Western modes. Food as a multimodal literacy also extends Pahl and Rowsell's (2010, 2006) application of artifactual literacies to show how artifacts might be used to represent meaning themselves rather than to exclusively stimulate stories as scaffolds for expression.

Materials were a part of Tasha's meaning making, the way she marked affirming aspects of her journey. Although she sought to learn new literacies and literacy practices, she has come to live by her mother's belief—Don't speak of the dark things—and sought literacies, materials, and social relationships that support her affective goals involving positive, affirming experiences. The ideas she highlighted signify hope, kindness toward others, support, and inner peace: the message on the bedroom poster, the sign in the

English classroom, the poster along the wall in physics, and her talk about singing and listening to music that "feeds my soul." Tasha's agentive literacy practices communicated a preferred way of being through representational qualities (in her objects and through her choice of language, written and oral). Tasha's compulsory literacy practices (writing, speaking, singing in choral performances, and artifacts in art class) varied in her assessment depending upon her perception of her ability to make meaning in a particular literacy according to the target community's rules for use of language and materials to create a recognizable pattern for interpretation.

Tasha's perception of her effective use of the literacies she encountered (RQ1, 2) and the affirming social support within each literacy community (RQ3) influenced her engagement with the literacy itself, the people in that literacy community, and social practices associated with that community and the communities that she believed were connected to that literacy. Consequently, Tasha's literacies and literacy purposes varied in their practices based on her perceptions of their multisituated nature and the social support available across the places in her life to enact those literacies. When social support persisted, Tasha engaged with the literacy. For example, Tasha embraced music as a vehicle to speak for her soul throughout her journey among places. In school, she embraced this literacy as a social practice with students and her teacher because she perceived choir as a supportive environment where risks were not taken alone and where they "spoke the same language." She learned new content as a part of a group that decided together that they would succeed. When one person struggled, the group responded to support that individual's efforts. Each individual needed to do well for the group as a whole to do well (Tasha, LLSI, October 19).

"I ask for help because I want to get it right… Sometimes I'll try to do it by myself and it looks wrong…  [but] music soothes my soul. It goes with me" (Tasha, HTMSS, November 5). Tasha used music at home to pray, in school to communicate meaning through song in musicals, and in student assemblies to teach new students what high school was like.  Similar to her use of Haitian food as a multimodal literacy holding community meaning, Tasha viewed music as a literacy that she could use to make meaning for herself and others in ways not available to her through word-based language. Like her mother with food in Haiti, Tasha enacted music to communicate meaning to a target audience, peers and teachers, in school, and working with others showed her competent use of this literacy to make meaning. However, Tasha continued to negotiate how to approach and integrate other literacies in her life with school places. In spite of her pursuit of word-based language for her own purposes, she continued to struggle with divergent literacy practices using those literacies. She was aware of the literacies' multisituated nature but struggled with ways to enact literacy practices using those literacies that would fulfill the varied literacy purposes she faced among the places and relationships along her journey. Additional implications for research and pedagogy are discussed in Chapter VII.

**Chapter V**

**FINDINGS: COLIN**

**"You'd have to listen to know what I'm talking about –**

**It's a very unorthodox approach…"**

(Colin, HTMSS, November 6)

Collaborating with Colin proved to be a different experience than working with the other students. Although I could only truly classify one of the students (Tasha, see Chapter IV) as a consistently active class participant, Colin appeared to set himself apart a bit more than the other students I observed. An Advanced Placement English student in Ed Kent's classroom, Colin self-selected a seat in the rear corner of the room near the door, the last seat in the row closest to the door. He usually had one person sitting in front of him (usually the same male student) and sometimes had one person to his left (sometimes a male, sometimes a female). When I observed, I never witnessed him engaging in any side conversations during class. He frequently had his eyes cast down toward whatever material was on his desk, usually a notebook. During the course of my classroom observations and incidental visits, I never heard Colin speak more than a brief phrase response in class.

Through his seat selection and social actions, Colin constructed an English classroom experience that favored social distance and disengagement. His demeanor should not be misconstrued as defiant, for it was not. When asked to do so, Ed indicated that Colin would share his ideas in small group. If called upon during large group discussion, sometimes Colin declined to answer, deferred to a peer, or provided a simple

answer and then resumed his position of relative silence. Colin's disposition was compliant, albeit perhaps too quiet for the discussion-based format of Ed's classes.

Initially, Ed shared some reservations regarding Colin's participation in the ethnography. Ed thought that it was great that he volunteered and hoped that his initiative to do so would mean that he was open to talking and thinking with me in new ways. Ed noted that he was aware of some social and academic inconsistencies with Colin across his classes, but he hesitated to conclude whether those inconsistencies were due to a mismatch between student and teacher, disinterest in the content, or a mix of both. Ed shared that he thought Colin was a nontraditional thinker. Ed was hopeful that Colin's thinking tendencies and interest as a volunteer participant would be good for Colin (Kent, FN, September 12). Ed's uncertainty regarding Colin piqued my interest in him as a participant. Ed's comments indicated to me that even those students who researchers and educators may not consider in need due their passing academic grades may still be in need as individuals seeking ways to find voice in the classroom.

As I reflect on my own journey as a teacher and researcher, I recall students who isolated themselves in various ways. Whether the students ultimately showed signs of academic failure according to school criteria or social failure according to peer criteria, the end result for the student was the same. She or he did not gain acceptance or membership in a particular community of practice. Collaborating with Colin offered an opportunity to engage with a student who found success in some areas but who perhaps was interested in something more.

**Social Encounters with Literacies in Places**

My process of coming to know and understand Colin through our collaboration necessitated concrete, material associations to construct scaffolding between his physical and social persistence among places and his desired affective goals. Colin's talk about his literacy engagement and goals was facilitated through his mapping literacies in school and hand-tracing to map his multisensory persistence among materials in his life places. These two data collection events and associated member-checks helped me to ask descriptive questions during his Literacy Life Story that inspired Colin to select an unorthodox novel as the symbol for his literacy goals (Colin, VPM, October 19)[6].

**Literacies in school.** Unlike other student participants, Colin used a legend to clarify his map of literacies in school places (see Figure 5.1). As he talked about his map, I sensed that he was completing a checklist—an inventory of places within the school place that reflected his awareness of school order and activities. His map functions on four levels: First, to depict a structure that hosts varied purposes and social groups; second, to denote reading and writing areas from broader social activities; third, to distinguish between reading and writing for work (his label R) and for fun (F); and fourth, to demark music as a literacy that requires reading and writing in ways that necessitated a distinct symbol, a music note (♪) (Colin, HDMI, September 26).

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[6] Colin's VPM consisted of photographs from a copyright protected novel. Consequently, the novel title is identified in this chapter, but the images were not included.
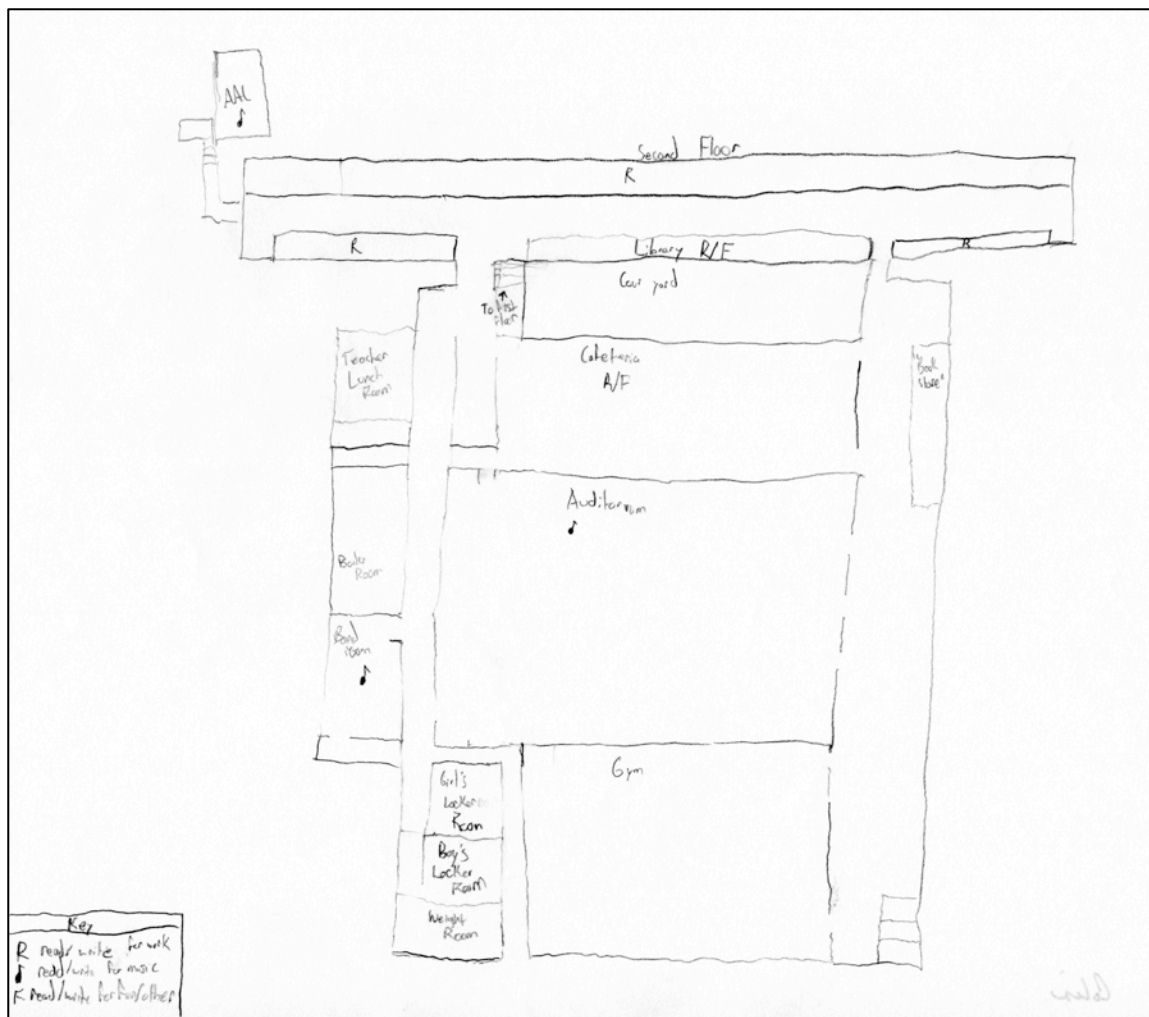
Figure 5.1. Colin's Hand-Drawn Mapping of Literacies in School Places (Colin, HDMI, September 26)

Colin's depiction was destination oriented, meaning bounded rooms to go to. Although he presented school-place details that other participants did not (namely the boiler room, teachers' lunch room, and weight room), he did not depict the first floor classrooms that include science, learning support, art, and two computer labs. Visually, nonacademic places had spatial priority. His narration reflected his awareness of others preferences. He talked at some length about the various areas in the school noting that

participation in band, strings, and concert band each channeled students to different places (RQ1, 3). Although he noted the sociocultural role of the library (RQ3) as a center for reading and writing for work (class related) and for fun (personal interest), he noted, "I rarely go in the library regularly because I don't like working in there… too many people, too many distractions… I just prefer to work at home" (Colin, HDMI, September 26). His library use was generally restricted to printing class-related documents (RQ2) although he listed the materials and human resources that the library offered as artifacts for other students (RQ1, 2, 3). Colin chose not to channel his movements to include the library; however, he noted that when the school's rules (RQ3) dictated that he spend time in a school commons area, like the cafeteria for a study period, he would complete class-related work in that area (RQ1, 2, 3).

Colin also noted student use of cell phones for social purposes (RQ1, 2, 3) and places (areas near lockers) that formed to fit the need to complete work quickly before class (RQ1, 2, 3) or engage in graffiti writing (in bathrooms) as a mode of anonymous peer communication (RQ1, 2, 3) (Colin, HDMI, September 26). Whereas Wilson's (2011) discussed individual pursuit of literacy practices as primarily covert practice to avoid oversight, Colin's awareness of the physical and social affordances of place to practice literacies in school shows how adolescents' literacies are practiced to fit within the social system of schooling and among the social network of peers while simultaneously pursuing individual purposes. This finding extends both Leander and Sheehy's (2011) and Soja's (2011) assertion to examine spatial, cultural, and social processes associated with literacy practices in schools. Colin's findings also contributed to Kress's (2010) observation, "There is a need for careful considerations of designs for

meaning and knowledge-making: the shaping of routes and environments of meaning-making and production of knowledge and, in this, the shaping of 'inner' semiotic resources" (p. 27). Colin shows that he was aware of the social and physical routes he had to take in order to pursue literacies to satisfy his interests in varied literacies and his required course content. This chapter focuses on Colin's skills as an advanced reader of physical and sociocultural texts. Colin read texts along his journey and chose to weave selected experiences into his practices and purposes with varied literacies. Colin's preferences are important because they illustrate his awareness of how he exercised his ability to choose practices and the effect that his childhood practices had on his adolescent reading practices.

