
Iterative Design and Implementation of Literature Modules in High School Classrooms

Project READI Technical Report #13

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PROJECT **READi**



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Project READI operated as a multi-institution collaboration among the Learning Sciences Research Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago; Northern Illinois University; Northwestern University; WestEd's Strategic Literacy Initiative; and Inquirium, LLC. Project READI developed and researched interventions in collaboration with classroom teachers that were designed to improve reading comprehension through argumentation from multiple sources in literature, history, and the sciences appropriate for adolescent learners. Curriculum materials in the READI modules were developed based on enacted instruction and are intended as case examples of the READI approach to deep and meaningful disciplinary literacy and learning.

Introduction and Overview of Literature Module Designs

Literature modules were iteratively designed and implemented each year of Project READI, beginning in year 2 (Fall 2011) and continuing through year 5 (Spring, 2015). Modules were designed for middle school and for high school using the same set of design principles and evidence-based argument assessments (see READI Technical Report #10) but differed in terms of the texts, instructional activities and supports, and formative assessments. The design principles and components of the literature instructional modules evolved over the multiple iterations of the project, building on prior work (e.g., Lee, 1995, 2007, 2011; Goldman, et al., 2012). A description of the components, along with their rationale and purposes appears in Lee (2016; READI Technical Report #9).

The process of iterative design and implementation was the same for the middle and high school modules: collaborative and iterative cycles of design and implementation followed by reflection on the instruction in relation to student work relative to READI student learning goals. The reflection process generated foci for redesign and implementation. The cycle of design – reflection - revision – implementation occurred over the course of an academic year so that teachers implemented revised modules with new groups of students in the next academic year. The iterative design process was conducted by the Literature Team, a group consisting of the middle and high school classroom teachers who implemented the designs as well as university-based researchers with expertise in English literature and assessment of literary understanding; discourse comprehension, literacy and reading; learning and cognitive sciences; and research and assessment methods. Implementations were documented through design documents; field notes of classroom implementations and design meetings; audio and video of classroom observations (selected class meetings); audio of literature team meetings to supplement meeting notes; student work, including assessments designed and analyzed by members of the Literature Team as well as assignments throughout the modules; and field notes of planning meetings that occurred between subsets of the Literature Team, often in conjunction with observing implementations. The documentation was the basis for the information on module design and implementation provided in two technical reports, one focused on middle school modules (grades 7 and 8) (READI Technical Report #14) and the other on high school (this report).

The middle and high school modules share a common conceptual framework as well as substantial overlap in the life themes and rhetorical devices that were the targets of the modules. Accordingly, the information included in the next two sections of this report is the same for both middle and high school module descriptions.

Conceptual Framework

In the first year of READI (2010 – 2011) members of the Literature Team developed a characterization of the kinds of knowledge about literary works that experts in literary reading and analysis draw on when interpreting literary works. This characterization, subsequently

referred to as Core Constructs (Goldman, et al., 2016) reflected a conceptual meta-analysis of research in areas of rhetoric, literary interpretation, and the teaching and learning of literature (e.g., Booth, 1974, 1983; Bortolussi & Dixon, 2003; Dixon & Bortolussi, 2009; Hillocks, 2011; Langer, 2011a, 2011b; Lee, 2007; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Rabinowitz, 1987; Smith, 1989, 1991). The core constructs for literature reflect knowledge in the areas of epistemology (beliefs, values, and commitments that the reader draws upon to pose, prioritize, and warrant claims based on a conception of the terrain of literature) (Lee, Goldman, Levine, & Magliano, 2016); concepts and knowledge frameworks on which readers draw as they construct interpretations of literary texts; strategies/heuristics that expert readers use; types of texts that characterize the literature curriculum in grades 6–12 (prototypical plot structures and character types), and the discourse/rhetorical problems of literary texts (Goldman, et al., 2016). As well, the larger Project READI team reached agreement on reading and sense-making processes that modules would aim to develop in each of the three disciplinary areas (science and history in addition to literature). These included close reading of multiple texts for purposes of completing a developmentally appropriate version of an authentic disciplinary task, analysis and synthesis within and across texts, and the construction, justification, and critique of disciplinary arguments (see Goldman, et al., 2016).

Interestingly, there is remarkably little empirical research on literary interpretation by adolescent readers. Thus, we undertook some initial basic studies of adolescents' processing of literary works and used these data to inform the postulation of 12th grade benchmarks on the core constructs, as well as a developmental progression from grades 6–12. One key issue that surfaced almost immediately in considerations of progressions in the core constructs was how to capture the difficulty “level” of literary texts. We came to recognize that measures for assessing complexity of texts, such as lexiles or metrics generated by quantitative corpus analyses (e.g., Graesser, McNamara, Louwerse & Cai, 2004), seemed less appropriate for capturing the challenges of literary texts than for capturing text complexity in other disciplines. As an alternative, the literature team developed a set of heuristic questions for exploring potential sources of complexity and challenge in literary works (Lee & Goldman, 2015).

Life Themes and Rhetorical Devices

Based on our initial basic studies and a consideration of the psychosocial concerns that face adolescent students, we chose to focus the modules on the life theme of coming of age and stories where symbolism was central to interpreting the story. Coming of age represents an archetypal theme in many literary works. In addition, coming of age represents a crucial set of experiences that characterize the transition from either middle childhood to adolescence or more often from adolescence toward the maturity of adulthood. We know from studies in adolescent development that this is a period of intense change: biological changes heighten the importance of peer relationships and the salience of emerging gender identities and sexual attractions while cognitive changes heighten adolescent's cognizance of social comparisons and social standing, especially in peer groups – they are more able to make inferences about abstract belief systems (right versus wrong, good versus bad, moral versus immoral, meaning of broader societal

affiliations for example with regard to race and ethnicity, etc.) as these belief systems impinge on them.

Because adolescence and indeed pre-adolescence are such important periods of physical, psychological, cognitive and emotional transitions, examining rich literary texts that provide opportunities for youth to reflect critically about their own life experiences can be empowering. The texts focused on a critical set of life experiences with which students would be grappling and included characters who wrestled with making sense of oppressive conditions not of their making and who experienced supports (sometimes internal psychological beliefs, sometimes external supports from others) that enabled them to be resilient and to learn lessons about an adult world that they would soon enter. (See for an example Sosa, Hall, Goldman, and Lee, 2015).

With respect to the rhetorical device, we selected the frequently taught device of symbolism. Symbolism is a common rhetorical tool used by authors to invite readers to hypothesize some broader proposition. The ability to detect when something in a literary text is intended to be figurative rather than literal, to distinguish whether the non-literal meaning is intended to augment or expand the literal or whether the target text is intended to stand in tension or contrast with the literal is a powerful skill in literary reasoning. When readers know how to detect and construct potential warrantable interpretations of symbols, they can access a wide range of literary texts. Thus, a second and equally important goal of this unit was to help students learn how to detect symbolism and to construct interpretations of those symbols. We taught what Rabinowitz calls rules of notice and rules of significance. The method for teaching these strategies was the interrogation of cultural data sets (Lee, 1995, 2007) and the orchestration of metacognitive instructional conversations (i.e. students talking about how they use intuitive strategies for detecting and making sense of symbolism in everyday popular texts such as rap lyrics, rap videos, film clips, advertisements, etc.). Middle school as compared to high school students were expected to identify symbols and engage in symbolic interpretation in more accessible texts and contexts.

Designs were adapted to the demographics and instructional histories of the different Literature Team teachers and their students and differed in terms of the specific text sets, cultural data sets (for activating relevant prior knowledge of strategies), and gateway activities (for building criteria by which to evaluate a coming of age experience). Thus, modules differed in terms of the specific texts as well as in the complexity of the coming of age motif. However, all modules conformed to the basic components of the architecture, as described in Lee (2016, READI Technical Report #9): explicit knowledge of strategies for interpreting symbolism through the use of cultural datasets, background knowledge for evaluating theme, strategies for close reading and for metacognitive processing, and routines for attending to the rhetorical functions of language and for building claims, evidence and warrants for constructing arguments about symbolic meanings. Furthermore, in conjunction with the module development, members of the Literature Team developed an assessment of evidence-based argument in literature, described in Goldman, Britt, Lee, Wallace & Project READI (2016), READI Technical Report #10. Classrooms implementing modules contributed to the piloting and validation of this

assessment. Thus, data were available on performance on this assessment at the beginning and end of each academic year. Assessments were designed to provide evidence of the joint READI learning goals of teaching the construction of argument (e.g. the relationship between claims, evidence, and reasoning) as well as its manifestation in literary texts. The inclusion of counterclaims, for example, provides evidence that students understand that when arguing, one must anticipate others' points of view. Such an understanding is critical to the formation of authentic arguments (Graff, 2003), and is one of the foci of the Common Core ELA standards across grade levels. Additionally, READI modules are designed to teach students not only how to track the literal events in a text, but how to understand the nature of literary texts in general. The assessments were thus intended to provide evidence regarding students' understanding that literature not only communicates engaging stories for entertainment, but that authors communicate their ideas about human behavior in the world; hence, part of the transaction between reader and text is the construction of abstract or universalized thematic inferences from the specifics of character, plot, and language.

Iterative Design and Implementation of High School Modules

This report describes the design process and implementations of high school literature modules as well as student performance on the evidence-based argument assessment. Table 1 shows the title/topic of high school modules implemented in grades 9, 11, and 12 starting in Fall, 2011. A major difference between the grade 9 and 11 modules is that the 9th grade modules covered a larger range of rhetorical devices and the identity aspects of coming of age whereas the 11th grade modules explored symbolic interpretation from power and gender perspectives. There were at least two iterative cycles with each module. Each of the design team teacher collaborators (JG, CM, and JC) implemented at least two iterations of the modules. TS and SL were university – based researchers who had been high school literature teachers. They implemented one or two modules to gain a better understanding “on the ground” of the instructional challenges. Table 2 shows the implementations chronologically by teacher.

	Symbolism/ Coming of Age	Symbolism/ Power & Gender	Argument	Unreliable Narrator
JG (9 th grade)	Fall, 2011		Fall, 2012	Spring, 2012 Fall, 2012
TS (9 th grade)	Fall, 2011			Spring, 2012
CM (9 th)	Spring, 2013 Fall, 2013 Spring, 2014		Spring, 2013 Fall, 2013	
JC (11 th)	Spring 2013	Fall, 2013 Spring 2014 Fall 2014 Spring, 2015	Fall, 2013	
SL (12 th grade)	Fall, 2011			Spring, 2012

	TS (9 th)	SL (12 th)	JG (9 th)	CM (9 th)	JC (11 th)
Fall 2011	Symb/Cof A	Symb/Cof A	Symb/Cof A		
Spring 2012	Unreliable Narrator	Unreliable Narrator	Unrel. Narr.		
Fall 2012			Argument; Unrel. Narr.		
Spring 2013				Argument Symb/Cof A	Symb/Cof A
Fall 2013				Argument Symb/Cof A	Argument Symb/Cof A/ Power & Gend
Spring 2014				Symbol/C of A	Symb/Cof A/ Power & Gend
Fall 2014, Spring 2015					Symb/Cof A/ Power & Gend

The high school modules also placed more emphasis than the middle school modules on supporting students in explaining how authors use language and structure to focus the attention of the reader on that which is symbolic and to convey details whose associations provide the data for making claims about the meaning of the symbol. Problems of this type are what Hillocks (Hillocks & Ludlow, 1984) calls structural generalizations and are embodied in the core constructs under discourse and strategies for literary reasoning. Finally, high school students were expected to construct oral and written arguments involving claims that identify that which is symbolic in a text and provide evidence from the text to support their claims. For high school students, the evidence should explain why the target has symbolic meaning beyond the literal, and why the text evidence supports the claim about the symbolic meaning. Oral and written argumentation forms were introduced in highly scaffolded ways in the middle school modules and in the 9th grade high school modules. Section 1 of this report is devoted to the symbolism/coming of age modules. We first look at three iterations as they occurred in classrooms of 9th grade students and teachers and then turn to three iterations that were enacted with 12th and 11th grade students. In addition to the major focus on symbolism and coming of age, two other modules were designed and implemented. In Section 2 we report on two iterations of work on a second rhetorical device, unreliable narrator. This was implemented iteratively only in 9th grade, although the first iteration was also implemented in grade 12. Finally, Section 3 reports on the development of a “mini” module designed to introduce students to distinctions among basic components of argument and types of argument.

Section 1. Iterative Design of High School Symbolism and Coming of Age Modules

Iteration 1: 9th Grade Symbolism and Coming of Age

The first iteration of the 9th grade symbolism and coming of age module was implemented in two classes taught by the same collaborating teacher (JG). For purposes of maximizing insights into implementation, JG taught one of the classes and a member of the university-based team (TS) taught the other. The design of the first iteration implemented all of

the components of the literature module architecture, as shown in the schematic overview and Table 3. A detailed description of the rationale for the design and its implementation are provided in Technical Report #15. Ultimately, a revised version of that technical report, Sosa, Hall, Goldman, & Lee (2016) appeared in the *Journal of the Learning Sciences*. (See also READI Curriculum Module Technical Report CM#1.)

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Symbolism				✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
Argumentation	✓	✓								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
Coming of Age										✓			✓	✓							
Annotations, Close Reading Questions, Charts, etc.			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓			
Scenarios: Slip or Trip and The Case of the Dead Musician	✓	✓																			
Song Lyrics: True Colors and Bag Lady				✓	✓																
Excerpt: When I Was Puerto Rican Gateway (Day 3): Excerpts from An Immigrant Class			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										✓	✓
Vignette: Four Skinny Trees											✓	✓									
Poem: A Song in the Front Yard												✓	✓	✓							
Short Story: Two Kinds Gateway (Day 15): Asian proverbs and Tiger Mom video															✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 1. Schematic overview of 9th grade symbolism/coming of age module, iteration 1.