Texting in school, last minute reading and writing on the floor beside lockers, and graffiti writing were practices that Colin observed but were practices he chose not to adopt. Colin's desire to control his material and social surroundings (RQ2, 3) channeled his place selection for his class-related practices. Unlike Tasha who preferred social mentorship and peer collaboration across literacies, Colin selectively constructed his practices when possible to engage in independently according to his preferred design for literacy practices and purposes. He had acquired foundational understandings of a variety of literacies and their associated texts to self-assess his proficiency and access to materials, places, and social relationships to fulfill his literacy purposes.

Colin's ability to self-assess his personal resources and those offered through places and social relationships were illustrated through his stories about his freshman year English class and experiences with different teachers. Colin noted that students assigned to particular academic levels and who studied with different teachers

experienced different literacies, materials, and literacy practices (RQ1, 2, 3). Colin assessed his academic level English class experience and decided that he wanted new options. Colin observed that academic level courses relied upon word-based literacies to build foundational skills, "vocab, filling in worksheets, doing grammar – that kind of stuff" (Colin, LLSI, October 16). Alternatively, his pursuit of honors level classes in his sophomore through senior years provided access to verbal literacies that centered on social debate, historical context, and oral storytelling. Referring to his practices in Jack Taggert's and Ed Kent's classrooms, Colin observed, "In honors and AP courses, it's more of actually talking about the material and how it relates to our world and how we deal with it" (Colin, LLSI, October 16). I am not suggesting that Colin's portrayal was an objective report of teachers, materials, or practices, but rather Colin's efforts to read the sociocultural context to seek agentive engagement with literacies and literacy practices among school places as seen as affording varied opportunities. Soja (2011) further explored place and people as shaping lives in "various ways, at times enabling and enhancing, at other times constraining and oppressing" (p. x). Colin's narrative shows how adolescents might be mentored to navigate social and cultural facets of places like schools to fulfill literacy and learning goals.

Colin chose to focus his example on the literacy experiences in his English classes to illustrate his awareness of sociocultural norms and expectations in particular academically leveled classrooms, his response as a learner to those expectations, his awareness of how to work within institutional norms to gain access to modify his journey, and finally, his assessment of the change as it related to his learning preferences.

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***Awareness of teachers as individuals.*** Colin's awareness of place-oriented

definitions for literacies, materials, and literacy practices incorporated his understanding

of social relationships with his teachers as mentors. Colin identified Jack Taggert (junior

English) as his favorite teacher (Colin, LLSI, October 16).  His talk about Jack and his

sophomore English teacher, Mr. N., indicated that he was aware how their life journeys

were implicated in their instructional strategies. Further, Colin shows how teachers'

journey-based identities are implicated in the social relationships they constructed in their

classrooms.

> Mr. N. (sophomore teacher) has much more of the (pause) like flamboyant–in the
>
> sense of the word that he is very energetic, and he was an actor, and now he's a
>
> director. And he's very enthusiastic when he explained things, and he likes to
>
> relate it to how it makes you feel or what was going on in the time that the work
>
> was written. Mr. Taggert (shakes head and laughs) I want to say, almost has the
>
> crotchety old man feel to him. Although he doesn't–at the beginning of the year, I
>
> was almost scared of him! (Colin, LLSI, October 16)

Colin learned to how to identify, read, and eventually participate in the social

relationships and the literacy practices that were common in Jack's classroom but

different from his sophomore experiences with Mr. N.  Colin's awareness of his

sophomore teacher's journey as an actor and director helped him understand that

teacher's interest in his own class performances, his tone of voice, and his approach to

reading and interpreting texts.

However, in junior English, Jack Taggert presented a new challenge for Colin.

Colin's talk about transitioning from one year in school to the next underscores the

sociocultural processes that students encounter. Physical locations tend to change as students are channeled to new places in school. Classrooms as school places become associated with the teachers who occupy them. Colin's talk about these teachers incorporated temporal and academic levels (identifying practice according to sequenced years and school classification as academic or honors) and materials, social ways, and literacy practices common to those teachers and their classrooms. Colin came to realize that in Jack's room, storytelling was the primary literacy practiced to form social relationships and construct relationships with texts, concepts, and sociocultural facets of life for students, Jack, and the authors studied.

> Julie:  He tells stories doesn't he?
>
> Colin:  (smiles) Yeah. He told so many stories. Then sometimes it was so easy to get him off track. One day, I said to my friends, here let me try to just get him to the go off on something. So I asked him, Mr. Taggert, during the time that the railroads were being built in America, why were the Irish discriminated against? And he would talk for the entire class. (Laughs)
>
> Julie:  When he told stories like that–
>
> Colin:  I loved listening to his stories! …They just grabbed me! They sucked you in. …I feel that he is a world-wise person and that he has a lot of experience… he told us a lot of personal stories.  (Colin, LLSI, October 16)

Jack's stories frequently focused on choices, assessing contexts, and anticipating consequences (Colin, HTMSS, November 6; Jack Taggert, LLSI, April & October). Interviews with Colin and Jack showed similar memories of stories that used Jack's

wide-ranging life experiences of travel and military service to underscore parallels among literature texts, the students' lives, and global society. Seemingly unrelated topics were woven into literature study through Jack's oral storytelling. Some topics included: The Taliban and war conflict; Valentine's Day dating stories; peer drug use; parent-teen violence; folk, rap, and classical music to convey senses of place and sociocultural meaning; violence against youth; discrimination practices against teens and adults based on socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious practices; and perceptions of empowerment and powerlessness (Colin, LLSI, October 16; Colin, HTMSS, November 6; Taggert, LLSI, April & October).

In their individual interviews, Colin and Jack noted Jack's need to embrace his military journey as a facet of his life. Jack noted that most of his experiences were not appropriate for the classroom, so he adopted larger lessons from them (Taggert, LLSI, April, May & October). He wanted the kids to know he was just a man, "to dispel the myth" (Taggert, LLSI, April). Colin said he did this with humor to confront rumors.

Julie: You guys all knew about his military background?

Colin: Right! Yeah, he told us, "I still have 3.5 years where I'm considered"–I forget what it was (pause).

Julie: Was it the post-traumatic stress talk? (I remembered this from Jack's interviews.)

Colin: (laughs) Yes! Post-traumatic stress–"so if you approach me fast, I might lash out, and I can't help myself! (Laughs) Or be held accountable for that!" (Shakes head clearly amused. We both laugh.)

Julie: Do you think people like that side of him? Do they like his history?

Colin: Yeah.

Julie: When you think about that class, do you–

Colin: I think that was my favorite English class!

Julie: Do you? Why?

Colin: The stories. I did like the subject. *Le Morte de Arthur*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, I liked all of that. Taking notes on it was a pain (laughs).

(Colin, LLSI, October 16)

Jack's literacy, oral storytelling, and his literacy practices that integrated personal, social, historical, political facets of life helped to define meaning making as integrated with lived experiences and in turn created scaffolds for Colin in this classroom in ways that used multiple literacies and varied texts to form social classroom norms that acted as a foundation to access curricular content and sociocultural goals. Contrary to calls for classroom practice to embrace digital tools (Greehhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009; Leu et al., 2009; NCTE, 2009; Snyder & Bulfin, 2008) and popular culture (Hagood, 2008), Colin valued the human connection of oral storytelling integrated with texts and life journey experiences. This finding opens new paths for schools to examine how instructional strategies can be individualized to teachers' strengths and students' needs and interests.

**Literacies among life's places.** As our conversations turned to Colin's larger life journey, I began to understand how his multiliterate life was supported through schools, family, and individual choices. He lived in a community school district that integrated limited programs across traditional grade barriers. However, Colin cited his self-awareness as an important component of making choices in his life.

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I have memories of the past but um, I feel like I really started being who I am

today in 6th grade. That's when I think I was first really self-aware. I don't know.

Before that I feel like I was just sort of going to class, and I was just sort of there.

But then in 6th grade, I feel like I started to develop my personality… I started

playing guitar in the 7th grade. I played the snare drum from 3rd to 5th grade, but

I started guitar in 7th. (Colin, LLSI, October 16)

The high school offered middle school eighth graders access to limited academic and

social encounters that included time in the physical place and exposure to limited social

relationships, literacies, and sociocultural norms that associated with participation in

marching band. With his parents' support, Colin's interest in music as a literacy and

playing percussion in a social setting as a literacy practice provided him with the internal

reserves to accept the opportunity that the school's policy permitted.

Colin's participation in the Hand-Tracing elicitation resulted little actual drawing

beyond his own hand-tracing but did provoke stories that illustrated his journey with

music, materials (posters of musicians in his room and guitars) and social relationships.

As noted in Chapter I and on his Hand-Drawn Mapping of Literacies in School, Colin

defined music as a literacy used to convey meaning in his life. Colin's musical literacy

practices varied depending upon which instrument he played (RQ2, 3). The material tools

he used to make meaning channeled his practice to particular locations in the school

(RQ1) that afforded access to additional equipment (RQ2) and social relationships for

collaboration and mentorship (RQ3). Colin's instruments included steel drums, acoustic

guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, upright double bass, and "this little Merton backpacker.

It's this really small guitar" (Colin, HTMSS, November 6; also Colin, HDMI, September

26; and Colin, LLSI, October 16). Colin played the steel drum in the school's band but he cultivated a social relationship with the band director to develop his guitar skills, access recording equipment, and access collaborative relationships and audiences unavailable to him at home or in other life places. Colin's preference was to read music for the bass clef because "that's actually the clef I learned to play first, learned to read first" (Colin, HDMI, September 26). He noted that he differed from his peers in this preference as they learned treble clef first. This pattern of difference also applies to the themes he seeks in word-based text experiences.

Colin's talk and artifacts help to tell the story of his journey and the significance of his literate life and how multiple literacies enacted in places with different social supports and materials combined to represent this literate life.  Through his agentive practices across places and social groups (see Table 5.1), Colin set his own affective goals that valued the unorthodox use of literacies' affordances to achieve meaning complexity (RQ1, 2). As a purposeful, multiliterate adolescent, Colin sought place-oriented social relationships (RQ3) that helped him overcome barriers when his personal resources were not sufficient (recording studio access, course changes, and oral storytelling). Colin's literacy engagement was driven predominantly through his perceptions of how literacies were practiced. As following discussion will show, he valued difference rather than mastery alone.

As Table 5.1 indicates, Colin's access and use of literacies extended across places and social relationships as an adolescent. As an advanced reader and meaning maker across multiple literacies, Colin engaged with literacies to primarily fulfill his affective goals. His family, primarily his mother and father, modeled and channeled his literacy

practices in his early childhood and elementary and middle school life.  From an early
age, in addition to music, his parents provided access and modeled storytelling through
word and imaged-based print literacies (picture books and novels).

Table 5.1

*Colin's Literacies Among Places and Social Relationships*

| Colin | Literacy Practices & Associated Social Relationships  Indicators: Shading-repeated practice & Letter-purpose | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Places** | **Individual** | **Peers** | **Teachers** | **Family** | **Adult Music Mentors [Mr. B & Drummer]** |
| **School** | A A A A | C A T T AS | C  C C | | |
| **Band & Strings Rooms** | AC AS  A C AC | S | AC AC  AC | | ACE ACE |
| **Home** | A A A A | T T S | C C | AS AS AS AS AS | |
| **Social Gather** | SE AS  A SE | T T S | | | |
| **Virtual** | AE AE AE AE | T T AS | C C | | C C |

| **KEY: Literacy Type** | Verbal Oral Storytelling | Music | Reading Printed Word-Based language | Writing Word-Based Language | Multimodal Literacies – including artifacts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Literacy Practice Purposes** | A – Personal affective goals  C – Class-related  S – Social  E – Entertainment | A – Personal affective goals  C – Class-related  S – Social  E – Entertainment | A – Personal affective goals  C – Class-related  S – Social  E – Entertainment  T – Texting & Facebook | A – Personal affective goals  C – Class-related  S – Social  E – Entertainment  T – Texting & Facebook | A – Personal affective goals  C – Class-related  S – Social  E – Entertainment |

Oral, word-based, and visual features of storytelling were emphasized at home through
bedtime stories from an early age.  Colin's memories also indicated that themes
supporting individuality remained with him as a part of his identity and practices across
the literacies he used as an adolescent.

Colin:   Well, I can remember my parents reading me bedtime stories. They did

always encourage me to read more.

Julie:   What stories do you remember?

Colin:   One sticks in my mind the clearest. It's this Native American story. I'm not

sure which tribe. It was called *An Arrow to the Sun*. It was about this boy

who was the son of the sun, and he came down on earth, and he was

different than all the other boys. They wouldn't include him on anything,

so he went on this journey searching for who he is and it led him to the

sun and a new understanding. He came back re-energized and confident of

who he was.  (Colin, LLSI, October 16)

Colin tells this story of difference, peer exclusion, and an individual decision to learn

about self. The boy in the story found answers, direction, and a sense of personal value.

This is a story of hope.  Many teacher educators and researchers use the axiom the right

book, for the right time, for the right student; however, this talk is generally reserved as a

guide for bounded school experiences in classroom libraries or through teacher-

constructed reading selections (Appleman, 2010; Bomer, 2011). In this study, I use this

axiom through the lens of the journey epistemology to learn how that book, at that time,

and through time and Colin's life journey has relationships with his literacy pursuits as an

extension of self. Colin remembers this tale, told at the right time, in the right place, and

with the right people (RQ1, 2, 3). He internalized its lessons, the value of individual

action, the need to value self, and the reality that social relationships may pose

challenges.

**Literacies Entangled with Self-Discovery**

Colin's sense of individuality and interest in literacies afforded unexpected examples of personal experiences that became essential to constructing understandings as we collaborated in our meetings and his artifact selection. My interest in learning more about Colin's life journey to better understand his ways with literacies opened opportunities for Colin to share artifacts as well as memories. Although I had given Colin a camera to document his literacies in places other than school (Colin, FN, October 2), Colin had not used that tool when we met for the Literacy Life Story Interview two weeks later (Colin, LLSI, October 16). However, during that mid-October interview and after we had discussed school and family practices, when I asked him about his individual practices, he recalled a pivotal experience he had with a novel. This novel, *House of Leaves,* became the basis for his choice to represent his pursuit and engagement with literacies. The way he talks about this novel shares parallels with the way he approaches other literacies in his life.

> Recently, [I read] a book. I either read it last year or the year before – it was this book by Danielewski–he has one of those weird names. It was a book called *House of Leaves*. It's a very unorthodox book. It doesn't have the approach of words on this page then words on this page (gestures as if holding a traditional book), end of chapter, next chapter. It had highly formatted text, like the word house was always in blue. When words were struck through it was in red–you have to understand (Colin continues to describe the color-coded patterns in the printed text and the multiple points of view that guides the narrative structure.) (Colin, LLSI, October 16)

In his initial preview of the text he noted both the "unorthodox" approach to the physical structure of the text and the narrative complexity. Colin's attraction to this artifact and his engagement with structural modifications challenged him to confront his definition of word-based literacy materials. When he brought the book in as a part of his Video/Photo Mapping of his literacies, he showed me the blend of images, words, and color as a part of the schema necessary to decode the text in order to read for understanding and interpretation (Colin, VPM, October 23). The novel contains multiple narratives within the story, multiple genres, and varied imagery. Reading this novel also requires the mastery of complex reading skills to decode footnotes, appendices, diagrams, and images used within the narrative structure. *House of Leaves* offered much more than met the eye initially, just as the Native American boy in Colin's story offered more than his peers could see, and just as Colin does himself as a multiliterate adolescent.

Colin's ability to read himself, his teachers, and his responses to social relationships, materials, and practices in the classroom developed overtime, likely through many sociocultural experiences not explored in the context of this research. However, our conversations through the course of this study shed some light on his journey and the ways that he made choices to pursue his own interests. These ways were likely to have provided the positive associations he gained from independent action. Colin's willingness to engage with decision making developed in conjunction with his awareness of social definitions for literacies, social and place-oriented access to varied opportunities and materials for expression, and place-oriented social support to learn about himself, his options, and his mentors. Coming to high school and discovering the journey among physical and social places was a challenge. Finding his way meant

understanding material and social affordances and limitations of school as a place. At this point in his journey as a senior, he has realized that "not everyone's going to the same place now" (Colin, LLSI, October 16).

Colin's use of literacies as an advanced reader across broad definitions of texts presents previously unexplored applications of cross-disciplinary literacy practice. Thinking about Colin as an advance reader does across literacies shows that how he looks for patterns regardless of the definition of text. Further, his ways with varied literacies shows that he seeks unexpected twists in his readings whether those readings be of music, word-based language, or oral narratives. As 21$^{st}$ century literacies incorporate multimodality (Kress, 2010; Leu et al., 2009; NCTE, 2009; Snyder & Bulfin, 2008), Colin's practices provide examples of advance reader engagement, agency, and mentorship roles. Mentorship in Colin's case facilitates access to materials but for Colin, perhaps more importantly, access to models of unorthodox literacy models.

## Chapter VI

## FINDINGS: SIMONE

## "Are You You?"

(Simone, VPM, August 21)

Although Tasha, Colin, and Simone interacted with me casually throughout the two exploratory years prior to the study, Simone was the first student participant to actively collaborate in the study. I came to know Simone best through my observations in her art classes, our conversations, and her artwork. I also observed her in the English classroom but found that the social norms in the art room permitted her to self-direct her engagement to a greater extent than in the more traditionally structured, sit-in-your-seat, as Tasha would say, English class.

Simone was a quiet, compliant student in all classroom places. Unlike Tasha, who frequently took risks to perform musically in front of an audience or to speak in class, Simone rarely spoke unless addressed. When she did assert her intentions, for example when she requested a course change to add physics to her senior schedule, she believed that her teachers and the school administration did not listen (Simone, FN, April 9; Simone, LLSI, August 21). Scheduling issues were complex and required the Vice Principal to make decisions, usually with student's input; however, if the administration determined that the student's needs did not indicate the need for a course, then the course was not scheduled (Shelia Novak, LLSI, August 8). Simone and her academic journey became texts that school personnel read. Rather than pursuing her path like Colin, Simone accepted the ways that social relationships in school channeled her journey.

**Literacies in School**

Curious about my work and my presence in places all around the school, Simone volunteered to participate when I told her I was there to learn more about what was meaningful to adolescents. Upon reflection, I realize that my seemingly small statement signaled a significant event for Simone—an adult wanted to know more about her as an individual—an adult would listen. Over the course of the study, as depicted in Table 6.1, I would come to know Simone through her artwork and her mapping activities that helped me understand her perceptions of places, social relationships, and the purposes for particular materials and literacies. Her representations voiced the complexities she perceived in places and the possibilities she saw to create voice and meaning through broader sociocultural definitions of reading, writing, and text.

> I was thinking about it this past week while I was actually in school. And it's kind
> of an inevitable thing. You are always reading and interpreting things, like no
> matter what, especially people's faces, and how we react to each other is the
> number one thing. I don't think we can map that… (Simone, HDMI, April 9)

Simone anticipated our meeting and had been thinking about reading and writing holistically as a part of the natural flow of social life (RQ1). She defined these concepts in broad terms that refer to human interaction in school as a text to be read (RQ1, 3). As noted in Chapter I, Simone's definition of bodies as texts to be read among the flow of other texts in school pushes the boundaries of what might be incorporated into discussions of texts in adolescent life. Simone's talk here, and throughout the chapter, helps to extend definitions of texts and adolescent practices discussed in other literature

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that explores reading, place, and multimodality in adolescent socialization and learning experiences (Appleman, 2010; Beers, Probst, & Rieff, 2007; Christenbury, Bomer, & Smagorinsky, 2009; Leander & Sheehy, 2011; NCTE, 2009).

Table 6.1

*Simone's Literacies Among Places and Social Relationship*

**Simone** — Literacy Practices & Associated Social Relationships
Indicators: Shading-repeated practice & Letter-purpose

Literacy color key: Verbal (red), Music (green), Reading Printed Word-Based language (gray), Writing Word-Based Language (yellow), Multimodal Literacies – including artifacts (blue). Within each relationship group the five sub-columns are ordered: Verbal (V), Music (M), Reading (R), Writing (Wr), Multimodal (Mm).

| Places | Individual V | M | R | Wr | Mm | Peers V | M | R | Wr | Mm | Teachers V | M | R | Wr | Mm | Mom & Dad V | M | R | Wr | Mm | Coworkers V | M | R | Wr | Mm |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School | | | T | T | | L/S | L | L | L | L | C | | C | C | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Art Studio | A | A | | A | A | S/C | S | | | | A/C | A/S | | A | A/C | | | | | | | | | | |
| Home | | A/E | T | T | A | S | S/E | | | S/E | | | C | C/C | | C | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Gather | F | A/E | | | A/E | S/E | S/E | T | T | S/E | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Car | | A/E | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Work | | | W | W | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | W | | W | W | |
| Virtual | | A/E | T | T | A/E/T | S/E | S/E | T | T | S/E | | | C | C | | | | | | | | | | | |

| KEY: Literacy | Verbal | Music | Reading Printed Word-Based language | Writing Word-Based Language | Multimodal Literacies – including artifacts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Literacy Practice Purposes | A – Personal affective goals<br>C – Class-related<br>S – Social<br>E – Entertainment<br>F – Faith<br>L – Peer Mentor<br><br>W – Work | A – Personal affective goals<br><br>S – Social<br>E – Entertainment<br><br>L – Peer Mentor | C – Class-related<br><br><br>L – Peer Mentor<br>T – Texting & Facebook<br>W – Work | A – Personal affective goals<br>C – Class-related<br><br><br>L – Peer Mentor<br>T – Texting & Facebook<br>W – Work | A – Personal affective goals<br>C – Class-related<br>S – Social<br>E – Entertainment<br>L – Peer Mentor<br>T – Texting & Facebook (also Pinterest) |

As Simone turned her attention to the physical map (see Figure 6.1) she created, she chose to begin with "shadier" places, "like bathrooms [and] the stairwells" where, like Colin, she noted that peers "can say stuff anonymously and get away with it… speak their mind, or they want to be funny or like rebel or something" (Simone, HDMI, April 9). However, Simone also noted positive forms of graffiti expression, for example, "song lyrics, like on the mirrors. People bring in white erase board markers and write messages" (Simone, HDMI, April 9).  Simone also noted that peers felt the need to communicate with family or friends during school; this need drove her peers to the bathroom to text or make cell phone calls (RQ1, 2, 3). This social purpose usurped the school's cultural belief that cell phones do not belong in school and should be turned off and out-of-sight during the school day (Shelia Novak, Student/Parent Handbook, April & August).