Table 3

Descriptive Overview of the 9th Grade Symbolism/Coming of Age Module, iteration 1

Days	Purpose/Texts	Student Activities ¹
Days 1-2	Cultural data set: Introduction to argumentation using Hillocks’ scenarios Slip or Trip and Case of the Dead Musician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class and groups: Found evidence and made warrants • Individual: Wrote an argument paragraph
Day 3	Gateway activity: Focus on short excerpts from book on immigrants in Chicago.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class: Read aloud • In groups: Answered discussion questions
Days 4-5	Cultural data set: Introduction to symbolism using a power point presentation and lyrics from True Colors & Bag Lady	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class: Watched videos • Whole class: Discussed symbolism in the songs using worksheet (Sample 1 in Table 2).
Days 6-	Main literary text: Read and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class and individual: Close reading

¹ Whole class discussions were part of class activities every day except Days 10 and 17.

10	interpret excerpt from When I was Puerto Rican	and annotating
Days 11-12	Main literary text: Read and interpret vignette Four Skinny Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class, groups, and individual: Filled in character map and follow the plot • Whole class: Discussed interpretation of “four skinny trees” using worksheet (Sample 2 in Table 2) • Individual: Wrote argument about symbol with reminders from teacher about need for claim, evidence and warrant
Days 13-14	Main literary text: Read and interpret poem A Song in the Front Yard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class: Discussed symbolism in poem • Individual: Wrote paragraph about coming of age
Day 15	Gateway activity: Focus on Asian proverbs and Tiger Mom video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class: Discussed proverbs • Whole class: Watched video
Days 16-19	Main literary text: Read and interpret story Two Kinds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class and individual: Close reading and annotating • Groups: Presented sections of text • Whole class and individual: Filled out symbolism worksheet (Sample 3 in Table 2)
Days 20-21	Main literary texts: Write about When I Was Puerto Rican and Two Kinds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class, groups, and individual: Wrote long essay about the symbols in two texts and what they say about the world using a writing template

Phase 1 EBA pre-post assessments were administered to the students in both classes. The following essay prompt asked them to compare how the authors of two short stories used images to communicate a message about the world.

“You have read two stories: [story title by author] and [story title by author].

In both stories, the main characters experience something that has a great impact on them. One way the authors show that impact is through the symbols the authors create in their stories. Symbols are words or phrases in stories that stand for more than what they seem to be. These words or phrases could be images, actions, objects, or characters (what they do, how they think, how they look, their names).

Write an essay that compares and contrasts how the symbols in each story help you understand the characters and their worlds.”

Students were told to first read the stories and then keeping the texts present, they wrote their essay. The pre- and the post-tests were each conducted over two class periods of 45 minutes each on two consecutive days. The pretest was administered the week prior to beginning the

module implementation and the posttest was given on two consecutive days within 1 to 3 days of completing the implementation of the module.

Essays were coded using the rubrics for the dimensions of literary reasoning and rhetorical organization: claims, functions of claims, evidence, reasoning, symbolism, theme (coming of age), synthesis (1 score across both texts), organization, language and syntax. Details of the assessment and of the criteria for each score point are provided in READI Technical Report #10, Phase 1 EBA design and development. Analyses of the rubric scores on each dimension at pre and post module intervention were computed for the combined sample of consented students in both sections ($N = 22$). Preliminary analyses compared the dimension scores given to each story in the pre- or posttest set (except for Synthesis). In only 10% of the cases were there any differences in the scores on the two stories within a set. In those cases, we used the higher of the two scores. Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests were calculated for each dimension on the rubric, as is appropriate with non-parametric data of this type.

Significant improvement in rubric score points from pre- to posttest occurred for three of the dimensions: *Claims* ($z = 2.04, p = .041$), *Functions of Claims* ($z = 2.11, p = .035$), and *Symbolism* ($z = 3.26, p = .001$). The students who improved on *Claims* tended to move from one or two unconnected claims to making claims that were connected. No essay received a score of four, which would include nested claims or counterclaims. Increases for *Function of Claims* reflected more students making claims specifically referring to the character or the world of the text. The modal score moved from score point 0 to 1. No essay received a 2, which would have indicated an examination of how the language of the text functioned to explain a character's internal state and/or social world of the text. Students showed the greatest gains in *Symbolism* with more students being able to either identify or both identify and interpret symbols on the post-test. On the pre-test, all of the students received a score of 0, making no attempt to attribute symbolic significance. On the post-test, the majority of students who improved received a score of 1, indicating that they identified a symbol in the text.

The scores for *Evidence*, *Reasoning*, *Coming of Age*, and *Synthesis* did not change significantly from pre-test to post-test. For *Evidence*, about 70% of the students gave some evidence on both pre- and posttest. For *Reasoning*, about 60% of the students demonstrated implicit reasoning in their arguments on both pre- and posttest. One student used explicit reasoning on the posttest. *Coming of Age* scores started at zero and remained at zero for every student. About half of the students used some level of *Synthesis* on both the pre- and posttests. Finally, *Organization of Ideas* showed some improvement but it was not statistically significant, ($z = 1.93, p = .053$).

The essays that students write reflect products of their thinking but not evidence of the process of thinking about literary works. As well, these are individual products whereas the participation structures in the modules include individual, small group, and whole class activities. In particular, classroom discussions are in some ways at the "opposite end" of performance based on an individual working alone in the written language mode: multiple students contribute ideas; teachers, and sometimes peers, facilitate the discussion; and meaning is constructed in the "here and now" allowing for clarification and elaboration in the moment. Analyses of the discourse during whole class discussions indicated that both the number of different students and the number of contributions made by students increased over the course of the module. In the beginning student contributions to the discussion were sparse; in the middle of the module, discussion was dominated by two students, CJ and YR, in particular; and by the end

of the module, discussion was distributed more evenly across the students in the classes. Thus, the trend over the course of the module was one of increased student participation and contributions to the substance of the discussions. Content analyses indicated clear shifts in what students were talking about, with control over the topic shifting from teacher to students. These trends occurred even as the texts, topics and foci of the lesson became more complex across the span of the module. Overall, what students were able to do across early, mid, end of the unit discussions was consistent with what the pre to post changes in the essays indicated. That is, students were increasingly able to identify symbols and use evidence to support their claims. However, it should also be noted that most of the time, students' contributions were directed toward the teacher, indicating that the discussions were largely teacher mediated.

Performance changes between the pre- and post-module essays as well as the changes in the literary argument qualities of the class discussions over the course of the module focused our reflective analyses of the instructional design for purposes of revising it. These analyses revealed three areas that needed revision: explicit warranting of claim-evidence relations, written argument, and thematic interpretation. We honed in on these three objectives for revision of the module. These revisions in the second iteration module were targeted at the skills and practices that were most challenging to students given the focus and allocation of time in the first iteration module design.

Iteration 2: 9th Grade Symbolism and Coming of Age

The second iteration for the symbolism/coming of age module was implemented during the Spring, 2013 semester (March to May 2013) in the classroom of a second collaborating design team teacher (CM). (See READI Curriculum Module Technical Report CM #3.) Based on the issues identified in reflective analyses of iteration 1 we extended the module plan to 9 weeks and added or increased the focus in four areas.

- Developing criteria for theme identification. We used short scenarios to introduce students to constructing criteria for coming of age (e.g., innocence to experience, idealism to realism).
- Writing arguments. More time was spent on written arguments, including the use of a two-week module focused explicitly on argument, discussed in Section 3 of this report. Support worksheets were introduced at the beginning of the module (e.g., "Building my Argument" worksheet) to help students in making more explicit connections between claims and reasoning.
- Connecting symbolic meaning to what its interpret function. Instructional routines and sentence frames provided students with academic language and language forms to encourage thinking and reasoning about the import of particular symbols they identified as potentially relevant and important to messages about characters and/or their worlds.
- Synthesizing across texts. Instructional supports were introduced that were intended to scaffold the reasoning and language forms needed to connect across different works by the same author or different works on similar themes.

Over the nine weeks, students engaged in various opportunities to develop knowledge of how to recognize and interpret symbols and develop criteria for judgments about coming of age experiences, as well as develop classroom norms for engaging in knowledge-building discussions and critical analysis of text. Figure 2 provides the overall design of the module, including the instructional goals and opportunities for discussions over the 9-week module. A text set was designed and sequenced to lead up to the canonical text “To Kill a Mockingbird” (Lee, 1982). The sequence began with texts that reflected a perspective on coming of age that was close to the age of the students in the class, specifically the vignette “Linoleum Roses” from *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1991). A second text drew on experiences that could be assumed to be closer to those of the students than the events in the Lee text in that students analyzed the symbols and discussed interpretations of the Tupac Shakur poem “The Rose That Grew From Concrete”. In working with each text, class activities provided multiple occasions during which students engaged in oral arguments through small-group and whole-class discussions, and individually composed writing assignments focused on claims about symbolic meanings and the evidence for these claims. Figure 3 depicts the flow of instruction and integration of texts with components of the architecture of the literature modules.

	Module Design		
	Simple		Complex
	Weeks 1-2	Week 3	Weeks 4-9
Instructional Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies for interpreting symbolic meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice metacognitive strategies for interpreting theme and symbolism Develop criteria for coming of age theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice in oral and written literary argumentation related to coming of age and symbolic interpretation
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural data sets (song lyrics, images) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coming of age scenarios, short literary texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canonical text (To Kill a Mockingbird)
Opportunities for Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions and prompts help students explain and provide evidence for claims Highly scaffolded to build 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiry determined by teacher and students Students provide evidence and logic Moderately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiry determined by teacher and students Minimum to no scaffolding during discussions— student to student

	interpretive arguments	scaffolded by teacher guiding questions	interactions
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Figure 2. Overall design of 9th grade symbolism/coming of age module, iteration 2

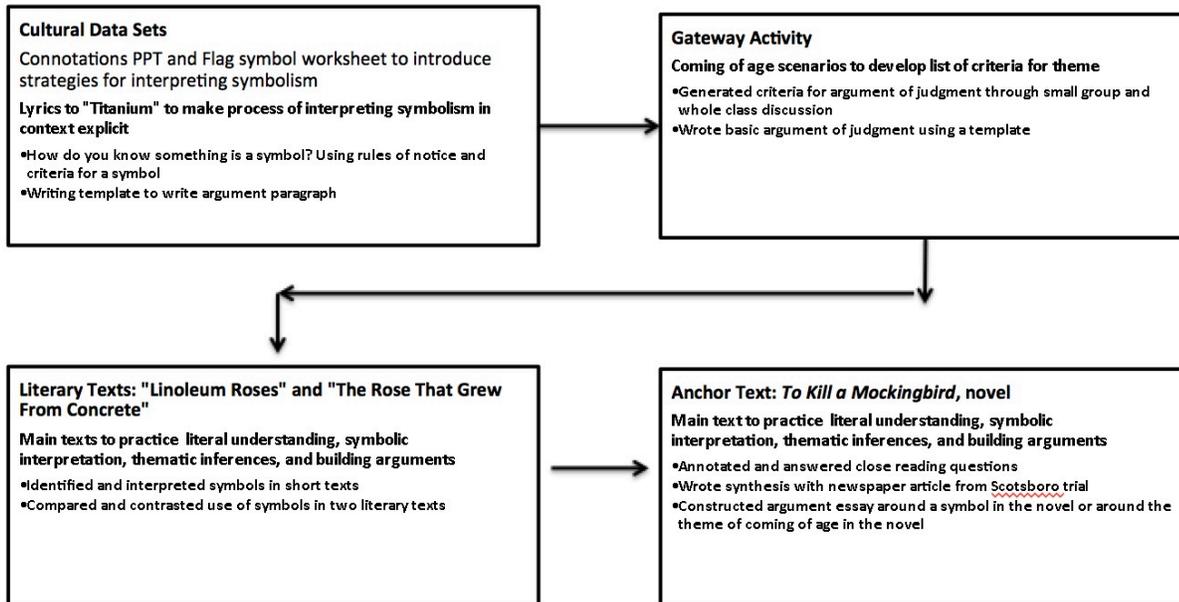


Figure 3. Flowchart of instructional foci and texts in 9th grade symbolism/coming of age module, iteration 2.

Analyses of Iteration 2 Implementation

We again conducted both product and process analyses of the implementation, albeit with a smaller sample size for iteration 2.

Pre/Post Essays. Using the Phase 2 story sets, all students in the class completed the pre and post essay assessment (See READI Technical Report #10 for details). Story sets were counterbalanced across students and time of test, however data on pre and post were available from 11 of 13 consented students in the class. Instructions for the Phase 2 version of the assessment were altered from those of Phase 1 to emphasize that stories convey messages and ideas about the human condition. Specific instructions were the following.

“You have read two stories: [story title by author] and [story title by author]. Both stories suggest messages and ideas about the way people are and the world we live in. In each story there are symbols that the author included to help us understand some of those messages and ideas. Symbols are words or phrases in

stories that stand for more than what they seem to be. These words or phrases could be images, actions, objects, or characters (what they do, how they think, how they look, their names). Write an essay that compares how the symbols in each story help us understand some of the messages and ideas about the way people are or the world we live in.”

The essays were again assigned rubric scores for nine dimensions: claims, function of claims, evidence, reasoning, symbolism, coming of age, organization, synthesis, and language and syntax.

Results of pre-post assessment. Due to the small number of subjects, we examined the results on the dimensions from a descriptive perspective first. Table 4 provides the mode, minimum, and maximum rubric score points at pre and post for each dimensions. As seen in the descriptives reported in Table 4 there were shifts in scores from pre- to post-assessment. For example, the modal scores increased from pre- to post- assessment in the Evidence, Symbolism and Synthesis dimensions. In addition, there were increases in the minimum scores achieved in the Claims, Evidence, and Organization dimensions. Furthermore, increases in maximum scores achieved were evident in the Evidence, Coming of Age, Organization and Language and Syntax dimensions.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Pre- and Post-Assessment Essay Scores by Dimension

	Mode		Minimum		Maximum	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Claims	3	3	0.5	1	3	3
Function of Claims	1	1	0	0	1	1
Evidence	1	3	0	1	2	3
Reasoning	1	1	0	0	2	2
Symbolism	0	2	0	0	2	2
Coming of Age	0	0	0	0	0	1
Synthesis	0	2	0	0	3	3
Organization	1	1	0	1	1	2
Language and Syntax	1	1	1	1	1	2

To determine if there were differences between scores on pre- and post-assessments, a Wilcoxon matched pairs signed rank test was conducted for each coding dimension. The low frequencies of negative ranks shown in Table 5 indicate that on all dimensions students improved or maintained their pretest levels of performance. Improvements were significant for several dimensions, including claims, evidence, symbolism, synthesis, organization and language and syntax.