*Figure 6.1.* Simone's Hand-Drawn Mapping of Literacies in School Places (Simone, HDMI, April 9)

Simone believed that the school's concern over student cheating prevented open access to cell phones. However, she felt that controlling the tool was not likely to stop cheating as a literacy practice associated with particular opportunities in particular classrooms (RQ1, 2, 3). Simone described the efforts that some peers undertook, writing on small sheets of paper, on their bodies, or on their clothing. "There's so much effort put into that instead of studying" (Simone, HDMI, April 9; see Figure 6.2. Simone's image captured on a Walking Tour, April).
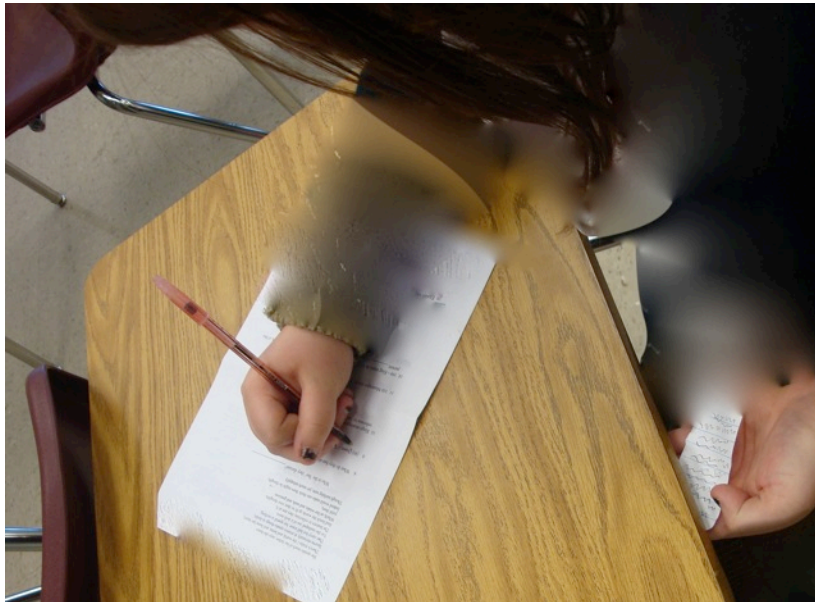
Figure 6.2. Word-based literacies used for cheating. (Simone, WT, April)

Further, Simone also read place. She noted the gym in particular where literacy was used for corporate purposes – advertisements on banners affixed to the walls and on beverage machines near the locker rooms (RQ1, 2, 3) (Simone, HDMI, April 9; Simone, VPM, August 21). She identified the library with technology tools necessary to complete mandated classroom literacy practices (RQ1, 2, 3) and the entrances to the stairwells and cafeteria as places for the school to report or generate interest in school events (Simone, HDMI, April 9; Simone, WT, April). For Simone, school, as a place, displayed literacies that constrained access (see Figure 6.3 Bookstore, only open two days a week after school when most students were leaving; Simone, WT, April) or provided controlled practice with rules (see Figure 6.4 Exit; Simone, WT, April; Schappe, WT, April).

*Figure 6.3.* Bookstore.



*Figure 6.4.* Exit & Gym Entrance. Controlled access to school.

From the beginning of our collaboration, Simone was thinking about place-oriented literacies, expectations, and materials. When thinking about literacies in the art studio, she observed,

I think instead of reading like in the classroom [where] you read words and you

have to interpret a story or what's going on in history [in response to teacher

directives], but in art you are doing emotions. You are expressing yourself so that

other people can understand you, but I think that only happens in the art room.

People who don't take art, I don't think they really appreciate that  - I mean they

can, and some people do, but I think it's in art classes, it's really (long pause)

concentrated. (Her voice becomes very quiet, and she whispers the last word.)

(Simone, HDMI, April 9).

Over the course of the study, Simone would return to talk about meaning making in the

art room. She discussed and offered artifacts to show how she was able to create texts

with layered meaning in the art studio because she was permitted to combine texts and

materials to create something new (RQ1, 2, 3) (Simone, LLSI, August 3). Her favorite

example of an intertextual piece was her self-portrait discussed in the closing segment of

this chapter. In the art studio, her work spoke on her behalf. Her work stimulated peer

and teacher mentor conversations, insight, suggestions, and praise (Hughes, FN, May 1 &

September 25). In the traditional classroom, she was a vigilant observer, not speaking but

watching, listening, and periodically taking notes. Simone was the student that many

busy secondary teachers might desire: compliant, quiet, but perhaps a shadow as well,

barely there.

Simone's social role as an observer positions her to read expectations and social

practices in multimodal ways, through body language, written and spoken language, and

through social relationships.  Counter to literacy research that focuses primarily on word-

based language alone (Gee & Hayes, 2011), Simone's talk embraces broad definitions of

texts, reading, and writing that situates multimodality as inherently among literacies in her school life using recognizable design inform intended audiences rather than as only broad communication. This interpretation expands upon Kress's (2010) discussion of multimodality as communication rather than literacy and posits that adolescent literacies and literacy practices inherently integrate multimodalities in ways that cannot be discretely segmented.

**Literacies Among Life's Places**

Simone embraced the physical, social, and cultural affordances of place to select materials and engage with literacy practices that brought her a sense of personal meaning. When social relationships permitted her to assume authority to make decisions that she found personally fulfilling (RQ3), Simone voiced positive affective associations with those places (RQ1, 2). For example, as Table 6.1 indicates, at home, Simone's identified literacies and literacy practices as predominantly self-directed to fulfill her affective purposes (RQ1, 2, 3). She loved her room, the place where her parents permitted her to control her material surroundings (RQ2) and her access to multiliterate, multimodal life (RQ1, 3). Her bedroom as a place within home place was a sensory rich, multimodal environment (See Figure 6.5 for Simone's image of her bedroom and Table 6.1 for the literacies and purposes she associates with home).

*Figure 6.5.* Simone's bedroom as a place for multiliterate, multimodal literacies and practices. Album covers and records span the wall embodying her love of music and the meaning music brings her in life. Her room was also the place that provided her an access point to meet peers socially in virtual places.

However, when talking about school as a place, Simone communicated negative views of classrooms and associated literacy practices with social relationships that "forced" use of particular literacies according to particular classroom-oriented purposes for literacy practices (Simone, HDMI, April 9; Simone, LLSI, August 3; Simone, VPM, August 21). For example, as depicted in Table 6.1, Simone's practices in school, with teachers, involved reading printed word-based language literacies and writing word-based language literacies. Similar to Colin, she noted that these were repetitive practices. Unlike Colin, Simone was unable to change her level of English or other required courses to access new opportunities. Fortunately for her, through elective course selection, she

joined the Art Studio. With her art teacher, Diane Hughes, she primarily used verbal, musical, and multimodal literacies. The individual column indicates which literacies she agentively enacted. Her preferred practices share more in common with the art studio as a school place than the classroom. Simone observed that classroom practices tended to be authority-driven and pattern oriented. Read—write—turn in work (Simone, LLSI, August 3). The color and variety shown in Simone's image of her room embodies her view of meaning making in her life.

In contrast, Simone offered a sketch she made of the hallway in the school to represent her understanding of the literacy practices and literacy purposes enacted in classrooms other than the art room (see Figure 6.6) (Simone, VPM, August 21).
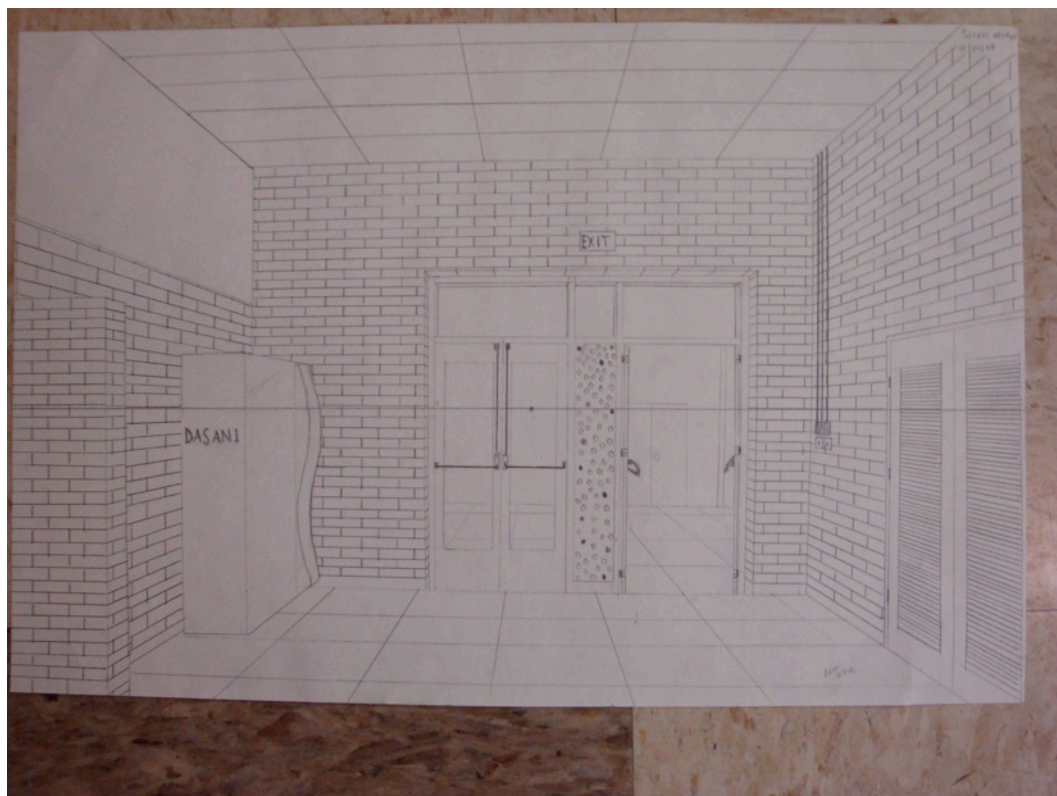


*Figure 6.6.* Sketch as visual literacy embodying school-based literacy practices and purposes.

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Simone embodies the stark, predictable patterns of school practices in this sketch of the school hall. Note that she also included the corporate relationship that the school has maintained with a beverage company.

**Social Encounters with Literacies in Places**

Simone's talk about classroom literacy practices grew as we worked together. Her classification of "forced" practices evolved to encompass predictable patterns of practice that yielded low motivation to engage. "We watched the same movie three times… we didn't really read out loud in class, but it was more like – go home and read it, and we'd come back and discuss it" (Simone, LLSI, August 3). Simone remembers this pattern repeating across classes each year of high school. Some students, like Simone, complied, but she noted that most students became bored and "changed the subject all the time… [or started] side stories and just like nagging [so teachers would] get annoyed and go off" (Simone, LLSI, August 3). In Simone's view, repetitive teaching materials and practices (RQ1, 2) contributed to disinterest and frustration with school and lead to disruptive and sometimes destructive behaviors (RQ3). Consequently, Simone's findings underscore the importance of how strategies are used rather than whether or not they are present. Even if educators incorporate popular culture and digital tools (as recommended by Hagood, 2008; NCTE, 2009; Snyder & Bulfin, 2008), those tools may not provoke student interest or engagement.

Other than the art studio with Ms. Hughes and the freedom she had at home in her room, only two other school classrooms provided exceptions to this pattern: Mr. N., her sophomore English teacher, and Mr. Jack Taggert, her junior English teacher. Similar to

Colin, Simone cited Mr. N.'s boisterous but knowledgeable personality, "He always stayed on topic, but he was very personal about it – he used personal examples and would just make it fun" (Simone, LLSI, August 3). She emphasized that Mr. N. began the year with lessons on the academic language they would need to know. This was different for her. He took the time to acknowledge what might be challenging for students (RQ1) and designed practices to help them acquire material, social, and contextual tools to support later literacy practices (RQ1, 2, 3). She specifically identified him as a master of content, "He like knows it inside and out" (Simone, LLSI, August 3). This awareness and his supportive mentorship earned her respect (RQ1, 2, 3).

Simone shared similar admiration for Jack Taggert, "He got down to business really fast… I think it might be his personality. He is the kind of person you want to impress. You want to work hard to show him that you are good at what you do kind of thing" (Simone, LLSI, August 3). Simone did not mind the control and believed that she learned more in Jack's room because the other students did not disrupt the class. Jack communicated expectations and then allowed the students to decide if they needed his assistance. Once a student initiated contact, "he would do anything for you" (Simone, LLSI, August 3). Above all, Simone spoke of Jack as a mentor who lived what he discussed; he read whenever he could, and the students noticed.

Simone: Mr. Taggert loved to read. He was always reading. In commons, he would have a book reading. In homeroom, he would be reading the paper.

Julie: What do you think Mr. Taggert hoped for you? What were his expectations?

Simone:        I think he just wanted us to be the best person we could be and be a

well-rounded person that tried. (Simone, LLSI, August 3)

Simone selected two images from Jack's walking tour photographs that represented her

perception of Jack's knowledge and commitment to students (see Figure 6.7)



Figure 6.7. Jack Taggert's classroom. Word-based language representing his content knowledge and commitment to students (Taggert, WT, April).


Simone admired Jack Taggert not because he mirrored her interests, but because

he lived according to his word and practice. I believe it is important to comment that

Simone does not identify herself as a reader, and as is indicated in Table 6.1, she reads

word-based language for very limited purposes. Jack modeled what proficient, engaged

readers do, not just during class, but also throughout his daily contact with students

(RQ1, 2, 3).

In the art room, Simone found a place with materials that interested her and a teacher in Diane Hughes who modeled how to use and to manipulate them to make meaning (RQ2, 3). As a teacher, Diane, like Jack, held high expectations (RQ3) but also monitored students and provided support as they engaged in meaning making practices (RQ3). "She did not care if you were good or not. She just liked that someone was trying or saw that they were trying" (Simone, LLSI, August 3). Simone characterized Diane's approach as "enticing" students to engage, to try techniques. She modeled, showed students master examples, and then gave them some choice as to what they might wish to enact (RQ1, 2, 3). Art expectations involved working with a type of tool (like a pottery wheel or a brush), a form for a product (like a three-dimensional object) or a subject matter (a self-portrait). Showing students how to use various tools, create different products, or represent content in varied ways provided some structure but also choices to construct meaning (Simone, LLSI, August 3; Hughes, FN, May 1). Diane Hughes helped students come to know the affordances of literacies in the art room (RQ1), the materials associated with those literacies (RQ2), and provided the mentorship through modeled practices (RQ3) to help students create the meaning they intended. Again, Simone underscores how the teacher's use of personal resources rather than tools supported her interests, provided positive mentoring experiences, and show her how advanced readers of discipline specific text work to achieve meaning.

**"Are You You?"**

High Schools are complex sociocultural places. Students and teachers gather for a variety of reasons. Some wish may wish to be there. Others, like Simone, would rather be some place else (Simone, LLSI, August 3). Regardless, at the end of the day, all leave

and resume their journeys among the other places in their lives. For most, schools as gathering places channel journeys and bring those individuals with different sociocultural experiences together again for another day.  For Simone, outward complacency did not necessarily indicate learning but rather stifled expression. Her classroom practices tended to produce stock answers and compliant behavior that she hoped to provide to get the assignment out of the way (Simone, LLSI, August 3).

The issues she would have embraced in the classroom were reserved for the art room: duality, peer pressure, consumerism, social control, identity, and perspectives on the future, social life, justice, health, and responsibilities.  As a peer mentor for younger students, Simone created opportunities to listen to peers concerns and to talk about issues that were in the media and in films (Simone, LLSI, August 3). She witnessed peer dynamics, struggles with teachers, and challenges that she and her peers faced to come to know themselves.  Diane Hughes opened the art studio to Simone so she could grapple with these issues.

The final three figures in this chapter present some of Simone's efforts to use literacies in multimodal practices that combined ideas and varied materials to create meaning. Figure 6.8 is a piece that she created to challenge a peer with the question: "Are you you?"

*Figure 6.8*. Are you you?

Simone wondered if the ways we talk and act are really who we wish ourselves to be. "A lot of the things I do have a theme or an idea, something behind it… I like doing stuff with a hidden or underlying meaning" (Simone, LLSI, August 3; Simone, VPM, August 21).

In Figure 6.9, Simone shares her self-portrait. Inspired through peer criticism, the film *Mean Girls*, and her role as a peer mentor, Simone created an intertextual portrait that includes word-based language and objects as a part of the message.

Everyone always says things about my hair so… it's just big [relates a personal insult from a peer]… but I've grown to love it. I used to not like it. I used to straighten it. But I like it. I was thinking about what I wanted to say because I think it's a defining feature of me. So I wanted to stand out. There's a quote [from *Mean Girls*], "Her hair is full of secrets. That's why it's so big." So I actually wrote that and started painting.



*Figure 6.9.* Simone self-portrait.

Simone created meaning in an effort to represent herself, her identity, as embodied through her hair. Simone made decisions to create meaning in response to her own life journey—her experiences being ridiculed, her efforts to try to change herself to fit in 'straighten it', and her ultimate decision to celebrate it after repeatedly seeing the film *Mean Girls* and talking about its meaning with others. Her hair came to be an extension of herself, and in its unruliness, harbored the depth of Simone's own personality. For Simone, making meaning through art allowed her to create layers of meaning, literal meaning based on the observed structural form and subtextual meaning reflecting the sociocultural complexities she faced as an adolescent. As Zoss (2009) asserted,

> The role of visual arts in a literacy context, such as a literature course in a high school or a language arts course in a middle school, need not simply be decorative… Instead, visual art can be a means for students to learn to communicate ideas and to learn new ways to think about problems and texts (p. 183).

Rather than teacher-constructed activities that include visual arts, the findings related to Simone's literacy practices extend Zoss's classroom oriented application of visual arts to show how school-based literacy practices and materials might be expanded in an interdisciplinary, adolescent-designed manner. In Simone's practice, she encountered meaning through multiple literacies along her life's journey that crossed place-oriented boundaries like classrooms, her home, or movie theaters. These findings show how Simone as an adolescent meaning maker used school as an interdisciplinary place to make meaning. Simone's social relationships with teachers, like Diane Hughes in the art

classroom and Jack Taggert in the English classroom, and peers showed her how ideas among varied texts might be used to create new meaning. Consequently, these findings support students as decision-makers to select literacies and materials and to encourage students to construct literacy practices that facilitate complex literacy purposes in school.

**Simone's Thoughts About Literate Life**

Silent in the classroom, this chapter closes with Simone's voice as shared through her Video/Photo Mapping efforts. Among images of her art, Simone included a photograph of this hand-written note.

I wake up in the morning to music, check my phone for texts, calls, or reminders for the day. My day is planned on whether I have to work that day. … If I do not work, I tend to drift… these days are the best, because they usually involve art and music. Art is the ultimate meaning-making device for myself. For me, I can express whatever I want through art. There are so many mediums; so many ways to interpret something. Literally, symbolically, the possibilities are endless. I can draw how something feels to me… how [it] smells… my body lends itself to my art. Reading, writing, and meaning making are found everywhere but are clouded by misconceptions. The word 'literacy' is so technical. I believe people only associate it with a classroom setting. With a classroom comes rules, so the rules impressed on assignments are assumed on 'literacy.' … I don't think many people think about it beyond the classroom. In reality, it is around them 24/7. Everything people do has a meaning… Humans are always looking to communicate and connect with others. This is exactly what literacy helps us do. (Simone, VPM, August 21)

**Chapter VII**

**IMPLICATIONS FOR**

**ADOLESCENT LITERACY, TEACHING, AND LEARNING**

**Sociocultural Understandings of Schools and Adolescents' Literate Lives**

Learning has long been discussed as a social endeavor. Learning communities in
high schools encompass networks of individuals that define and construct sociocultural
expectations for classroom experiences, movement, behavior, academic progression,
access to material resources, and varied types of social relationships according to social
roles in the learning community. Throughout the study, the student participants
channeled agentive literacy practices toward separate, preferred places within the larger
school place. All of the preferred literacy places were associated with school-provided
elective studies. These classrooms afforded students access to adult and peer-based social
relationships that shared similar values for particular materials and practices to construct
meaning. For all three participants, student, place-oriented definitions for literacy (RQ1)
and beliefs about materials (RQ2) and social relationships (RQ3) flowed as parts of
mutually understood, shared social practices. The school's policies provided access to
these places through elective course selection. Consequently, the students' access to these
places, materials, and social relationships was a part of the larger sociocultural practice at
the school that provided students the opportunity to exercise choice in some curriculum
encounters (Shelia Novak, LLSI, August 8; Course Selection Handbooks, April &
August).

The associated social relationships were place-oriented but as the findings show,
not place-bound. This is significant because the nature of assumptions related to situated

literacy practice had to give way to the adolescents' lived journeys among places, people, and materials that revealed how they enacted literacy practices according to particular literacy purposes. Their sociocultural journeys included people who socially practiced the literacy with the student and those who established expectations or controlled access to literacies, literacy practices, and purposes in places.

Tasha's literate life shows how sociocultural displacement affected not only her physical contexts but also the sociocultural foundations that assigned value to particular literacies, materials, and social relationships. The data show how she marginalized her literacies, materials, and literacy practices as her access, social relationships, literacy purposes, and options to practice literacies changed. However, the data also show how she retained the ideological foundation set forth in her early childhood as an affective scaffold to help her determine how to channel her decision making when selecting literacies, materials, and social relationships. Colin offers a portrait of an advanced reader who, when disengaged from school life, self-selected literacies, places, and social relationships that afforded him opportunities to restructure texts in multiple literacies to achieve unconventional meaning making experiences.  Finally, Simone offers engagement with literacies as a visual learner. Simone's engagement in school presents the portrait of the compliant, average student that many educators may accept and overlook.  Her view of literacies in life, represented largely through her visuals, shows the vibrant complexity possible when a student encounters social relationships that support her self-constructed path to meaning making. Rather than predetermining all facets of meaning making, Simone's positive relationships with teachers provided opportunities to think about meaning making and then self-select representational modes.

Although the ethnography in its entirety encompassed additional participants, this discussion is restricted to findings and implications presented in this dissertation that relate to Tasha, Colin, and Simone.

**Adolescents' literate lives among places.** Adolescents seek out and embrace rich multimodal literacy experiences and weave them into the flow of their lives through school, home, community, peer, and individual places they encounter or pursue. Music, painting, pottery, sketching, writing, singing, dancing, dress, talk, photography, film, gestures, even grimaces for performance and social reactions communicate meaning and weave together in their memories across social and cultural contexts to affect their ways with people, places, and social practices. The names each participant used for those literacies shared similar labels and was usually linguistically or visually constructed in an active sense of doing something: telling stories, singing, playing an instrument, writing, reading, photographing, watching or making film, social networking, texting, tweeting, posting, painting, sketching, and making visual and multimodal art.

However, what they did (the literacy used in an active sense with a material they identified as appropriate for this literacy) and how they did it (the process showing or talking about how it was used) varied according to the participant's sociocultural definition of the place where they practiced (engaged with meaning reception and/or meaning making and distribution). The participant's definitions of places were ideologically based and included physical, social, and cultural associations that the participant formed based on individual life experiences (past) and social and cultural expectations related to tasks and social relationships.

***Multisituated literacy purposes***. The participants consistently verbally identified the literacies with at least one place where they practiced that literacy; however, data analysis across methods indicated that participants consistently engaged with a particular literacy purpose across places. The literacy purpose then travelled with the participant to a certain extent, but the way the literacy was practiced (selected materials and processes) varied among the places the participant journeyed. This finding extends conversations about the role of sponsorship in literacy practices (Brandt, 2009), and the definition of literacy events (Heath, 1983). Literacy events have been generally understood as concrete, observable circumstances that move literacies into action. The literacy event and the literacy sponsor have been associated with constructing the purpose, content, materials, and social relationships assigned to literacy practices. The findings in this study move the nature and effect of events, sponsorship, and practice forward.

In this exploration of adolescent practices, purposes rather than events travelled with students, and literacy practices were modified as the literacy purpose travelled among places. Rather than sponsorship, place functioned as the primary signpost that signaled students to be attentive to new definitions, materials, and social conditions for meaning making. Places, whether school, home, car, or art room, were associated with social relationships and ideologically laden with meaning acquired through immediate and previous experiences. Place did not eliminate the sponsorship influence or the literacy purpose, but place did dominate to the extent that it modified literacy practices that began in one location and continued elsewhere.

*Literacy purposes*, as the activating reasons for practice, were not situated but *multisituated in practice*. The adolescents in this study frequently initiated a literacy

practice in response to a meaning making purpose in a particular place (like a classroom or their car), but then continued the meaning making purpose as they traveled to new places along their journey (taking an assignment home to work on and submit virtually). When adolescents left the place where the literacy practice originated, the practice changed. Only the literacy purpose remained constant across places. Literacy practices, meaning those activities used to enact the literacy for meaning making to meet a given purpose, changed in response to the new place-oriented social practices, available materials, and social relationships. For example, when Tasha brought an assignment home for English class, her literacy practices changed in order for her to meet the purpose for meaning making. Rather than working on her own as she did in school, at home she worked with her cousin. The materials associated with writing in the classroom were pen, paper, and resources, like dictionaries. The materials associated with writing the same assignment at home changed in response to the available materials at home, a laptop. All students anticipated changes to literacy practices when the literacy purposes demanded that meaning making extend beyond the confines of a bounded place, like a classroom.