Table 5. Wilcoxon Results for Changes in Dimension Scores for Pre- and Post- Assessments^a

	Negative Ranks	Positive Ranks	Ties	Z	p value
Claims	0	6	5	2.21	0.03*
Function of Claims	0	3	8	1.73	0.08
Evidence	1	8	2	2.48	0.01*
Reasoning	2	3	6	0.00	1.00
Symbolism	1	7	3	2.43	0.02*
Coming of Age	0	2	9	1.41	0.16
Synthesis	1	6	4	2.16	0.03*
Organization	0	4	7	2.00	0.05*
Language and Syntax	0	4	7	2.00	0.05*

*Significant at $p \leq .05$.

^aNegative ranks indicate pre rubric score point greater than post; positive ranks means post greater than pre. |Z| indicates these are absolute values of z.

Discussion. The pre-post assessments indicated that the targeted modifications were effective for improving some dimensions but others continued to be difficult for students. In particular, spending more time on writing literary arguments improved students' skills at supporting their claims with relevant and sufficient evidence. However, few students showed gains in connecting their evidence and claims with warrants despite supports and time built into the module to help students make reasoning explicit. In synthesizing work, the added scaffolds proved successful, helping students make gains in constructing arguments using information from multiple texts. Although students showed gains in identification and interpretation of symbols, they did not indicate growth in coming of age, suggesting that further supports are required to develop skills in writing about how symbolism functions in texts to get at the coming of age theme or to explore social or moral issues that reflect the human condition.

Because the pre/post assessments did not indicate growth in reasoning, we traced the opportunities and activities for writing arguments, especially with a focus on warrants, that took

place during the nine weeks of the intervention. The sampled student written essays, especially those written during the last three weeks of the module, indicated the use of explicit warrants in students' written arguments. However, these assignments continued to be heavily scaffolded. When writing without these scaffolds on the posttest, students continued to have difficulty in producing warrants. This suggests that a next iteration needed to focus on gradual removal of scaffolds.

Analysis of enactment. Similar to analyses of previous enacted modules, this enactment indicated student growth and sophistication in whole-class and small-group discussions more than in individual written work. The classroom discussions provided evidence of changes in reasoning over the course of the module. Specifically, over the course of the enactment, students' increased their facility with, and ownership of, the interpretation process. For example, the discussions that took place over the first two weeks of the module were heavily teacher-directed. In her questions and statements, the teacher explicitly reminded the students of what a symbol was and of the reasoning needed to back up their identification of something as a symbol. The teacher also often clarified or asked for clarification of the function of aspects of arguments (i.e., what is reasoning?) and of skills or techniques (i.e., what made you think that is a symbol?). Through these "moves" the teacher made explicit and emphasized the thinking and reasoning necessary to connect possible meanings of symbols to larger thematic understandings of text.

As the module continued, the discussions became less teacher-directed. As the students moved into the canonical text, they no longer relied on the directives of the teacher but were able to engage in interpretive processes to make claims, provide evidence, and reason about symbolism and its relationship to interpretive meaning. The teacher encouraged elaboration of the ongoing discussion rather than setting its direction and encouraged all students to contribute to the discussions. Generally, as the students took over more of the intellectual work, the teacher took a less directive role in the discussion.

Iteration 3: 9th Grade Symbolism and Coming of Age

Reflection on the iteration 2 implementation surfaced some specific areas that needed more focus, including developing criteria for theme but also reasoning about connecting various identified symbols to the criteria as well as the gradual removal of scaffolds. However, a more general issue emerged: students needed opportunities to revisit symbolic interpretation skills over a greater range of texts, both in terms of length and complexity. As well, to enact more effective scaffolding and fading, the team decided explore more active monitoring of student work samples throughout instruction. Finally, it was generally agreed based on observations of the enactment that more emphasis was needed at the beginning of the year on establishing a community of readers and learners. Based on these needs, the design team reached the decision to construct a year-long implementation plan for 2013 – 2014 as well as identify specific tasks across the year that would be used for ongoing assessment of student progress in literary interpretation.

The year-long design is provided in Table 6. Instruction began with an orientation to building inquiry dispositions, sharing and debating different ideas about the role of literature, and

developing ideas about reading as an open dialogue between reader and text. Criteria for evaluating arguments, attributing character traits (e.g., heroism), and coming of age were explicit foci. In addition, students were introduced to interpretation of identified symbols with respect to criteria for different character traits and themes. These reasoning practices were introduced in the context of short works, some of which were highly familiar to students and thus reflected cultural data sets and others were less familiar (see weeks 7 – 16 in Table 6). Therefore in the context of short pieces, students could think about how they knew something was symbolic and what it might mean thematically. Then, in similarly short works that were less familiar, students attempted to use those same processes to identify symbols and interpret their importance and relevance to thematic interpretation.

Table 6. Year-long design of iteration 3, 9th grade symbolism/coming of age

Weeks	Focus/ Texts	Objectives
1-2 weeks	Mini-Argument Module <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Courageous Scenarios ▪ Slip or Trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Close reading encompasses meta-comprehension and self-regulation of the process. ▪ Examples to draw on students’ knowledge of claims, evidence, and reasoning. Practice constructing claims using evidence; articulate how evidence supports claims ▪ Establish and apply criteria for judging the effectiveness of arguments
3-6 weeks	What makes someone a hero? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Odysseus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish criteria for judging interpretations with respect to themes for connecting use of language to theme. ▪ Draw from students’ experience and practice by identifying general norms and expectations in argument forms.
7-16 weeks	Symbolism/ Coming of Age <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Titanium Lyrics ▪ Coming of Age Scenarios ▪ “A Song in the Front Yard” by Gwendolyn Brooks ▪ “Linoleum Roses” by Sandra Cisneros ▪ “The Rose that Grew from Concrete” by Tupac Shakur ▪ “The Flowers” by Alice Walker ▪ “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-text analysis: close reading of literary texts that use symbolism to communicate theme: read to identify potential symbols and authors’ use of symbolism. ▪ Construct literary arguments (claims, evidence, explanations) about use of symbolism to communicate themes within and/or across texts. Draw on criteria for specific themes. ▪ Build on past modules by developing new criteria for specific devices or genres (e.g. unreliable narrator or coming of age stories), and apply to arguments about effects of those elements in literature.
2 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excerpt from <i>In the Time of the Butterflies</i> by Julia Alvarez 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CPS Mandated Reach Performance Test for Q3 ▪ Close reading of a literary text provided to the students in order for them to construct literary argument (claim, evidence, warrant/explanation) using what they thought to be the theme or symbol of the excerpt.
18-28 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Book Thief</i> by Markus Zusak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Close reading of literary texts that focused on characterization and identifying theme and

	<p>Supporting Texts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background information on Holocaust, Nazi/Hitler rise to power, and numerous other topics covered through cross-discipline instruction during the English, World Studies, and Reading class - Article: Holocaust Survivor: Jeannine Burk's story 	<p>how it relates to our world today</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construct literary arguments (claims, evidence, explanations) about characters and themes within and/or across texts. ▪ This text proved to be rather difficult for a good number of students. Students completed Jigsaw activities for different sections of the book, and they wrote a final argument piece on (<i>Who fostered the greatest relationship with Liesel in The Book Thief?</i>)
29 week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>This I Believe</i> Personal Essay Unit <p>Sample Essays included: Mohammad Ali, Elie Wiesel, Tony Hawk, Barack Obama, and other various ones including student examples.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To give students a break before continuing on to the next unit focused on the novel <i>Of Mice and Men</i>, a week was devoted to having students build their own "personal beliefs" essays modeled after the well-known NPR program "This I Believe"
30-36 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Raymond's Run" ▪ <i>Of Mice and Men</i> by John Steinbeck ▪ "The Man Who Finds His Son Has Become A Thief" by Raymond Souster ▪ Article: Death of Emmitt Till ▪ Letter from John Steinbeck to Ms. Claire Luce (actress who played Curley's wife) 	<p>Continuation of reading literary texts for symbolism and creating literary arguments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-text analysis: close reading of literary texts that use symbolism to communicate theme: read to identify potential symbols and authors' use of symbolism. ▪ Construct literary arguments (claims, evidence, explanations) about use of symbolism to communicate themes within and/or across texts. ▪ Develop literary argument for overall character development and theme of the text (<i>Was George justified in killing Lennie at the end of the novel?</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This literary argument was built on developing new criteria (what does it mean to be loyal to someone?)
2-3 days	<p>Project READi EBA Post-Test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros ▪ "The Butterfly" by James Hanley <p>GISA test</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete post-test which asks students to compare/contrast/connect symbols across two texts

At the start of the second semester (week 18), the first novel was introduced (*The Book Thief*) and students then spent the second semester working with symbols and themes in longer works, concluding the year with the reading of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. For both novels, the design included shorter literary pieces that related to the themes of the novels as well as informational pieces to provide students with background knowledge about the historical context in which the novel was set.

During the first semester, a tension emerged between the need to have a certain number of grades for each student and using student work products more formatively. Thus, student work samples became de facto the basis for grade book entries and took on a summative quality that

created tension with using the pieces more formatively. Nevertheless, with respect to symbolism, over the course of the Fall semester, students showed more proficiency with identifying symbols and discussing how the author was using symbols to indicate some larger message about the character or the story world. However, although they engaged in these identification and interpretation practices with several short pieces over the semester, when they were faced with engaging in these activities in the context of a novel, they struggled. Discussions were more heavily teacher guided than at the end of the Fall semester and some of the interpretation templates that they had left behind by the end of Fall were reintroduced. This helped somewhat but introduced another issue. Students were not reading on their own but waiting to come to class to “get the answer.” This was perhaps a natural result of the re-introduction of the supports. These issues again brought to the fore the delicate balance in the design of modules around issues of text complexity, supports for engaging with challenging texts, and classroom contexts that supported students to keep them sufficiently invested in doing the work. We observed similar trends over the year with respect to intra- and intertext connections and argument writing. Students’ proficiency with these processes developed over the Fall semester when short texts were in use but they struggled with these same processes in the context of novel-length literary works. Thus, the tension between complexity of text, task, and scaffolds remained a relatively unresolved issue.

Phase 3 assessment. Pre/post assessments. Data were available for 14 students for the pre- and post-assessments using the Phase 3 design (see READI Technical Report #10). This version of the assessment used the same two stories at pre and at post (“Eleven” and “The Butterfly”) due to the difficulties encountered in early phases of EBA assessment development of equating the difficulty of text sets. In addition, this prompt used a graphic organizer to elicit student thinking about symbols in the two texts, their meanings, and their comparisons. This was preparatory to writing an essay that addressed the following prompt.

“When writing stories, authors often create symbols that help reveal ideas about the way people are and the way the world is. Symbols are words or phrases in stories that stand for more than what they seem to be. Symbols can be images, actions, objects, or characters (what they do, how they think, their names). In your essay, compare and contrast how you think symbols in “Eleven” and “The Butterfly” help reveal ideas about the way people are and the way the world is, or help you understand the characters and their worlds. Use the information you wrote in the chart and the stories to help you write your essay.”

The pre-post assessments were scored with rubrics for nine dimensions: Claims, Function of Claims, Evidence, Reasoning, Symbolism, Coming of Age, Organization, Synthesis, and Language and Syntax. To determine where there were significant differences between scores on pre-and post-assessments, a Wilcoxon matched pairs signed rank test was conducted for each coding dimension. As shown in Table 7 below, Claims, Function of Claims, Evidence, Symbolism, Coming of Age, Synthesis, and Organization showed equal or improved performance. However, only the improvement in Symbolism was significant.

Table 7. Wilcoxon signed rank test of significance of change (post – pre) on nine essay dimensions^a

	Negative Ranks	Positive Ranks	Ties	Z	<i>p</i> value
Claims	0	1	15	1.00	.32
Function of Claims	0	1	15	1.00	.32
Evidence	3	8	5	1.09	.28
Reasoning	3	2	11	.45	.66
Symbolism	2	10	4	2.58	.01*
Coming of Age	0	2	14	1.34	.18
Synthesis	8	4	4	1.03	.30
Organization	4	4	8	.00	1.00
Language and Syntax	3	2	11	.45	.66

*Significant at $p \leq .05$

^aNegative ranks indicate pre rubric score point greater than post; positive ranks means post greater than pre. |Z| indicates these are absolute values of z.

Reflection on the year long implementation occurred in the design team context and with the 11th grade teacher implementing iterations 2 and 3 at the same school as this 9th grade teacher. These are discussed below, following the presentation of iteration 3 with 11th grade students.

Iteration 1: 12th Grade Symbolism and Coming of Age

The 12th grade initial iteration of the symbolism and coming of age module emphasized affective evaluation of literary works and the words within them and connecting the ways in which these feelings related to themes. The emphasis on affective evaluation was intended to lay the ground work for focusing on symbolism as connotative meaning evoked by authors choice of particular words (e.g., mansion versus house) Texts used in the module reflected texts that the 12th grade teacher had previously used with her students. Thus, although the goals and components of the modules were similar for 9th and 12th grade, the implementation of the 12th grade module reflected texts of greater complexity. As well, it was assumed that symbol identification was not an issue for these older students but that connecting symbols to themes required attention. The module was implemented in one 12th grade classroom during Fall, 2011. Table 8 provides an overview of the instructional sequence of tasks, texts, and instructional focus

over the course of the 18 days of instruction.