The participants intentionally pursued places, were authoritatively directed to places, or were able to identify in-the-moment, place-oriented opportunities to practice literacies. The participants' places for practice were consequently rooted in individual ideological assessments of the sociocultural expectations and the dynamics among physical locations, people, meaning making purposes, social relationship access and affordances, material access and affordances, and cultural beliefs that entangled notions of self, society, and expression. These inform calls for the flow of people and materials through schools (Leander & Sheehy, 2011) and the ways that places like schools

contribute to adolescent socialization (Heath & Street, 2008) and adolescent literacy (NCTE, 2009) within the flow of adolescent journeys. For example, Colin's interest in music, the school's recording studio, and his relationship with the band director prompted him to pursue meaning making at school and at home. The literacy itself then became further defined and acquired layers of social and cultural meaning as it was practiced in varied places, for varied purposes, and with varied materials and social relationships. Consequently, the value assigned to literacies varied according to each participant's life journey. Individual journeys provided varied access to materials and relationships but also provided sociocultural history that influenced value systems and definitions of purpose. Individual's in the same place of practice defined literacies in different ways, preferred varied materials, and formed varied social practices based on the prior experiences s/he had in her/his life journey.

*Classroom oriented social relationships.* The teachers purposefully constructed literacy personas that reflected the individual teacher's desired visible mask. I use the term visible mask intentionally to indicate the performance that each teacher described as an intentional creation constructed overtime through experiences and decisions along their journeys through adolescence, young adulthood, and through the course of professional and personal life. The adolescents read their teachers as social texts and channeled their literacies and literacy practices to places where particular teachers constructed social relationships and literacy practices in ways that provided the support, materials, and purposes that met the students' needs. Adolescents' assessment of their teachers for possible relationships are then important facets of responding to Heath and Street's (2008) call for learning more about adolescent literacy socialization.

These decisions had consequences that are important to note. All three of the students discussed in this dissertation channeled their practices toward the type of social relationships that met their needs. However, the social relationships were not necessarily associated with literacies that were valued within school or home communities. None of the adolescent participants selected reading and writing word-based literacies as their preferred mode of meaning making. Further no adolescent participants identified places associated with primarily reading and writing word-based literacies as valuable or desirable places for meaning making.  The one exception was Jack Taggert's junior English classroom as a place that used word-based language and was a preferred school place and social relationship for Colin and Simone; however, both noted his oral storytelling as pivotal, not reading or writing word-based language.

**Differences as signs of complexity**. The adolescents in this study embody the principle that persistence in a place does not necessarily indicate common understandings, purposes, or histories. Tasha, Colin, Simone, and their teachers and other classmates all came to West High School as individuals. Difference was the constant throughout this research. Each participant offered literacy life stories and artifacts that contributed to how they perceived their roles in school and how they engaged with literacies. Each adolescent emphasized different preferences for meaning making, social relationships, and interaction with materials. Assumptions related to 'sameness' for any of the adult or adolescent participants due to their social roles in the school would fail to reflect the complexity they offer in social learning places within the school.  Rather than an obstacle difference, provides opportunities to learn more about the complexities inherent in meaning making in the 21st century.

This research presents sociocultural understandings, mentorship, and community learning through multimodal literacies (food preparation, musical performance, photography, art, oral storytelling, and intertextual representations) that support complex definitions of text, reading, and writing. Rather than compartmentalizing these literacies to specific situated events, the participants integrated them into the flow of their lives and their literacy purposes in ways that relied upon individual sociocultural understandings of place-oriented materials and social relationships. Although in their classrooms they may have faced similar school-oriented expectations for literacy practices, they arrived and persisted in those classrooms from different journeys that constructed individual entry points that framed those encounters influenced their understandings.

**Implications for Schools, Teaching, and Learning: Paths to Adolescent Understandings and Empowerment Needed**

Although all three of the adolescents discussed in this dissertation were able to identify at least one positive school place, none of those places was consistently in an academic classroom. Investigating the student's understandings through the research questions helps to guide the following calls for actions in school culture development, teacher education, curriculum development, and pedagogy.

- Understanding that places construct physical, social, and cultural identities that adolescents seek, avoid, and may attempt to modify for affective purposes.
- Develop place-oriented, student-selected, social relationships as the foundation to construct scaffolding for struggling students and to support

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learning and agentive, complex meaning making practices for all adolescent learners.

- Recognize that literacies are used to fulfill literacy purposes that are likely to be multisituated in practice. Consequently, it will be important to work with adolescent students to jointly assess material, social, and cultural resources available for meaning making among the places that adolescents travel.

- Schools as gathering places can support differences in individually valued literacies, literacy purposes, and literacy practices. Dispositions and social roles need to be reassessed to answer: How can students and teachers act as mentors for each other to learn about varied value systems and ways of making meaning? How might understandings begin to form common appreciation for difference among meaning making practices and reveal unforeseen complexities that can open new paths to learning and social relationships in schools?

Colin's realization that a new English classroom learning community would be better for his ways in school was not enough. In order to act upon that realization, he needed information and opportunities. Directing his own academic path required that he understand the school-oriented cultural beliefs related to leveling studies and the power structure and literacy practices necessary to access information.

Some students, like Colin, will have the personal resources to investigate and pursue learning environments that better fit with their learning styles and academic needs. However, many, like Tasha and Simone, will not. Schools need to provide information to

students through varied multimodal literacies consistent with the literacies that students who gather in that particular school use in their lives  to encourage individual ownership over academic progression through school. Examples of positive social relationships noted here indicate the need to redefine student-centered school culture to open dialogue with students about their life journeys as well as their educational journeys, learning preferences, and the school's options for learning places. Teachers are a part of this dialogue and should make their journeys open to students like Jack did in this study. Jack's willingness to talk about how his journey affected his classroom persona and reasons for being a teacher showed the students that he trusted and respected them as partners in learning. Colin and Simone's awareness of their sophomore teacher's journey as an actor and director helped them understand that teacher's interest in his own class performances, his tone of voice, and his approach to reading and interpreting texts. Tasha's affinity with her choir director developed through Tasha's shared journey with her and her belief that they "spoke the same language."

**Pedagogy and teacher education.** Colin's start in high school English classes was negative due to a mismatch in teaching strategies and his needs.  To some degree differentiating instruction may have assisted him; however, his story relates the need to examine how leveled courses in high schools are constructed socially, culturally, and through what use of materials and wider social practices as well as literacy practices. Tasha's traditional classrooms embraced differentiated instruction using varied instructional approaches that included multimodal literacies (film, images, written and spoken language). However, the classroom-oriented definitions of literacies, selection of materials, and construction of literacy practices were not consistent with her life journey

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that had provided the foundation for her sociocultural understandings related to meaning making, social relationships, and places. Well-intended pedagogy missed learning opportunities and further isolated Tasha. Although Tasha was able to construct her own social scaffolds based on school-based social relationships that supported her affective goals for positive, collaborative learning, those relationships were outside of school-places that provided learning opportunities to develop word-based literacies needed for Western institutional success.

This research does not argue against word-based literacies in schools. Word-based literacies have been and are likely to continue to be socioculturally relevant facets of Western communication. However, this research asserts the need to adopt broad definitions for texts, reading, and writing that are consistent with local student populations. Adopting a place-oriented mapping expression will help to conceptually define this rationale: Knowing "where we are" is the first step to planning the journey to "where we want to go." For adolescents, the "where we are" encompasses physical, social, and cultural understandings formed through individual life journeys. Classroom learning is more complex that looking at a shopping mall map that notes "You are here." Students need to understand what "here" means in terms of definitions for literacies, materials, and social relationships. They need to come to know the "here" of school through understandings that are already familiar to them, individual sociocultural, journey-based understandings. They also need opportunities to explore how to incorporate new understandings into established frameworks and then to design meaning in recognizable ways for new target audiences that are rooted in their known paths and integrate new ones. This framework celebrates diverse ways of coming to know, honor,

and communicate meaning.  Students are positioned as leaders, knowing their journey,

and collaborators, working with peers and teachers to gain mutual understanding and to

intentionally pursue paths create shared meaning. Welcoming students into the

conversation regarding course design, instructional strategies, and academic progression

has the potential benefit of developing critical perspectives, metacognition, and self-

awareness that may result in a student's greater investment in the educational process

because of her/his role, not only in course selection, but also through learning community

construction.

Researchers and educators frequently recommend pedagogy that offers students

opportunities for open-ended interpretation (Appleman, 2010; Bomer, 2011; Beers,

Probst, & Rieff, 2007; Smagorinsky, 2008). Teacher-mediated discussions and activities

typically drive these practices.  However, Colin's preferred practices extended beyond

this pedagogical practice. Colin's agentive practices engaged him in complex sensory and

cognitive journeys to seek meaning through unexpected structure or modifications to

genre or literacy patterns. Tasha shows that a teacher's efforts to construct multimodal or

differentiated activities may capture students' attention but will not necessarily scaffold

to understanding without a shared ideological basis and common sociocultural schema.

Simone and Colin's encounters with Jack show how students respond favorably to

teacher relationships and the social and material structure of the classroom when the

teacher shares his/her journey in ways that model content mastery and how to weave an

individual's life into the fabric of classroom content. Likewise, Tasha also shows the

importance of teacher relationships but through the basis of collaboration and mentorship

to identify expectations and paths to making meaning.  Mentor collaboration is important

during all phases of meaning making to learn expectations, purpose, and how to use material and sociocultural resources. However, who is mentor and who is student should come into question. As teachers seek to come to know their students' sociocultural understandings, this study shows that sharing decision making and positioning students as mentors is likely to help build trust and ethically represent students' intended meaning.

When place-oriented purposes dictate school-based sociocultural expectations, educators are likely to benefit from self-reflection asking: To what extent do our instructional approaches, class activities, text selection, and assessments engage students in ways that they find interesting and that stimulates them to look inward? Are classroom approaches helping students to construct scaffolds that ask: What do I think about this experience that I'm encountering? How does this show me something new about myself or about the way I understand ideas or human experience? How can place-oriented social relationships foster senses of safety and community that promotes collaboration and expression to achieve individual and group success?

To accomplish lesson, unit, and course design that meets these needs, lessons from the adolescents in this study indicate that teachers need to know more about their students' literate lives and their broader sociocultural journeys. Tasha, Colin, and Simone show that student-centered practice means that teachers are confronting their own assumptions about adolescent literacy and seeking answers that are rooted in coming to understand each student's journey. The student's journey is not only how they define reading and writing or how frequently they engage reading and writing, but it means learning more about their early childhood, their journeys through schools, exposure and stories about meaningful people, places, and social interactions. Learning about what is

meaningful and how its meaningful will provide valuable lessons about how students'
journeys can inform the ways teachers and students construct scaffolds to approach new
ideas, new tools, and new social relationships that are a part of making meaning in school
and other life places.

The insights shared here indicate that the "what" of the interest is more complex
than a tool, a genre, or a mode of communication. Text structure was a primary interest
for Colin, Tasha, and Simone. The interest in a text's structure may be visual but
communicated through varied modes and understandings of texts (Colin with the novel
*House of Leaves*; Tasha with objects and images of word-based language in her teachers'
classrooms or her cousin's island poster; and Simone through painting, drawing,
ceramics, and unconventional representations of printed, word-based text). Further, the
structural interest may involve the multisensory or multimodal in ways that differ from
classroom experiences (Tasha's oral storytelling, food, and film experiences; Colin's
analysis of guitarists and music genres; Simone's interest in mixed media art, the pottery
wheel, music, and clothing).

Whatever the structural interests, all texts and literacies of interest were rooted in
sociocultural understandings of self, places, accessible materials, and social relationships.
As discussed sociocultural understandings were dynamic and mediated through each
individual participant's life journey. To say that these understandings are dynamic is to
say that they are prone to change. Adolescent life is full of change, body, mind, family,
peers, notions of independence, and notions about the future.

Just as researchers advocate understanding what successful readers do and
modeling strategies for struggling adolescent readers (Beers, 2002; Beers, Probst, & Rief,

2007; Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2009), this study offers examples of what successful multiliterate adolescents do in an effort to explore how educators might model strategies that provide social support, definitions of literacies, and opportunities to reconstruct literacy practices to challenge students to think about texts in different ways but to learn more about themselves, to celebrate their expertise according to their definitions of literacies and literacy practices, and to begin to understand how to construct socioculturally supportive scaffolds to define and contextualize literacies and literacy practices that are new to them. Adolescent literacy policy and research statements have asserted the importance of knowing more about adolescents' literacies (Appleman, 2010; Bomer, 2011; Greenhow et al., 2009a, 2009b; Leu et al., 2009; NCTE, 2009) but have not done so within the contexts of both adolescents' and teachers' journeys. This study shows that through those journeys the foundational understandings of social practices, materials, and relationships emerge. Given that learning is social, teachers' and adolescents' efforts in schools should encompass not only the adolescents' journeys, but also the teachers'. Developing meta-awareness is likely to support the development of mutual understandings necessary for the foundation of positive social relationships associated with learning.