Table 8. Texts and General Activities in symbolism and Coming of Age Unit

Timeline	Unit elements	Instructional activities and texts
Prestudy	Prestudy assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written task in response to the poem “I Ask My Mother to Sing” by Li-Young Lee • Think-aloud in response to an excerpt from the novel <i>Prisoner’s Dilemma</i> by Richard Powers • Phase 1, EBA pretest
Day 1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of the connection between everyday and school interpretation • Examination of language that creates specific effects
Days 2 and 3	Discussion about effects of language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headlines and print ads • Short story: Short version of Cinderella (created by the teacher)
Days 4 and 5	Writing argument about effects of language	Argument about symbolism and effects in the short version of Cinderella
Day 6	Constructing interpretations with a focus on symbolism	Novel excerpt: <i>Black Boy</i> by Richard Wright
Days 7 and 8	Constructing interpretations by comparing two texts with similar themes but different styles	Pop songs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I Will Follow Him” sung by Little Peggy March • “I Will Follow You Into the Dark” by Death Cab for Cutie
Days 9 and 10	Writing argument about literary effects	Argument about symbol and themes in love songs
Days 11-13	Discussion and activities for interpretation of theme of fiction	Novella excerpt: “Linoleum Roses” from <i>The House on Mango Street</i> by Sandra Cisneros
Days 14–16	Discussion and activities for interpretation of theme of fiction	Short story: “Ysrael” by Junot Díaz
Days 17 and 18	Writing argument about literary effects	Argument about symbol and theme in “Ysrael”

Poststudy	Poststudy assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written task in response to the poem “I Ask My Mother to Sing” • Think-aloud in response to the excerpt from the novel <i>Prisoner’s Dilemma</i> • Phase 1, EBA posttest
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The first three days of instruction were focused on making affective evaluation visible as a precursor to taking up consideration of how specific words authors included in their texts might be intentional and designed to evoke particular connotations and feelings in the reader. At the beginning of the unit, the teacher introduced the affective evaluation heuristic and the concept of connotations. She presented students with a list of approximate synonyms for the word *house*, such as *domicile*, *shack*, *crib*, and *cottage*, and asked students where they would prefer to live. Students identified and explained their preferred terms by articulating associations with those terms. Students had negative reactions to *shack* and *domicile* but positive reactions to *crib* and *cottage*. For example, one student preferred the word *cottage* because it sounded more “pure and innocent.” The teacher then defined what the students had done as “constructing connotations” of language. She pointed out to them that even though all the words they looked at were synonyms for *house*, students knew that each word had different connotations and could have different effects on an audience. Next, the teacher pointed out that part of what students were doing when they created connotations was making an evaluation of the valence, or positive/negative effects, of the words. She explained that individuals often make a very quick evaluation of the positive or negative impact of a thing first and then figure out why they made such an evaluation. She explained that such a process was a great way to examine the effects of language in all sorts of texts.

This exercise was repeated in small groups with synonyms for *woman*, such as *lady* and *chick*, along with other terms that the students called out. Students first evaluated the positive or negative valence of each word and then explained their evaluations, generally using abstract terms. Comparisons of synonyms for *woman* led to a discussion about the way concrete words embodied abstract concepts and, therefore, had powerful effects in our minds. The teacher then reintroduced the idea of connotation and wrote down the three steps of the affective evaluation on the blackboard:

1. Identify language that you feel has strong valence.
2. Evaluate valence (positive, negative, or both).
3. Explain or justify your evaluations.

Students were then provided with time in which to practice applying these three steps of affective evaluation with short, popular texts. They compared effects of the stage name Marilyn Monroe and Monroe’s given name, Norma Jeane Mortenson. They examined the tones created by different word choices in newspaper headlines (e.g., “Police Officer Controls Riot” vs. “Cop Suppresses Gathering”) and articulated the connotations that they felt were created by specific

words and the headline as a whole. They did similar work with advertisements, making text-based evaluations of mood and tone and explaining those evaluations through abstractions. The teacher led several class discussions in which she reminded students that the process they were using was one they used in their everyday lives; now they were carrying that practice into school, taking it apart, and trying it on other kinds of texts.

The next two days (4 and 5) were devoted to exploring coming-of-Age and gender, a coupling the teacher was interested in exploring. As well, students applied the affective heuristic. She did this by introducing and asking students to define coming-of-age and compare the experience for young women and young men. Students then practiced the affective evaluation heuristic with a series of literary texts that could be characterized as exploring both gender and coming-of-age. The teacher began with simpler, more familiar texts, such as a version of Cinderella. The teacher asked students to practice the first step of the heuristic by identifying details in the text that seemed particularly affect-laden. For example, after reading the line “It was afternoon. Cinderella was left at home, weeping by the ashes,” students identified text that they felt was especially valence-laden. In this case, students felt that the second sentence (“Cinderella was left at home...”) was more affect-laden than the first and that it was negative in tone. Within that second sentence, students pointed to the words “left,” “weeping,” and “ashes” as being especially salient to their negative evaluations. Then, the students justified their evaluations, agreeing that in context, those words created a sense of abandonment and hopelessness. In this way, students moved beyond tracking the action of the story to identifying details that were salient to interpretation and constructing abstract connotations. Students repeated this process with every phrase or detail that they felt was valence-laden.

After finishing the story, the students practiced affective evaluation on the cumulative effects of this version of Cinderella. Most judged the story to have positive effects, explaining their evaluations with simple thematic inferences, such as “Hope will win out in the end,” and “Love conquers all.” Notably, a few students judged the overall effect to be negative, justifying their evaluation by saying that in Cinderella, “the only way a woman succeeds is through a man.” As the students formulated interpretations, the teacher provided them with sentence stems designed to support the use of affective evaluation. For instance, one stem read, “This text *condemns* a world in which...,” and another read, “This text *celebrates* a world in which...” Students then wrote a one-paragraph argument about the effects of Cinderella and were encouraged to refer to specific elements (e.g., words, phrases) of the text as evidence.

An additional day of practice with the affective heuristic involved applying it to an excerpt from Richard Wright’s novel *Black Boy*. This text also addressed issues of coming-of-age. First, students made arguments about whether the narrator had in fact come of age, and then returned to the text to use affective evaluation to construct connotation and thematic inferences of details and overall effects.

The next segment of the module (days 7–10) was intended to introduce students to comparing across texts and writing arguments about those comparisons. This was introduced using two popular love songs, “I Will Follow Him” and “I’ll Follow You Into the Dark.” The two songs addressed the same theme, devoted love, but used different styles to do so. Students

practiced affective evaluation with both texts. Students then used the school argument template to make claims about which kind of love was more mature. They incorporated some of their interpretations of the effects of language into those arguments.

From songs, students moved to short stories as contexts for applying the affective heuristic (days 11 – 16). They began with a vignette from Sandra Cisneros’s *The House on Mango Street*, “Linoleum Roses”, and then moved to a short story from Junot Díaz’s *Drown*, “Ysrael”. For the Cisneros piece, students practiced the affective evaluation in a teacher-led discussion and as a whole class worked to identify and construct connections between connotations that they felt were created by the text. Students used the sentence stems to develop thematic statements based on connections between abstractions. Students then read the Díaz story; about 25% was read in class, and the rest was read for homework. To account for students who had not read for homework, the teacher asked class members to review important sections. Students then worked in small groups to use affective evaluation with one motif from the text. The culminating activity of the module (days 17 and 18) involved students using the school argument template to make an argument about the effect of that motif on the themes of the story as a whole.

The 12th grade students took the same version of the Phase 1 EBA as the 9th graders during iteration 1, using exactly the same instructions, procedures for counterbalancing, and scoring. Analyses of the rubric scores on each dimension at pre and post module intervention were computed for the combined sample of consented students (N = 34). Performance was analyzed separately by story set. There were significant improvements in the rubric scores regardless of story set, although for the condition where the easier stories were at pre (per the 9th graders), fewer dimensions improved significantly at posttest. Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests were calculated for each dimension within story set, as shown in Table 9. Note that the lack of significant improvement from pre to post for several dimensions in the Eleven/Butterfly First condition is due to higher rubric scores at pretest for this story set.

Table 9. Results of Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests (post/pre) for 12th Grade Iteration 1

Dimension	Eleven/Butterfly First		Flowers/Mulvaney's First	
	<i>t</i> (13)	<i>p</i> value	<i>t</i> (18)	<i>p</i> value
Claims	< 2	> .07	3.88	< .01
Function of claims	4.32	< .01	3.36	< .01
Evidence	2.01	.07	3.11	< .01
Reasoning	2.21	.04	4.43	< .01
Symbolism	4.20	.01	3.57	< .01
Coming of Age	< 2	> .07	3.59	< .01

The data indicate that the module was effective in enhancing the literary interpretation skills of the 12th grade students. Levine (see Levine, 2014. [Making interpretation visible with an affect-based strategy](#). *Reading Research Quarterly*, 49, 283-303) reports that it was more effective than a more traditional approach to symbolism and theme, a basic study related to the module design described here. Of interest with respect to concerns about text complexity is that

the story set made less of a difference in performance for the 12th grade as compared to the 9th grade students. This could reflect more mature psychosocial development, the effects of the affective evaluation heuristic, or both.

Reflection on the implementation underlined the importance of developing criteria for coming of age, and themes more generally, as well as the importance of having students become aware of the processes they were using to understand nonliteral use of language in everyday experiences and cultural artifacts. As well the difficulties students experienced in moving from shorter, less complex literary works to longer ones and from discussion to written expression reinforced the need to carefully design text sequences and provide opportunities for independent but supported writing. Unfortunately due to personal circumstances, the 12th grade teacher could not continue with the project and the second iteration the high school symbolism/coming of age module was designed and implemented in a different school with an 11th grade teacher.

Iteration 2: 11th Grade Symbolism and Coming of Age

The second iteration of an upper-level high school symbolism/coming of age module was implemented over a 9-week period of time during Spring, 2013 (January to March) in an 11th grade classroom in an interest-oriented selective enrollment school. Consistent with the reflection on the initial implementations of this module, time was allocated to writing as well as discussion, and gateway activities specifically oriented toward building criteria for coming of age themes. In designing the module, careful attention went into the selection and sequencing of texts and developing supports for connecting symbolic meaning to what it says about the characters or their world and for synthesis across texts. Thus, over the nine weeks, students engaged in various opportunities to develop knowledge of how to recognize and interpret symbols and develop criteria for judgments about coming of age experiences, as well as develop classroom norms for engaging in knowledge-building discussions and critical analysis of text. (For the complete module, see READI Curriculum Module Technical Report CM #4.)

The text sequence was designed and sequenced to lead up to the chapter “Two Kinds” from Amy Tan’s novel, *The Joy Luck Club*. The sequence began with a younger coming of age perspective and with experiences that were expected to be more closely related to students’ experiences: “Linoleum Roses” from *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1991) and the Tupac Shakur poem “The Rose the Grew From Concrete”. In the 11th grade module, more emphasis was placed on connecting symbolic meaning to theme than in the 9th grade where these two shorter works were also part of the module design. The last two texts in this module are ones in which the narrator is reflecting on her childhood. Thus these stories introduced complexity related to understanding that these are recollections of events and emotions experienced as an adolescent but recounted from an adult perspective. First, students worked with Eugenia Collier’s short story “Marigolds.” They then went on to read the chapter “Two Kinds” from the Tan novel.

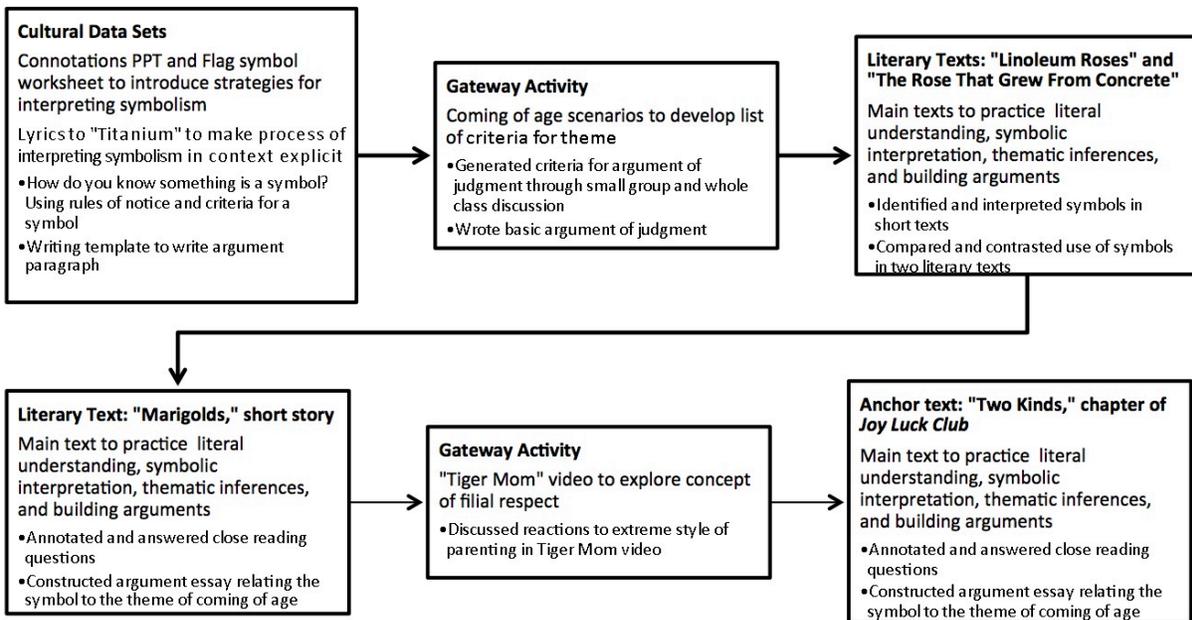
Instructional activities addressed guiding questions regarding theme (e.g., What counts as a coming of age experience? What role does family play in coming of age? How is coming of age impacted by racism and poverty?), rhetorical tools in literature (e.g., What is a symbol, what

does it do, and how do you know? How do authors use symbolism to represent childhood, maturity, and coming of age?) and structural generalization (e.g., How does the author use language to convey symbolic meaning? How does the author organize details to convey what you think the symbol(s) mean?). The module included multiple occasions on which students engaged in oral arguments through small-group and whole-class discussions as well as individual writing assignments focused on claims about symbolic meanings and the evidence for these claims. Table 10 and Figure 4 provide the overall design of the module, including the instructional goals, related texts, and opportunities for discussions over the 9-week module

Table 10. Design of 11th grade symbolism/coming of age module, iteration 2

	Module Design		
	Simple		Complex
	Weeks 1-2	Week 3	Weeks 4-9
Instructional Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies for interpreting symbolic meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice metacognitive strategies for interpreting theme and symbolism Develop criteria for coming of age theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice in oral and written literary argumentation related to coming of age and symbolic interpretation
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural data sets (song lyrics, images) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coming of age scenarios, short literary texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longer literary texts: “Marigolds” (Collier, 1969); “Two Kinds” (Tan, 1989)
Opportunities for Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions and prompts help students explain and provide evidence for claims Highly scaffolded to build interpretive arguments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiry determined by teacher and students Students provide evidence and logic Moderately scaffolded by teacher guiding questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiry determined by teacher and students Minimum to no scaffolding during discussions—student to student interactions

Figure 4. Sequence of module components for 11th grade symbolism/coming of age module, iteration 2



Analysis of enactment. This enactment provided evidence of student growth and increased sophistication in whole-class and small-group discussions more than in individual written work. The module enactment, specifically the classroom discussions, provided evidence of changes in reasoning over the course of the module especially students’ increased facility with and ownership of the interpretation process. Over the course of the module, the discussions became less teacher-directed. As the students moved into the longer literary texts, they no longer relied on the directives of the teacher but were able to engage in interpretive processes to make claims, provide evidence and reason about symbolism and its relationship to interpretive meaning. That is, students took over more of the intellectual work.