**Implications for Research Design and Sociocultural Theoretical Frameworks**

Ethnography as a methodology afforded the time, physical presence, and social relationships that supported my research goals involving ethical representation, participant-researcher collaboration, and the use of multiple participant-responsive methods. Extended time in the field proved to be essential in this study as the adolescents and teachers needed to observe me first in order to make decisions about participation,

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conversations, and interactions with data collection. Consequently, time was implicated in opportunities to be physically present and to develop social relationships at the participant's pace rather than the data collection schedule.

**Building collaborative relationships in participant-responsive research**. Becoming a part of the daily rhythm of life is a widely accepted goal for ethnographers (Atkinson, Delamont, & Housley, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Pink, 2007, 2009, 2012; Wolcott, 2008). As Pink (2012) observed, through studying individuals and their practices researchers come to understand not only how those practices might be enacted, but also how they are modified. Gaining social and cultural access to participants and places, relied upon my ability to initially subordinate data collection goals to social goals that were built upon my early actions in the school. Extended time in the field afforded opportunities to engage participants as collaborators according to their comfort with the research relationship, their schedule demands, and their needs to come to understand through observation of who I was, how I interacted socially, and what their involvement might mean for them. My two years of exploratory work at the site provided opportunities for the administrators and teachers to ask me questions overtime about my research purposes. Although the student flow changes overtime, the two years I spent visiting the site provided the participating senior level students with some memories of seeing me among their school places. I had to be aware of my actions, my social associations, and the frequency of my visits during the exploratory period and in the initial months of the study. I knew that I was being observed just as I was observing. Joint observation was a natural part of human interaction that provided a sound foundation for the social relationships that formed through later collaboration. Given that

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the research site was a place where all participants were assessed in some way as a function of social roles as students, teachers, and administrator, extended time was a benefit to support their varied needs to assess me and to think about how my presence and their collaboration might affect their social roles at school.

Beginning active research in March of one school year and then continuing that work into the next school year provided multiple benefits. First, knowing that I would be available to meet over and extended period that spanned distinct seasonal rhythms provided participants with a sense of control over when to collaborate. I use the term seasonal rhythms to represent the nature flow of activities that happen in schools over the course of a calendar year. The change of temporal seasons tends to coincide changes in academic, social, and cultural life. Teachers and students develop relationships over these periods that are mediated to certain extents by school-oriented schedules, cultural traditions, and seasonal social life activities. Although conducting the ethnography during one school year, August to June, would have provided varied seasons, the timing of March to March provided the added benefit of summer participation for interested participants. For example, Shelia Novak (administrator), Ed Kent (AP teacher and English department chair), Rachael Stemple (English teacher), and Simone asked to meet during the summer months. These participants noted that they would have more time to relax, think about their practices, and engage in extended conversations with me during the summer months.

**Design consistent with social life**. This study also shows the importance of the researcher performing the social interaction that the study seeks to foster. The adolescents were constantly assessing people, materials, and place-oriented practices. My

ability to engage ethnography with the adolescents in this study relied upon the adolescents' views about adults, teachers, and sociocultural dynamics of school as a place where we gathered. Educational ethnography opens opportunities to explore the complexities of multisituated sociocultural life. This study shows how multisituated practice means that the adolescents were simultaneously physically, socially, and culturally aware of the sociocultural contexts of their lives when they made decisions about literacies and how to socially engage with literacy practices. These understandings traveled with them through the places and sociocultural contexts of their lives.

*Journey epistemology as informing sociocultural theoretical frameworks.* The findings indicate that adolescents and their teachers relied upon individual resources gained through their life journeys when they formed understandings, selected literacies and materials, and engaged with social relationships. As they made decisions, they were always multisituated within their life journeys, their purposes for meaning making, and the places that channeled access to social relationships, materials, and expectations for literacy practices. Consequently, the findings from this study contribute to theoretical conversations that center on adolescent literacy socialization in schools and adolescent selection of literacies and purposes for literacy practices as integrated with adolescents' and teachers' sociocultural journeys. These sociocultural journeys include individual journeys and as a community composed of diverse journeys.

Furthermore, meaning was often made on the move or in anticipation of moving and making meaning through multimodal literacies. Designing research methods in a participant-responsive manner allowed the participants to not only select the timing for our meetings but to also collaborate to select representational modes consistent with their

socioculturally constructed understandings. The adolescents in this study lived lives that were immersed in multimodal literacies. Opening up opportunities for expression and representation through mapping, walking, and video/photography honored the participants' physical and sociocultural journeys and channeled the research design to collect data in ways that were closer to how the participants lived with others and practiced meaning making. Further, the design outlined here purposefully describes multimodal, multisensory means of data collection that are perhaps best suited to gain new understandings of the complexity of literacy socialization in a multimodal communicative society (Kress, 2010). This design also honors the integrated nature of visual (Prosser, 2011) and material (Pahl & Rowsell, 2006, 2010) culture in adolescent life and incorporates methods that may not only facilitate participant visualization of their understandings (hand-drawn maps) but also actually come to know and represent meaning visually (student-participant video/photo maps and walking tours) and through artifacts rather than exclusively verbally and/or in writing.

Consequently, a participant-responsive, multimodal design contributed to ethical representations and validity concerns in a 21st century sociocultural era that challenges researchers to reassess assumptions surrounding reading, writing, and meaning making and to investigate lived practices. The ethnography of adolescent literacy in this manner contributes to calls for understanding the little-researched nature of adolescent literacy socialization (Heath & Street, 2008) and also helps to inform research calls for studies "aimed at investigating the complex relationships between the verbal and the visual in communication and representation [that] would also provide opportunities to closely examine new literacy practices in real contexts: to observe teachers and students…"

(Snyder & Bulfin, 2008, p. 829).  Engaging in this research also supports important

aspects of developing literacy programs in schools that honor and incorporate evolving

definitions of reading, writing, and text and efforts to define contexts for literacy

practices and literacy purposes.

   ***Embracing evolving understandings to inform future research***. As sociocultural

understandings surrounding literacies inevitably evolve with larger social practices and

access to varied materials and social relationships, this study indicates that researchers

need to continue to explore:

- Social relationships as inherent components of adolescent literacy

  practices that foster senses of place and the need to gather for community

  meaning.

- Literacies as integrated with adolescents' conceptions of self and

  individual life journeys and as portable as they travel among the places in

  their lives.

- Literacies in the lives of teachers, administrators, families, and other

  members of communities who support adolescents. How do adults'

  understandings of literacies, materials, and social relationships travel with

  them among the places in their lives? How do adults' sociocultural

  understandings of these aspects of literacy influence authority-determined

  literacy purposes and associated expectations for literacy practices?

   Creating responsive pedagogy and policy rest on complex understandings of local

and global student and community populations and necessarily moves researchers to

investigate practical questions and sociocultural understandings surrounding adolescent literacy socialization:

> Do [or *How do*] readers who have been schooled in traditional forms and definitions of print-based literacy embrace a broadened definition and use of text in their day-to-day lives? And do readers (teachers, parents, children alike) perceive their readings of nonprint texts as a form of reading at all? ... [A] key question for future research must address how places and spaces create and are created by readers'… and their constructions of literate identities (Hagood, 2008, p. 545-546).

Implicating place and varied individual pathways provides a rich contextual basis to ground findings. As Casey (1996) observed, "…a given place takes on the qualities of its occupants, reflecting these qualities in its won constitution and description and expressing them in its occurrence as an event: places not only *are,* they *happen*" (Casey, 1996, p. 27). Understanding place, materials, social and cultural facets of adolescent literacy practices opens new possibilities for researchers and educators to reframe meaning making in educational contexts to better develop social practices and literacy purposes that are consistent with adolescents' lived journeys.

# Appendix A

## Fieldnote Format and Storage Protocol

Fieldnotes will be organized in a two-column format with date, time, location, situational context, and individuals or groups involved. The left column will contain a record of observed details; the right column will contain my reflective questions, insights, emerging themes, or connections (fieldnote structure and usage based on Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, and Heath & Street, 2008). Fieldnotes will be handwritten in a notebook or recorded on a tablet during observations and/or immediately following depending upon the situation and the surroundings at the time. Fieldnotes will be typed and logged into a password protected, computer database organized for this research after each day of observation. All participants will be given pseudonyms and notes will be organized to reflect the environment, interactions, and body movements in place in a manner to ensure that the privacy of the school and the participants is protected.

| Contact Type: | Page 1 of 1 |
| Who: | |
| Date: | |
| Time: | |
| Place: | |

| Fieldnotes – Events and interactions observed/perceived Photographs – taken with iPad | Implications – Connections to other participants or contexts - New Directions – Themes - Unanswered questions |
|---|---|
| Source: Walking tour – unplanned meeting that evolved at Jack's suggestion. Coding: place, social reaction to expectations, content anomaly or process Journey epistemology Researcher Method/Actions & decisions RQ1 how define literacy & social expectations in place RQ2 beliefs about literacy embodied in material objects – see content anomaly detail for silences with material objects – raises the question: does the student's absence of memories related to literacy materials (readings & writings or assignments) say something about their priorities? What context surrounds remembering material aspects of engaging with literacy? RQ3 literacy practices embodied through social relationships & power enactment in place | |
| | |

**Appendix B**

**Hand-Drawn Mapping Protocol**

The following protocol will be used in conjunction with introductory activities as described in the Dissertation Proposal under Methods of Data Collection. Teacher and student participants will be involved in the hand-drawn mapping elicitation.

- Each participant will be reminded that this activity, as all activities in the study, is optional and will not affect her/his ability to participate in the study in other ways.

- The researcher will explain that different ways of representing understandings helps to form a fuller picture of what is happening with aspects of our lives.

- To begin the activity, the researcher and participant will collaborate to recall aspects of the life history shared during the earlier interview. How literacy "looked" in this memory will provide a scaffold to think about how places have a relationship to practice (memories also used to explore place in Basso, 1996; Legat, 2008; Ingold & Lee Vergunst, 2008; Till, 2005).

- Each participant will be offered a plain sheet of paper and a range of tools (pencil, pen, markers) to select.

- Participants will be asked to think about the ways that they and others make meaning in the school and the way that s/he thinks about the places in the school that reading, writing, or meaning making happen. Then, each participant will be asked to create a map of literacy happening in the school.

Guidance during the mapping process will be given on an as-needed basis but is likely to include or evolve from the following ideas and questions listed below.

Participants will be asked to think about how days progress in the building. In these questions, the phrase "reading, writing, and meaning making" is used in place of the term literacy; however, the language selected to represent this meaning is likely to vary according to the participant. Language used during the interview will be negotiated in a collaborative manner between participant and researcher so shared understandings are developed.  Those shared terms and understandings will be documented in the fieldnotes to facilitate comparison to other interview data during analysis.  Some or all of the following probing questions may prompt the participant to think about the ways literacy might happen.

**Hand-Drawn Mapping Elicitation Probing Questions and Ideas**

- What happens when you come in the building in the morning?
- Think about the doors you push open, the people, the sounds and things you see touch, and even smell around you.
- Think about how your day progresses.  As you move through the day, where do you go in the building?
- Where do you participate in reading, writing, or meaning making?
- Where do you see others reading, writing, meaning making?
- Are there times when you hear literacy?
- Smell things that connect to reading, writing, or meaning making?
- Touch things?
- Are there places in the building where you encounter literacy but were not a part of its creation?

- Do you think that there are rules about reading, writing, and meaning making? If yes, how do you know about those rules? Who sets them? Where? How are they followed or not?

- What kinds of things are parts of reading, writing, and meaning making? How do you or others use these things? How do people decide what to use and where to use it? Why are these things important?

- What kinds of reading, writing, and meaning making happen here? Where to those events happen? Who is involved? When do they happen? Do they happen in one place or on-the-move? How?

- How do other people respond to the different kinds of reading, writing, and meaning making that happen in the building?

**Appendix C**

**Digital Video/Photo Mapping: Prompts & Ideas**

*Note: Photography may be substituted if the participant is uncomfortable with*

*video.*

As you think about how you want to film your reading, writing, and meaning making outside of school, some of these questions may help you. Remember, a walking tour is one straight-forward way to create your video map. Digital storytelling might be another way if you feel like 'telling the story.' Use the method that feels most comfortable for you.