Pre/post EBA for 11th grade symbolism module. This class of 11th grade students took the Phase 2 version of the EBA assessment, similar to the 9th grade students on iteration 2. Instructions and story sets were identical for the two grade levels. Phase 2 used two story sets (“Eleven” and “Butterfly;” “Shaving” and “The Flowers”) counterbalanced across time of test and students. The pre-post assessments were scored with the rubrics for the nine dimensions: Claims, Function of Claims, Evidence, Reasoning, Symbolism, Coming of Age, Organization, Synthesis, and Language and Syntax. Descriptive statistics indicated some improvement from pre to post test on maximum score points for Claims, Function of Claims, Symbolism, Coming

of Age, and Synthesis dimensions. However, modal scores were largely unchanged, with only Claims showing any increase (from 2 to 3). Table 11 shows the number of students whose performance was worse (negative ranks), better (positive ranks), or unchanged on post than on pre test for each dimension. Results of significance tests indicated significant improvement on only Claims and Symbolism dimensions.

Table 11. Wilcoxon signed-ranks test for Post – Pre Dimension Rubric scores^a

	Negative Ranks	Positive Ranks	Ties	Z
Claims	0	5	3	2.12*
Function of Claims	2	1	5	0.00
Evidence	4	2	2	1.19
Reasoning	3	0	5	1.73
Symbolism	0	5	3	2.04*
Coming of Age	0	1	7	1.00
Synthesis	1	2	5	0.82
Organization	3	0	5	1.73
Language and Syntax	1	0	7	1.00

*Significant at $p \leq .05$

^aNegative ranks indicate pre rubric score point greater than post; positive ranks means post greater than pre. |Z| indicates these are absolute values of z.

Thus, while the oral small group and whole class discussions suggested that students were engaging in more sophisticated literary interpretation and argumentation, the individual written assessments failed to reflect much improvement. Analyses of student written work indicated that even with various supports and scaffolds, students struggled to write interpretive argument essays. Furthermore, during the implementation of the module, students frequently did not hand in written writing assignments despite multiple attempts by the teacher to provide supports and rewriting/ revising opportunities. Students simply started these assignments but typically did not complete them. In reflecting on the module implementation, two conclusions with redesign implications emerged: The complexity of what students were attempting required more iterations and a classroom norms and expectations that were not present in the class in which the implementation occurred. These needed to be established at the beginning of a school year and could not simply be switched on (or off) midway through the year – the situation of this implementation. The decision was made to move to a year-long design, with a sequence of modules/units that revisited interpretive argumentation based in close reading of literary texts. This was the form that iteration 3 took.

Iteration 3: 11th Grade Symbolism and Coming of Age

The year-long implementation began with a content focus on argument and reading and norms and expectations for engaging in argument in the class. These discussions were grounded in examples students brought up of arguments “in real life.” There was a lot of emphasis on the different functions of argument across different situations in real life. By week 3 of the semester, the instructional focus had moved to the use of textual evidence based on close reading of short texts that spoke to experiences familiar to them in forming the basis of the claims they argued. JC, the 11th grade teacher, selected canonical texts that afforded the exploration of gender and power motifs in relation to the coming of age theme. Hence, she selected texts in which these motifs manifest during symbolic interpretive work.

The sequence for the entire year is provided in Table 12 and indicates chronology over the course of the year, including weeks of instruction, the objectives targeted, the texts students worked with, and the instructional activities in which teacher and students engaged. Most of first semester was spent crafting arguments of judgment about gender and power. Specifically, objectives for the first three weeks related to setting norms and expectations for argumentation practices in the classroom and criteria for argumentation and arguments, with content focused on the everyday rather than literary content. Students began by developing and revising criteria with shorter texts such as "Linoleum Roses" and "The Rose that Grew From Concrete" as well as several images.

Table 12. Year long design for 11th grade symbolism/coming of age, iteration 3

Weeks	Focus/Texts	Objectives
1-2	Introduction to Argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Literacy Debate: Online, R U Really Reading?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce close reading of texts (including images, advertisements, and other short texts) about which you can make arguments OR that themselves make arguments that we can examine. Draw from students' experience and practice by identifying general norms and expectations in argument forms. Discuss and make public group knowledge of how and why arguments are used in real life.
3	Development of Argument (Gender and Power) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worldview Image (Connotations PPT) Linoleum Roses Male-dominated culture graphic "Afghan Boys Are Prized, So Girls Live the Part" (NY Times article) Burqa/Bikini Image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close reading of texts (including images, advertisements, and other short texts) about which you can make arguments OR that themselves make arguments that we can examine. Use everyday argument examples to draw on students' knowledge of claims, evidence, and reasoning. Practice constructing claims using evidence; articulate how evidence supports claims Establish and apply criteria for judging the effectiveness of arguments
4	Introduction to Symbols <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Titanium' Linoleum Roses The Rose That Grew from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw on prior discussions and students' knowledge to identify common everyday or literary symbols, common symbols in different genres (e.g. hip hop, romantic poetry).

	Concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-text analysis: close reading of literary texts that use symbolism to communicate theme: read to identify potential symbols and authors' use of symbolism. ▪ Construct literary arguments (claims, evidence, explanations) about use of symbolism to communicate themes within and/or across texts. Draw on criteria for specific themes.
5-15	Development of Argument (Gender and Power) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Portrait" by Stanley Kunitz, • <i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i> • "My First Afghan Burqa" • "The Freedom of the Hijab" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop practice in, close literature reading processes, and text-based discussion supporting meta-comprehension and sense making. ▪ Construct literary arguments (claims, evidence, explanations) about themes within and/or across texts. Draw on criteria for specific themes. ▪ Develop and apply criteria for judging effectiveness of arguments about literary interpretation; Draw on key concepts (historical context, critical theory) as a means for making literary interpretations.
16-28	<i>Chicago Lit Circles: Power, Privilege and Place</i>	This unit was designed and led by AC, University Intern. The focus of the unit was on examining power structures in non-fiction texts centered on Chicago. These texts included <i>Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago</i> , <i>There Are No Children Here</i> , <i>High Rise Stories</i> , and <i>Never A City So Real</i> .
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PSAE and ACT Prep Practice 	
30	Understanding Dystopian Fiction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Video clip of Hunger Games ▪ Harrison Bergeron ▪ "Haunted by The Handmaid's Tale" article in the Guardian The Handmaid's Tale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish criteria for dystopian fiction
31-37	Analyzing Power Structures in Dystopian Fiction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further develop practice in close reading with a focus on elements of dystopia and power differentials ▪ Construct literary arguments about dystopian fiction, focusing on the relationship between power and agency in the society ▪ Analyze language choices made by the author, including symbols and attention to word choices and their impact on power relationships ▪ Construct and revise arguments (claim, evidence, reasoning) to convey message about the themes of power and dystopia in Handmaid's Tale

Week 4 marked the introduction of rhetorical tools specific to literature. Students used David Guetta's "Titanium" as a cultural data set to elicit discussion of how they recognize and engage with symbols in their everyday practices. Then, students revisited "Linoleum Roses", which had previously been read to form an argument about power/agency, and then read "The

Rose That Grew From Concrete." Students crafted a synthesis that explored how each text used the symbol of the rose to communicate a message about an individual's power/agency, the major theme of the text. Students then had repeated daily practice with crafting arguments of judgment about gender and power as they moved in week 5 to the focal text, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. For example, they tracked two symbols, the rocks/pebbles and the snow and examined what these symbols say about power (or lack thereof). Students completed a chart and a mini-writing assignment for each of these symbols. Throughout the 10 weeks of working with *Suns* students crafted paragraphs on a daily basis, both for homework and during class, and used these paragraphs as a point of discussion and revision. These activities were intended to support them in the culminating assignment - a three-page essay that made an argument about the power/agency of a character over the course of the text.

During the 10 weeks of the semester that were focused on literary analysis and interpretation of the focal novel, adjunct shorter texts were used to support understanding the cultural and historical context of Afghanistan during the time period of the novel. In the culminating task with this novel, students crafted an essay that required them to synthesize the different relationships in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* in terms of the larger theme of gender and power. Students had to make an argument about the role of power in these relationships, synthesizing multiple relationships that occurred throughout the text. The written work was preceded by whole class discussions addressing these syntheses. Figure 5 summarizes the flow of components over the course of the year.

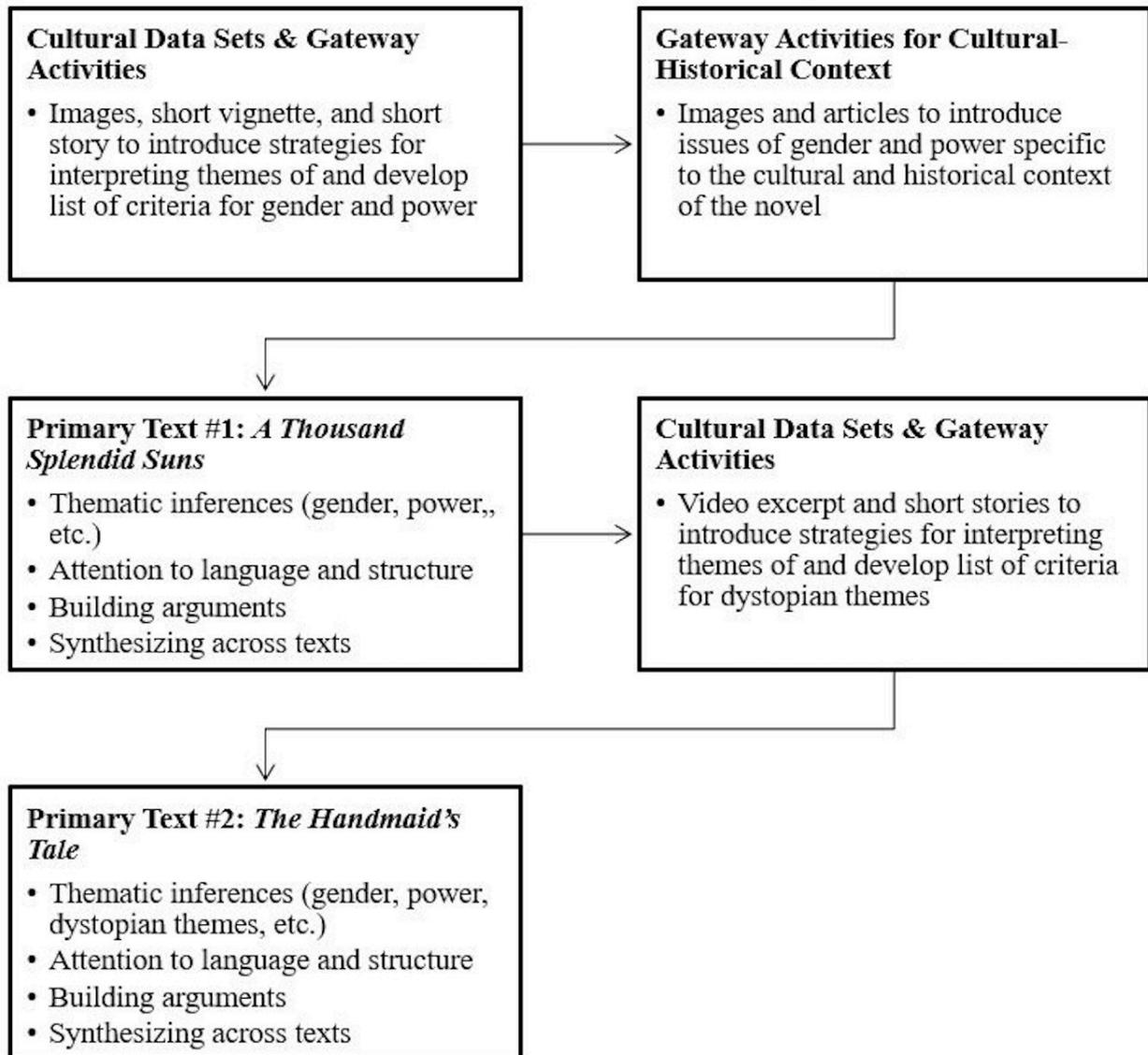


Figure 5. Sequence of Instructional components for iteration 3 of year-long 11th grade symbolism and coming of age emphasis

Student learning was examined through pre/post EBA assessments and analyses of student work throughout the year.

Phase 3 EBA pre/post assessment. Students completed the Phase 3 version of the EBA assessment. This version of the EBA assessment used the same stories (“Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros and “The Butterfly” by John Hanley) at pre and post along with a graphic organizer chart intended to elicit ideas about the symbols in each story prior to writing the essay. The prompt for the assessment task was the following.

“When writing stories, authors often create symbols that help reveal ideas about the way people are and the way the world is. Symbols are words or phrases in stories that stand for more than what they seem to be. Symbols can be images, actions, objects, or characters (what they do, how they think, their names). In your essay, compare and contrast how you think symbols in “Eleven” and “The

Butterfly” help reveal ideas about the way people are and the way the world is, or help you understand the characters and their worlds. Use the information you wrote in the chart and the stories to help you write your essay.”

The pre-post assessments were scored with rubrics for nine dimensions: Claims, Function of Claims, Evidence, Reasoning, Symbolism, Coming of Age, Organization, Synthesis, and Language and Syntax. To determine where there were differences between scores on pre-and post-assessments, a Wilcoxon matched pairs signed rank test was conducted for each coding dimension for the 14 consented students for whom pre as well as post assessments were available. As shown in Table 13, all dimensions showed equal or improved performance but only for Reasoning was the improvement significant. This was the first time that students had had to write on the same stories at pre and at posttest as earlier phases of the EBA assessment had used different story sets. Some of the students expressed thoughts about it being silly to do it again. We are therefore concerned about the validity of the scores as indicators of change.

Table 13. Wilcoxon signed rank test for changes in essay dimension scores for (Post – Pre) on Phase 3 EBA assessment^a

	Negative Ranks	Positive Ranks	Ties	Z	p value
Claims	0	1	13	1.00	.32
Function of Claims	0	1	13	1.00	.32
Evidence	2	6	6	1.35	1.76
Reasoning	0	6	8	2.45	.01*
Symbolism	1	5	8	1.82	.07
Coming of Age	2	0	12	1.41	.16
Synthesis	3	6	5	1.28	.20
Organization	2	7	5	1.73	.08
Language and Syntax	1	6	7	1.90	.06

*Significant at $p \leq .05$

^aNegative ranks indicate pre rubric score point greater than post; positive ranks means post greater than pre. |Z| indicates these are absolute values of z.

Student work. Student work samples from across the year were examined specifically to trace the evolution of symbolism, synthesis, and argument writing, especially the use of explicit warrants. The analyses indicated that year-long design was indeed warranted for development of all three areas: Moving from simpler to more complex texts over the course of the year supported students efforts to engage in reasoning about the connections between interpretations of coming of age themes dealing with gender and power based on close reading of the texts: They

repeatedly showed engagement with the work, although they continued to need supports to grapple with a text as complex as *Handmaid's Tale*. However, their products were much more successful when crafting an analysis in the shorter texts with which they began. For example, earlier in the year in moving from the shorter texts to *A Thousand Splendid Suns* students experienced difficulty tracking symbols and making decisions about whether or not a symbol was contributing to a larger meaning over time or whether it was important only locally for an isolated event or character in the story. They were able to articulate the larger meaning of symbols in discussion and in small group writing but struggling writers needed support in crafting an analysis that explained what a symbol meant. They continued to use those supports for *Handmaid's Tale* and took on the cognitive work of identifying and tracking possible symbols throughout the entirety of the longer text.

A similar pattern was observed for synthesis: Students began *Suns* without the frame needed to synthesize their thinking about two - character relationships, examining similarities or differences in terms of the larger themes of gender and power. The work with *Suns* was supported with explicit teaching, modeling, and language stems to craft syntheses in writing. They experienced less of a struggle in classroom discussions. They continued to rely on language stems in the second novel. Class discussions also showed integration of information from the adjunct informational readings on cultural and historical context with the events and characters depicted in the novels.

Based on the previous iteration of the literature modules, the teacher recognized that argument, specifically writing/ explicit warrants, required constant practice and revision for students to improve. This included requiring students to revise their writing: to revisit paragraphs and analyze them in terms of the strength of the claims, evidence, and reasoning and to rework based on this thinking. Students came to each class prepared with evidence and reasoning for specific claims. Class discussions of these provided opportunities to practice the language of these arguments. In the second half of the year, longer essays were required more often than the short essays of the first semester. Often these included using information in the informational texts as part of their arguments.

Reflection on Iteration 3.

Throughout the year-long implementation of the series of modules around symbolism and coming of age from gender and power perspectives the design team debriefed about classroom activities. The group discussed students' uptake of literary interpretation practices, how scaffolds and supports were working and for whom, and the challenges for both teaching and learning perceived by the teacher and research staff documenting the classroom implementation. The ongoing reflections led to modifications in scaffolds, strategies, adjunct texts, and tasks and are captured in the design table and flowchart. In addition, during the month prior to the start of the next school year, a subset of the design team, including the 11th and 9th grade implementing teachers, reflected on the entire year and developed designs for the year starting in Fall 2014. As this was the last year of data collection for the larger READI project, the bulk of resources had to be diverted to the large-scale efficacy study in Science and the intensity of documentation and collection of student work had to be curtailed in 2014-2015 for these two literature classrooms.

Both the 9th and 11th grade year long sequences were modified to address the challenges students faced in moving from class discussion to small group and then independent argument writing. As well, substitutions and additions to the ancillary texts were discussed with both teachers. However, we focus on the 11th grade revisions due to the fact that the 9th grade teacher decided to leave the project after the first semester.

Design of Iteration 4, 11th grade year long symbolism and coming of age. The teacher decided to keep the same overall themes, gender and power, as well as the same two major novels, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Due to the absence of the student-teacher the module that he had taught (weeks 16 – 28 Chicago Literature Circles) was deleted, allowing more instructional time for work on coming of age gender and power themes. In addition, the teacher wanted to move between the microcosms of the worlds within the literary texts and the macrocosm of the world in which we live. The deletion of this module increased the thematic coherence and opportunities to build the knowledge and skills of literary reasoning across the year. As well, it allowed more time for students to complete an in-depth study of and write more extensive literary arguments for each novel. One other significant change was the timing of the introduction of symbolism to the students. In year four, the students engaged with texts and activities around symbolism before reading *A Thousand Splendid Suns*; however, by time major symbolism came into play in the novel (5 to 6 weeks later), students had forgotten what they had learned and class time had to be spent reminding students of what they had done previously. Because of this, the teacher decided to introduce symbolism when it became relevant in the novel, which meant moving symbolism to approximately half way through the first semester. Symbolism was then revisited several times throughout the rest of the novel. Understanding the symbolism in this case had required that students see the recurrence of certain symbols in the text and that they had enough information about the characters and events in the novel to attach symbolic meaning to these recurrences. This required reading fairly far into the novel.

Finally, the teacher also decided to introduce an additional thematic layer in the reading of both novels, which moved beyond gender and power in interpersonal relationships to how macrocosmic forces impact gender and power in those relationships. For example, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, this meant drawing students attention to how what was happening in the government in Afghanistan, the political and social forces, were impacting the intimate lives of the main characters. In *The Handmaid's Tale* as well, the dystopian government controlled the people's lives by regulating all gender relations and dividing power amongst specific groups of people, thereby played a significant role in their interactions. The intent of introducing a focus on larger political, social, and cultural forces was to encourage students to consider how these forces impacted the interactions and relationships among the characters in the texts. This was to lay groundwork for students' extrapolating from the worlds inside the texts to their own lives and the world outside the texts. The implementation of this design is taken up in the dissertation work of Allison Hall (in preparation).

Section 2: Iterative Design of Unreliable Narrator Modules

An unreliable narrator is one whose credibility has been compromised for one reason or another. In literary texts, the author offers clues to the lack of credibility of the character for the reader, and in this way suggests alternate interpretations of the text and the author's worldview. Readers can construct some of the worldviews of texts based on the discrepancies between what an unreliable character sees and what the audience sees, creating a basis for interpreting authors' messages and perspectives. These are probabilistic and highlight the multiple meanings afforded by literary texts perhaps more so than in the case of symbolism.

The first iterations of the unreliable narrator module were designed and implemented in Spring, 2012. One version was designed and implemented in the two 9th grade classes that had completed the symbolism/coming of age module during Fall, 2011. (See READI Curriculum Technical Report CM#5.) The other version was designed for and implemented in the 12th grade class that had participated in the symbolism/coming of age module during Fall 2011. The first iteration designs were largely based on an instructional sequence developed by Smith (1991, 1992). Smith's instructional approach starts with culturally familiar cartoons (*Calvin and Hobbs*, *Doonesbury*) and then moves to texts, beginning with paragraph – length monologues and progressing to short stories of increasing complexity based on length and transparency of unreliability of the narrator. Students are introduced to two strategies, one for identifying unreliable narrators and another for making sense of the effect that an unreliable narrator has on the meaning of the text. Discussion prompts elicit cues to detecting unreliability by considering how likely it is that the narrator would have access to the information (fact, details) being related, fact-checking (e.g., Is the narration in accord with what is known about the situation?), and reality checking (i.e., Does the narration make sense given what you know about the world?). Based on the discussions of the cartoons and monologues, cues to unreliability are generated by asking why the narrator might be providing unreliable information. Smith (1992) reported that 9th grade students generated six types of cues (self-interest, relevant experience, knowledge, morality, emotionality, consistency). Students then apply these questions and strategies to literary vignettes and short stories. The READI unreliable narrator module in 9th grade (as well as 12th described below) used Smith's instruction model and was thus designed to build students' skills related to four learning goals.

- Detecting unreliable narrators in texts
- Identifying cues for unreliability and comparing narrator's worldview to that of author.
- Reading and developing a reasoned response to a text by reconstructing meanings where a narrator's reliability is arguable
- Constructing reasoned arguments in support of claims about unreliability and constructing arguments about themes/ worldviews offered by texts

Unreliable narrator 9th grade, iteration 1. The four week 9th grade version of the module is described and flow charted in Table 14 and Figure 6, including the texts used. The sequence provided students with repeated experiences using the two strategies. In the first week, cultural data sets and short monologues helped activate prior knowledge of strategies and identify cues for unreliability. In each of the following three weeks, students continued to use the strategies

and express their evaluations of the narrator and interpretative import in written arguments. Writing was supported with graphic organizers for evidence and character maps.

Table 14. Instructional sequence for 9th grade unreliable narrator, iteration 1

Instructional Days	Objectives	Texts and Supports
Days 1 - 2	Build understanding of narrator unreliability based on student knowledge and experience using easily accessible text	Text: Calvin and Hobbs comic strip (cultural data set) Supports: Argument template
Days 3 - 7	Develop abstract criteria for narrator unreliability using short scenarios and connect to what it indicates about human nature	Texts: Scenarios of unreliable narrators (Smith, 1991) Supports: Guided questions around narrator unreliability
Days 7 - 14	Apply abstract criteria to a short story, looking for specific textual evidence related to the development of the character and the criteria for unreliability throughout the story and connect it to human nature	Text: “The Journal of a Wife Beater” by Harry Mark Petrakis Supports: Textual evidence support sheet & Character map
Days 14 - 18	Apply abstract criteria to a short story, looking for specific textual evidence related to criteria for unreliability, connect it to human nature, and develop counterclaims to refute opposing claims.	Text: “The Jacket” by Gary Soto; “Victor” by Danny Hoch Supports: Textual evidence support sheet & Character map

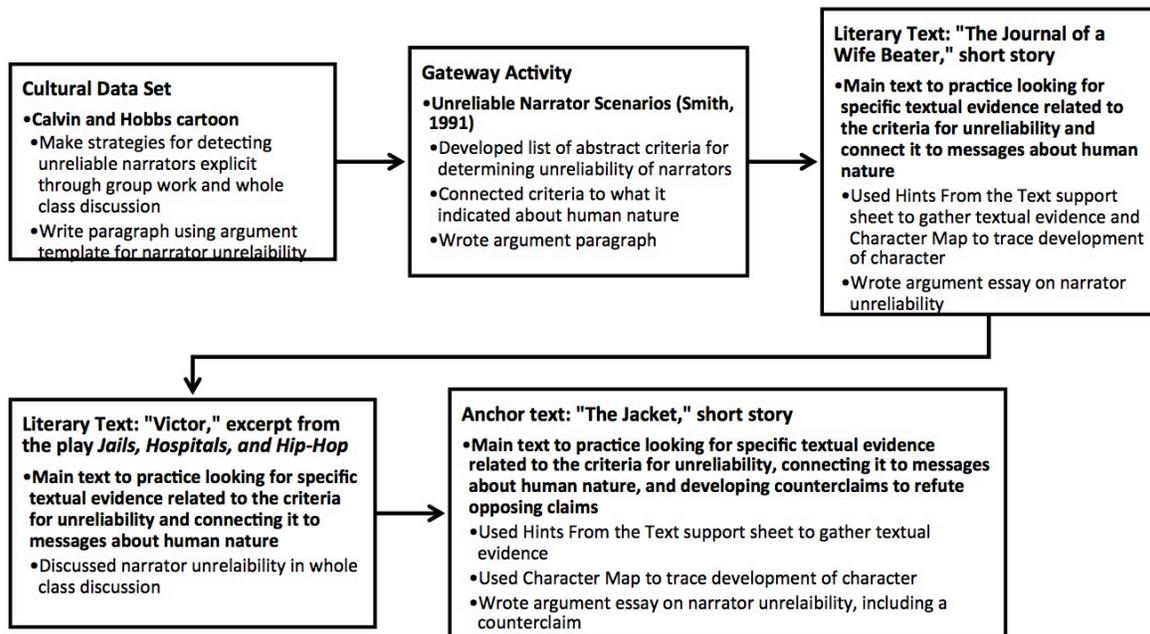


Figure 6. Flow of instruction and learning goals for the 9th grade unreliable narrator module.

Assessment of Implementation. Students completed a pre/post assessment that was similar to the symbolism/coming of age EBA assessment, however the task involved working with only one story prior and one story post module implementation. Two different stories were counterbalanced across time of test and students so that each student worked with different stories at pre and post assessment times. There were 22 consented students who completed both pre- and post-assessments across the two periods. Assignment of student to text was counterbalanced so that 12 students had text A (“Bigfoot Stole My Wife” by Ron Carlson) as their pre and text B (“The Somebody” by Danny Santiago) as their post and the other 10 had text A at post and text B at pre.