Some of you may find it helpful to answer the questions below if you aren't sure what to say or how to say it. There isn't a required length, but if it helps you, think about making a map that lasts about ten minutes. Don't worry about smooth editing. It's O.K. to start and stop the camera.

These topics inspired by the mapping we did of the school building may give you some ideas:

- What happens when you wake up in the morning? Or when you come home from school? Or after dinner at night?

- Think about the doors you enter, the people, the sounds, and the things you see, smell, and touch.

- Think about how your day progresses. As you move through the day, where do you go?

- Where do you participate in reading, writing, or meaning making?

- Where do you see others reading, writing, meaning making?

- Are there times when you hear literacy?

- Smell things that connect to reading, writing, or meaning making?

- Touch things?

- Are there places in your home, work, or play where you encounter literacy or play with literacy? How does this happen?

- Do you think that there are rules about reading, writing, and meaning making? If yes, how do you know about those rules? Who sets them? Where? How are they followed or not?

- What kinds of things are parts of reading, writing, and meaning making? How do you or others use these things? How do people decide what to use and where to use it? Why are these things important?

- What kinds of reading, writing, and meaning making happen here? Where to those events happen? Who is involved? When do they happen? Do they happen in one place or on-the-move? How?

- How do other people respond to the different kinds of reading, writing, and meaning making that happen? Do other people set rules or consequences?

**Appendix D**

**Literacy Life Story Interview Protocol**

**Documentation & Scheduling**

The following series of questions is intended to provide the overall structure for the interview. All interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed. I will confirm that the participant is comfortable with the recording prior to beginning the interview. I will take notes during the course of the interview documenting my observations of the participant's demeanor, gestures, or other semiotic characteristics that would not be available on the audio recording. Further, I will note my observations and potential new lines of inquiry that surface during the participant's responses. I may or may not use those notations to form new questions during the meeting; some further inquiry may be more appropriate for a later meeting or may raise my awareness of other facets related to the context of the study. The participant will select the place and time for the interview. All participants will have read, discussed, and signed the Informed Consent letter prior to the start of this interview.

**Duration**

I suspect that the initial meeting associated with this interview protocol will last approximately 40 minutes (the length of a standard high school class period); however, if the participant is inspired to tell stories about events in her/his life, a longer meeting or follow-up meetings may be scheduled. It is also possible that a participant may provide short, direct answers resulting in a relatively brief interview. In an effort to be sensitive to particular participant's ways of becoming comfortable with the research context, I may

decide to ask these questions and the related mini-tour, example, and verification questions across a series of meetings.

**Questions for the Semi-Structured Interview**

Notations will be made for each participant that document the time, location, context, and duration of the interview meeting (see Appendix C Fieldnote Format & Storage Protocol). I am likely to have the following questions in front of me and visible to the participant if a 'road map' appears to put the participant at ease (without the italicized portions). I will introduce the interview by saying that I simply just want to get to know the participant better. I intended to use these questions as starting points for our discussion and as a reminder to think about some particular things related to reading and writing as we talk.

1. **Tell me about how you got here. How did you come to be** *(an administrator, teacher, or student)* **at _____ high school?** *Adult participants are likely to provide some level of professional history. Student participants may discuss their residence in the community, their siblings who have attended, or indicate other pathways related to family, places, or housing situations.*

2. **Would you describe some of the things you like about being here (at this high school)?** *This is a general, open-ended question intended to note the sorts of activities, people, places, or associations that initially come to mind when the participant thinks about the high school as a place visited each school day in their lives. Answers to this question are likely to provide directions for further probing, examples, or verification questions.*

3. **What kinds of activities are you involved in here?** *Participants, particularly students, will be encouraged to expand upon their curricular activities to include clubs or other organizations that are a part of their engagement with school as a place of meeting. If activities are discussed, then follow-up explanatory questions will be introduced.*

4. **What kinds of things/activities do you like to do when you are not here at school?** *If needed, I will provide guided-tour questions that probe for work, play, community, and family activities. Students may respond to guided questions about work, play, and peer-related social life.*

5. **Can you tell me story about things your family does or things you like to do with your family?** *Or if more appropriate,* **Can tell me a story describing how you do these activities with your friends? Family? Both?** *In essence, the preceding question will be used as an introductory point for home and family life. If the participant appears to be uncomfortable with family discussions, then I will proceed to questions centering exclusively on reading and writing that begin with the next question.*

6. **Think about your experiences with reading and writing. How did you learn to read or write?** *This question may change in the field according to earlier responses. The essential element is to guide the discussion to ways of learning including social relationships, methods, and types of practices that were a part of reading and writing experiences. It is entirely possible that this question will reflect the multiple times across the participant's life that s/he was in the position of novice learner (as a child and again as new forms of literacy were*

*encountered). This question also provides an opportunity to explore multiple facets of the participants' social and cultural life across contexts.*

7. **Can you remember any particular reading or writing experiences that have stayed with you?** *It may help participants to add the further prompt of: experiences with family, an early teacher, friends, or on travels.*

8. **If you think about the different parts of your life, in what ways does reading happen for you? What kinds of things do you read?** *I will make a list of the things stated and then follow up with question 7 to explore the contexts for the identified things.*

9. **Can you describe what kinds of things happen around you when you read?** *I am interested in learning more about the contexts that might be created or that might facilitate reading - particular times, places, objects, or other surroundings that influence reading. If needed, I will offer guided-tour questions formed as extensions from the activities, places, and people that the participant discussed in earlier questions. This question may provoke a multi-part answer that presents different contexts for different types of reading.*

10. **What do you think you have to know, be able to do, or have to read the kinds of things you read?** *It is possible that literacy 'tools' or devices may come up here if they haven't before. Also, it's possible that learning preferences or collaboration may come up here if not before. Depending on the participant's answers to questions six and seven, this question may be modified to directly explore particular types of texts that the participant identified. The goal will be to gain an understanding of the types of texts that the participant reads and what the*

*participant thinks is important in this process of reading – the types of text and if the participant indicates 'appropriate' times or places to engage or encounter opportunities for particular reading. A similar protocol will be followed with the next set of questions related to writing.*

11. **What about writing? When you think about the people, places, and things you do, in what ways does writing happen?** *If needed, I will further prompt with suggestions that may include: Describe the places where you write. Describe how you like to write – alone, with someone else, with a pen, a computer, other ways?*

*12.* **Can you talk about the time of day or night that you write? Why? If you could change the time, would you? Why?** *For questions 9 & 10, I am trying to explore particular times or places that might influence what the participant writes or how s/he writes and why or if those times and places are valued.*

13. **What do you think you have to know or be able to do to write the kinds of things you write? Do you need to have particular objects or things to do this? What might they be; where would you get them?**

14. **What about reading and reading for other people? What do you think is important to them?** *This question explores areas of similarity and difference with people and contexts that the participant may initially identify as a part of the local community, a part of different generational behaviors, or perhaps aspects of global trends. If prompting is necessary, I will ask about reading and writing among peers, other generations, and people from other social communities*

*locally and globally. This question will help me to begin to see how the*

*participant situates her/himself as a reader and writer with regard to others.*

15. *Potential closing question:* **Are there things you would like to read or write that you haven't yet?** *This question will be formalized in the field according to the progress of the interview. The intended purpose is to end the interview with interests that the participant may not have been able to share given the content of earlier questions. The interview may end with question fourteen*

# Appendix E

# Coded Data Sample

Who: Colin
Date: 16 October 2012
Time: Period 2
Place: Library

| Fieldnotes – Events and interactions observed/perceived<br>Photographs – taken with iPad<br><br>Source: Audio transcript & researcher fieldnotes<br><br>**Coding:** <mark>place,</mark> <mark>social reaction to expectations</mark>, <mark>content anomaly or process</mark> <mark>Journey epistemology</mark> Researcher Method/Actions & decisions<br><br>**RQ1 how define literacy & social expectations in place**<br><br>**RQ2 beliefs about literacy embodied in material objects** – see content anomaly detail for silences with material objects – raises the question: does the student's absence of memories related to literacy materials (readings & writings or assignments) say something about their priorities? What context surrounds remembering material aspects of engaging with literacy?<br><br>**RQ3 literacy practices embodied through social relationships & power enactment in place** | Implications – Connections to other participants or contexts - New Directions – Themes - Unanswered questions |
|---|---|
| I met Colin in the cafeteria at the beginning of his commons period. I asked him if he wanted to stay or go some place else.<br><br>He said he wanted to go<br><br>I asked where and told him that a couple of the other students liked to meet in the library. Would he like that or to pick another place?<br><br>He selected the library.<br><br>No one was meeting in the tutoring room in the back, so we went there to talk and not disturb any students who might be studying.<br><br>Start of audio transcription E 2.02<br><br>Julie: so what it is (taking out the Literacy Life Story Protocol) is basically fifteen different questions and everybody has the same sort of flow but a lot of them blend in together. I have the questions here so I remember where to focus. Most of them are conversation points<br><br>Colin: ok<br><br>Julie: so – the first part is thinking about your life as a student and what brought you to where you are now. So think about what kinds of things – why are you at this particular high school? What brought you here?<br><br>Colin: I'm here because I went to the [district's] elementary and middle schools. I went there because my parents thought it was important for me to be in this [district] and get this education. | Offered an initial dichotomous choice – stay or go<br><br>His choice to go opened up his options to choose as long as we stayed on school property.<br><br>He chose the library.<br><br>We talk causally about school and the senior meeting he attended a couple of weeks ago as we walk – this time is important – the walking time – as we move and talk about his activities, Colin relaxes his gait and body posture. We talk about miscellaneous topics as we settle into his chosen place – the library.<br><br>Living area and schooling same since early childhood |

**Coding:** <mark>place,</mark> <mark>social reaction to expectations</mark>, <mark>content anomaly or process</mark> <mark>Journey epistemology</mark> Researcher Actions
**RQ1**-define lit & social expect in place   **RQ2**-beliefs about lit in material obj   **RQ3** soc relation & power

# Coded Data Sample

Who: Colin
Date: 16 October 2012
Time: Period 2
Place: Library

| | |
|---|---|
| Julie: what about your classes? what do you remember about different classes when you came through high school? Or maybe different–when you think back to early on in school versus now are there classrooms, teachers, or classes that stand out to you more than others? | Talks about memories of classes |
| Colin: freshman year I was in academic English class. And I have to say one of the best decisions that I made in high school was to take the test for the honors course the following year because I like my honors and now my AP English class so much better than the academic class because I feel like in the academic classes it's a lot more busy work but– | Freshman English class signaled the need to change – and to work to do so |
| Julie: like what kinds of things are busy work? 4.05 | He didn't like the use of materials in his academic level class because he felt is was "busy work" – this instructional strategy didn't fit with his preferred learning style – discussion. |
| Colin: vocab, filling in worksheets, doing grammar–that kind of stuff | |
| Julie: yeah | |
| Colin: but then, in the honors and AP courses it's more of actually talking about the material and how it relates to our world and how we deal with it. | |
| Julie: in the class that you have now (AP English with Mr. Kent) most of it is talking– | |
| Colin: (smiles and laughs) yeah all of its talking we've only had one test. | Writes essays in AP now |
| Julie: yeah, yeah. Do you write essays? | |
| Colin: yeah we write a lot of essays | |
| Julie: does he give you a question and you think about it the night before? I know I haven't been in every day, but it seems like he's usually referring to something–look at your notes, look at your essays, things like that–how does he structure it? | |
| Colin: how does he structure the class or the essay? | |
| Julie: well, are you–how frequently are you writing essays? | Ed constructs the essay assignment questions |
| Colin: in the beginning, it was almost one every night (snaps fingers 3 times) now, he's taken to giving us more like a week to write one but it's longer than the ones he'd have us do every night in the beginning. And it's more of a broader question then the focused ones that we had before. The one that we just wrote, you could use either–there were 2 books that we've read swampland via and the Tigers wife–and you could choose either one of those to write it down. Once you chose, he gave us a variety of topics within, like about love, war, or violence (pause) | Overtime the essay assignment focus, content, and frequency has changed. Earlier more focused examination of text details. Now, broader questions, still based on text, but require additional student thinking to integrate ideas. |

**Coding:** place, social reaction to expectations, content anomaly or process Journey epistemology Researcher Actions
**RQ1**-define lit & social expect in place    **RQ2**-beliefs about lit in material obj    **RQ3** soc relation & power

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