The assessment prompt was the following.

“Write an essay where you show whether you believe the narrator is reliable or not. Use evidence from the story and from your own experience when showing the narrator’s reliability or unreliability. Then discuss what this story might suggest about human nature.”

The pre-post assessments were scored with rubrics for 6 dimensions: claims, counterclaims, evidence, reasoning, human nature themes, and organization of ideas. For human nature, essays were scored on whether or not they constructed a supportable interpretation of the story’s worldviews of human nature that could be supported by details in the story. The score points are defined in Table 15.

Table 15

Unreliable Narrator Assessment Dimensions and Rubrics

Claims/Subclaims	
0	Description or summary, restates the question
0.5	Claim/s are provided, but are not accurate in terms of being supportable by the stories; OR claims are provided, but claims are not about the characters, events, or language of the story. For example, “Bigfoot is not real, and here is why” OR “People should not drop out of school; it is bad for them”).
1	At least one supportable claim about reliability is provided. The claim might simply be the thesis (“Chato is unreliable”). Other claims may address other aspects of the story as long as they are supportable (e.g. “His wife probably just left him”). Some claims may simply be repetitions of the first claim and are not to be “counted” more than once., A sentence that reads “Chato is both reliable and unreliable” counts as two claims.
2	Includes a thesis and at least one subclaim (e.g., “Chato is unreliable because...”). In a “2” essay, the subclaims are generally local, specific to the details of the story, and closer to evidence than claims (e.g., “Chato is unreliable because he thinks that his teacher wants to adopt him”).
3	Includes a thesis and at least one subclaim supporting thesis. In a “3” rating, claims are more general or abstract (e.g. “Chato is unreliable because he is ignorant”) or (“People might say that Chato is reliable because he has experienced life’s obstacles”).
Counterclaim	
0	No counterclaim
1	Counterclaim that addresses opposing thesis about reliability, but no evidence recruited to support counterclaim or rebuttal (e.g. “Some may say that the character is reliable, but the evidence shows he is not”).
2	Counterclaim and reason that supports counterclaim (e.g., “Some may say that the character is reliable, because he talks about wanting to be a writer, but they are wrong”)
3	Counterclaim and reason that supports counterclaim, as well as evidence rebutting counterclaim (e.g., “Some may say that the character is reliable, because he talks about wanting to be a writer, but in actuality all he does is write graffiti all over buildings”).
Evidence	
0	No evidence provided (either because student did not support claims with evidence or because student had no claims)
0.5	Only inaccurate (contradicts the events of the text) or unrelated evidence provided. For example, “The Bigfoot narrator is unreliable because his girlfriend took the car when she left.”
1	At least one piece of accurate, related evidence provided in attempt to support claim/s. May include personal or real world knowledge, but must also include text-based evidence. May be in addition to inaccurate or unrelated evidence.
2	More than one piece of accurate, related evidence provided in attempt to support claims. May include personal or real world knowledge, but must also include text-based evidence. May be in addition to inaccurate or unrelated evidence.
3	More than one piece of accurate, related evidence provided. Of that evidence, at least two pieces are connected in that they support the same claim (e.g. ‘Chato is unreliable because he is too self-centered. For instance, he believes that a girl could fall in love with him just because of his writing, and he believes that an old rival gang still cares if he exists”).

Reasoning	
0	No explanation as to why evidence supports the claims or claims support the overall thesis; connection seems illogical or cannot be inferred (e.g. “Chato is unreliable. He wears a jacket when he goes out all the time.”)
1	At least one implicit warrant. Claims and evidence could be logically connected through an appeal to cultural or literary norms but connection is implicit. For example, an implied warrant based on cultural norms might be “The character Chato is unreliable because he is constantly destroying people’s property.” Another example:, “The protagonist of ‘Bigfoot’ is unreliable. He says that Bigfoot stole his wife. Probably, she just left him, and he can’t figure that out because he is in denial.” An implied warrant based in literary norms might read, “The bigfoot narrator is unreliable because of the way the author has him repeat himself a lot,, making him always say “You gotta believe me.”
2	More than one implicit warrant. Claims and evidence could be logically connected through an appeal to cultural or literary norms but connection is implicit. For example, an implied warrant based on cultural norms might be “The character Chato is unreliable because he is constantly destroying people’s property.” An implied warrant based in literary norms might read, “The bigfoot narrator is unreliable because of the way the author has him repeat himself a lot, making him always say “You gotta believe me.”
3	In at least one instance, claims and evidence are explicitly warranted, and the warrant uses some appeal to cultural norms, (e.g. “The character Chato is unreliable because he is constantly destroying people’s property. People who don’t care about other people’s rights are not to be trusted”). May include implicit warrants as well.
3.1	In at least one instance, claims and evidence are explicitly warranted, and the warrant uses some appeal to literary norms, (e.g. “When the author creates a narrator who insists that he must be believed, we know his character is not reliable”). May include implicit warrants as well.
Note	Students may incorporate language of explicit warranting, like “as a general rule” or “usually,” but that language may not actually be linked to reasoning that connects evidence to claims of reliability. For example, “Chato is unreliable because he doesn’t even know what it means to be a writer. He writes all over buildings. Generally speaking, a writer is someone who writes books or stories.” In this case, the student has explained why Chato is not a writer by defining criteria for writers, but the student has not explicitly explained how this evidence proves Chato’s unreliability. Such writing does not “count” as explicit warranting and does not earn a “3.”
Human Nature	
0	Doesn’t address ways the story contributes to our understanding of text’s worldview or ideas about human nature (thematic statements). Statements about what people should do are not equivalent to statements about text’s ideas about human nature. For example, “I think that if someone takes your wife, you should try to get her back” would be scored as a 0. Such a statement may reflect a student’s worldview, but doesn’t reveal a student’s understanding of what the text might communicate. ALSO, students might incorporate the words “human nature” into their essay without actually discussing human nature. For example, “It is human nature to go after your wife if you think she’s been kidnapped” may actually be an example of reasoning or explanation, not an interpretation of story’s suggestions about human nature.

0.5	Addresses aspects of human nature specific to characters in the story or universal, but unsupported by the text (e.g. “The story shows how it is human nature to face your worst fears about yourself”).
1	Constructs supportable interpretation of story’s worldviews of human nature that could be supported by details in the story. The interpretation is universal (e.g., “The Bigfoot story shows how people will believe anything in order to avoid the truth,” or “Denial is a hell of a drug”). The writer does not have to use stems like “The story suggests....” in order to present an interpretation of story’s ideas about human nature.
Organization of Ideas	
0	The response has no clear organization.
1	Explicit thesis statement that responds to prompt. Essay may be only one paragraph or no logical paragraph breaks.
2	Explicit thesis statement. The body of the essay has some organizational framework (e.g., response moves chronologically through text or uses different aspects of reliability criteria as subclaims).
3	Well organized; explicit thesis statement, paragraphs logically separate different claims and evidence; transitions between paragraphs or sections of paragraphs are made explicit (e.g. with phrases like “also,” “but,” “in contrast,” etc.).

Overall, on the posttest, students showed higher rubric scores for claims/sub-claims, use of counterclaims, reasoning, and organization of ideas, but showed little change in their scores for use of evidence or human nature dimensions. (See Figures 7a and 7b.) On the pre-tests, only one student presented a thesis about the reliability of the narrator and then supported it with sub-claims that were general or abstract rather than local to the text. On the post-test, 18 students included a thesis and general sub-claims about reliability. While none of the students included a counterclaim on the pre-tests, five attempted counterclaims on the posttests. The evidence scores on the pre-test were high, leaving little room for growth on the post-tests. Regarding the use of reasoning, only one student used an explicit warrant on the pre-test, while 11 students used explicit warrants on the post-test. Six students attempted to write about human nature on the post-test while only two attempted it on the pre-test. Regarding organization, most of the pre-test essays were written in one paragraph, whereas eleven of the post-test essays followed an essay format with a thesis statement in the introduction and separate paragraphs supporting each main sub-claim of the essay.

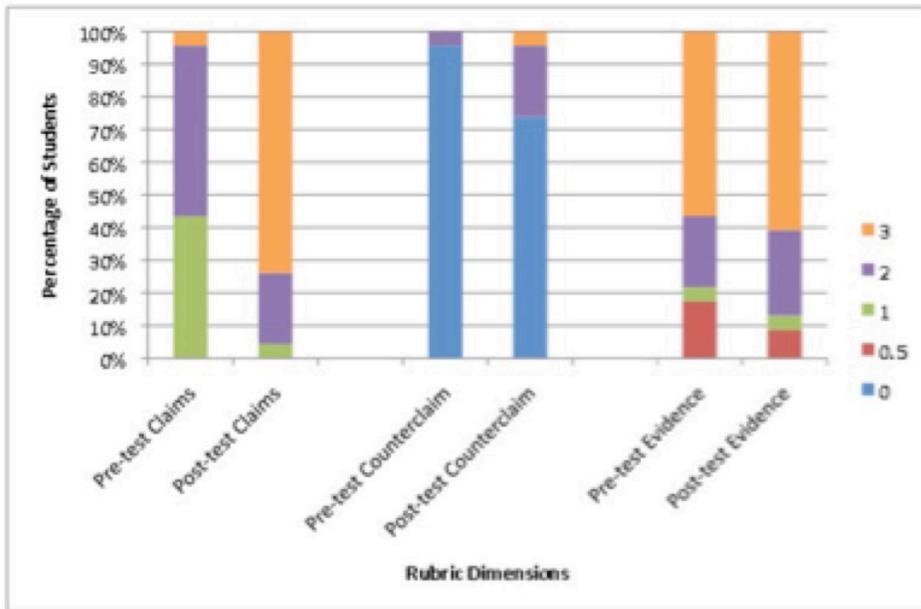


Figure 7a. Pre and post test rubric score point distributions for dimensions that showed improvement from pre to post test, iteration 1, 9th grade.

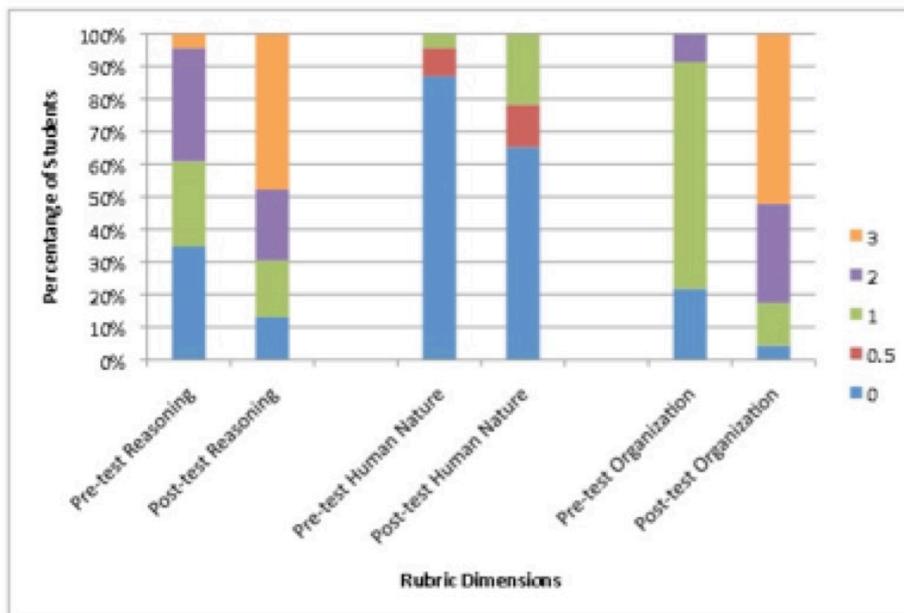


Figure 7b. Pre and post test rubric score point distributions for dimensions that showed minimal change from pre to post test, iteration 1, 9th grade..

Unreliable Narrator Module iteration 2, 9th grade

The second iteration of the Unreliable Narrator modules for 9th grade was implemented during Fall, 2012 in JG's classroom. Reflection on iteration 1 revealed the need for several changes in the implementation of this module as well as the need to accommodate an the instructional focus of mandated by the district. Based on the first iteration enactment, we identified the need for more opportunities in two areas: moving from oral to written mode and articulated the difference between author and narrator of the texts. The iteration 2 design included discussion and writing focused on the development of criteria necessary for judgment arguments about the reliability of the narrator in a story as well as more discussions and support handouts for differentiating author and narrator. In Fall 2012, the district required that all 9th grade students read the novel *Persepolis*. The iteration 2 design began with a focus on the reliability of the narrator, Marji, in this novel. Marji can be judged unreliable because she lacks knowledge and experience, two criteria often used to detect unreliability in narrators.

The implementation of the module occurred over four weeks, however many of the instructional days had to be eliminated or truncated due to school events or changes in schedules. As a result, the design could not be enacted as intended.

Assessment. Students (n = 9 consented) completed the same pre/post as used in iteration 1 and essays were scored using the same dimensions and rubrics. Visual inspection of the rubric score point distributions suggested increased sophistication along some of the dimensions but little change in others. (Due to the low number of subjects, no statistical analyses were conducted.) These distributions are shown for each of the dimensions in two graphs: Figures 8a and 8b.

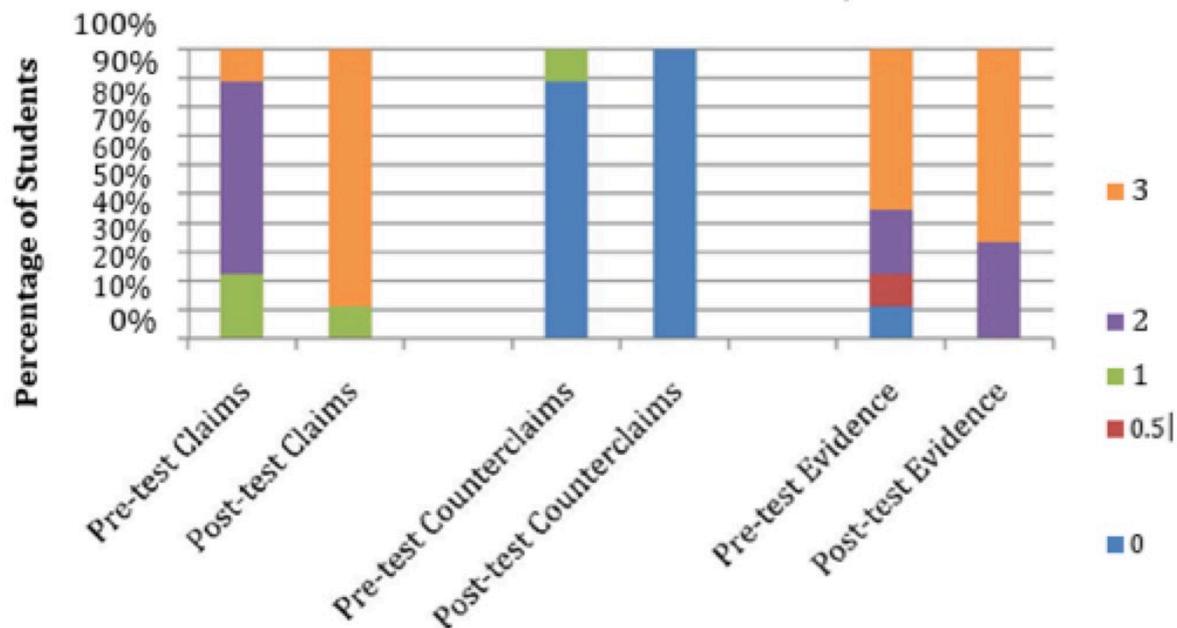


Figure 8a. Rubric score point distributions on claims, counterclaims, and evidence dimensions at pre and posttest for Unreliable Narrator, 9th grade Iteration 2

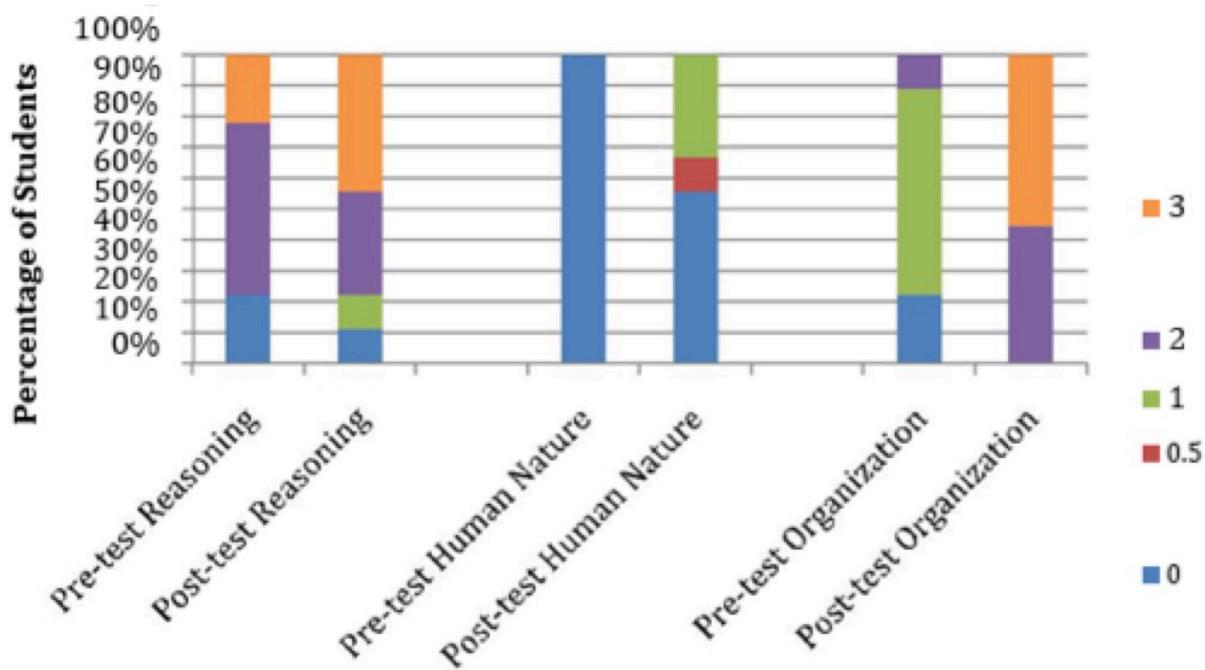


Figure 8b. Rubric score point distributions on reasoning, human nature, and organization dimensions at pre and posttest for Unreliable Narrator, 9th grade Iteration 2

The rubric score point distributions showed upward trends for four dimensions: claims, organization of ideas, reasoning, and human nature. For claims, the mode on the pre-test was a score point of 2, indicating that students had a thesis and at least one sub-claim, but that the claims and sub-claims remained local to the text. The mode on the post-test was a 3, indicating that the claims had become more abstract. In organization, the mode moved from a 1 on the pre-test to a 3 on the post-test. Students’ responses on the pre-test were generally one paragraph, while most post-test responses took the form of a logically-organized essay. The change in reasoning scores indicates that more students provided explicit warrants on the post-test. For the dimension of human nature, almost half of the students attempted to write about human nature on the post-test, whereas none had addressed human nature on the pre-test. Score point distributions for counterclaims and evidence remained flat. These improvements in performance from pre to post were particularly encouraging given the limited duration of the enactment. They suggest that the redesign has created a very solid basis for students reasoning about claims and the evidence for their support.

Grade 12 unreliable narrator module.

The Unreliable Narrator module for twelfth grade had similar learning goals as the 9th grade module. It was developed to help make interpretive processes visible to students and help them build literary schema that would allow them to make independent interpretations of texts. The module was also developed to help students explore why people might refuse or be unable to

see “the truth.” Accordingly, students were given scaffolds both for evaluating narrators in literary texts, and developing arguments about those narrators and their connection to themes and overall effects of texts.

Similar to the 9th grade design, the 12th grade module followed Smith’s (1991, 1992) instructional process and began with the Calvin and Hobbs cartoon as a cultural data (Lee, 2007) that allowed students to publicly articulate their implicit interpretive practices. In the 12th grade, students easily evaluated the unreliability of the character Calvin and went on to explain the criteria by which they were able to make judgments about reliability of speakers (for example, if a speaker is overly emotional or self-interested, he or she may be unreliable). Over the course of the unit, students expanded on those criteria for reliability, drawing from their everyday knowledge. They then began to apply that knowledge and those criteria to more literary and canonical texts. Texts in this unit included cartoons, satirical news articles, dramatic monologues by Danny Hoch, and short stories including Gary Soto’s “The Jacket” and Richard Matheson’s “Born of Man and Woman.”

At the same time, students received support for the writing of arguments about reliability. They drew from the criteria they had developed about unreliability to construct claims, find precise textual evidence to support those claims, and then create warrants (Toulmin) that justified the connections between claim and evidence.

Assessments. We administered the same pre/post assessment to the 12th graders as was described for the 9th grade students, using the same counterbalancing process so that each student wrote essays on a different story at pre and posttest with about half the students having each story at each testing time. Wilcoxon signed ranks tests of the pre/post assessments indicated that students made statistically significant gains in the areas of claims, ($z = 1.98, p < .05$), counterclaims ($z = 3.58, p < .001$), organization ($z = 2.14, p < .05$), and thematic inference ($z = 2.12, p < .05$). The gains made in the area of claim construction suggest a possible relationship between the opportunity to develop criteria for a concept and the ability to make claims about that concept. In addition, the READI module design for the building of criteria included reading a short text, and then organizing a claim, evidence, and reasoning about the criteria for unreliability. This practice in structuring their arguments may have helped students improve their organization during their post-test writing. This suggests that explicit practice in structuring an argument, including the use of templates, may transfer to student’s independent writing.

Section 3. Argument Module for 9th grade

Based on the multiple objectives as specified for the initial modules (developing oral and written arguments, developing criteria for theme, and focus on literary device) and the small growth noted in the pre/post scores from iteration 1 around the use of evidence and warrants in building arguments, we decided to design an argument unit lasting about two weeks in an effort to get students oriented to arguments of fact (forensic) and judgment. This module drew heavily on Hillock’s (2012) *Teaching Argument Writing 6 – 12: Supporting claims with relevant*

evidence. (See READI Curriculum Module Technical Report CM #8 for the complete module)

The argument module served as an introduction to arguments of fact and how to reason around data to make a forensic claim. The module was also meant as an introduction to arguments of judgment, which need criteria as evidence to build a case. The module was intended to address several issues, as follows. :

- Introduce forensic arguments using cartoons and short descriptive write ups of “what happened”
- Introduce arguments of judgment using short scenarios for which students were to determine whether the action was courageous. Contrastive cases were depicted in the scenarios to facilitate the deduction of criteria for an action to be judged courageous. .
- Encourage students to think about the complexities of argument.
- Establish the importance of weighing evidence in these scenarios as a basis of using this practice when moving into judgments about symbolism and unreliable narrators.
- Engage in oral and written arguments as a means of preparing students for writing longer arguments

The organization of the argument module is depicted in Figure 9.

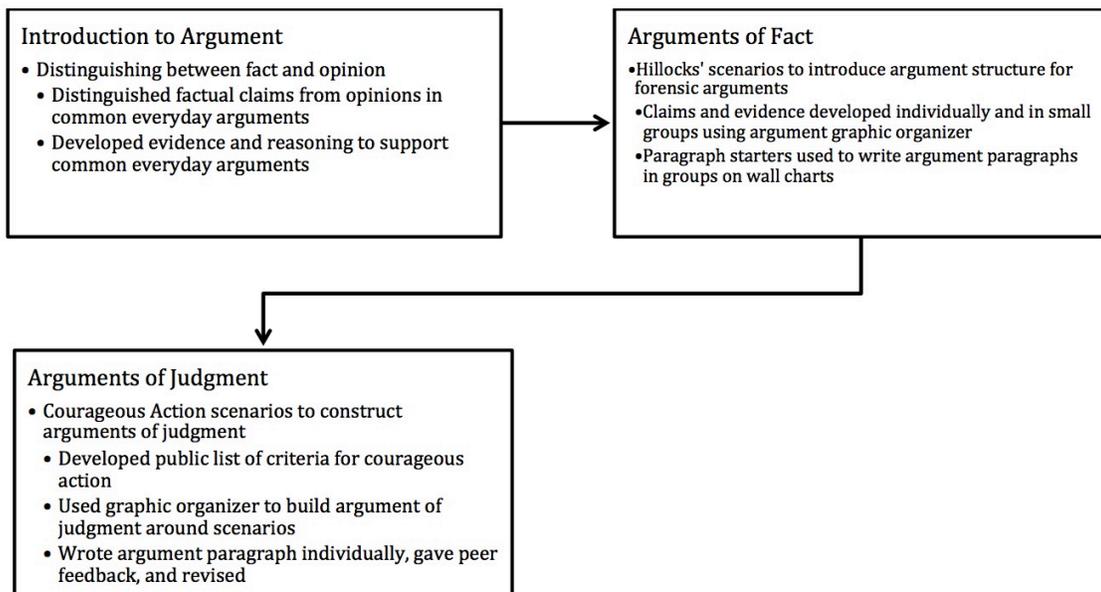


Figure 9. Flow of the argument module for 9th grade.

The argument module was designed for and enacted in two 9th grade classrooms in two different schools. The first enactment occurred in JG’s classroom in Fall 2012, referred to in this section as Site 1. JG had enacted the first iterations of symbolism/theme and unreliable narrator

the previous year. The second enactment took place in CM's classroom in Spring, 2013, before she implemented the symbolism/coming of age module and is referred to in this section as Site 2. In each case, a pre/post assessment was used; however, there were different assessments at the two sites.

Site 1 argument module. The argument module at Site 1 took place approximately one month into the school year and preceded the first literature module by about three weeks. The module was implemented in one class. Pre/post data were available for 9 consented students.

The prompts for the pre/post were taken from previous ACT prompts. Prompt A asked should security cameras be installed in the classroom. Prompt B asked should high school be extended to five years. The prompts were counterbalanced so that half of the students received prompt A and half received prompt B at pre and post. Rubrics were developed for five dimensions of argument: claims, counterclaims, evidence, reasoning and organization.

Scoring System for Argumentation Pre/Post Assessments

1. *Claims/Subclaims:* Description or summary, takes no position on question (0); At least one supportable claim is provided (1); Includes a thesis and at least one subclaim, claims are generally local (2); Includes a thesis and at least one subclaim, claims are more general or abstract (3).

2. *Counterargument:* No counterargument (0); Counterclaim that acknowledges opposing claim/thesis about subject, but no evidence or examples to support opposing claim (1); Counterclaim and reason that supports counterclaim (2); Counterclaim and reason that supports counterclaim, as well as evidence rebutting counterclaim (3).

3. *Evidence:* No evidence provided (0); At least one piece of accurate, related evidence or specific example provided in attempt to support claim(s) (1); More than one piece of accurate, related evidence or specific example provided in attempt to support claim(s) (2); More than one piece of accurate, related evidence provided. Of that evidence, at least two pieces are connected in that they support the same claim (3).

4. *Reasoning:* No explanation as to why evidence supports the claims or claims support the overall thesis; connection seems illogical or cannot be inferred (0); At least one implicit warrant. Claims and evidence could be logically connected but connection is implicit (1); More than one implicit warrant. Claims and evidence could be logically connected (2) In at least one instance, claims and evidence are explicitly warranted (3).

5. *Organization of Ideas:* No clear organization (0); Explicit thesis statement that responds to prompt. Essay may be only one paragraph or have no logical paragraph breaks (1); Explicit thesis statement. The body of the essay has some organizational framework (2); Well organized; explicit thesis statement, paragraphs logically separate different claims and evidence; transitions between paragraphs or sections of paragraphs are made explicit (3).

The dimensions, rubrics, and figures showing the score point distribution for pre and post module are shown in Figures 10a and 10b. There were no significant changes from pre-to post-

test. The lack of change in student performance on the pre- and post-tests may be due to the lack of alignment of the prompts and scenarios in the assessment with the instruction.

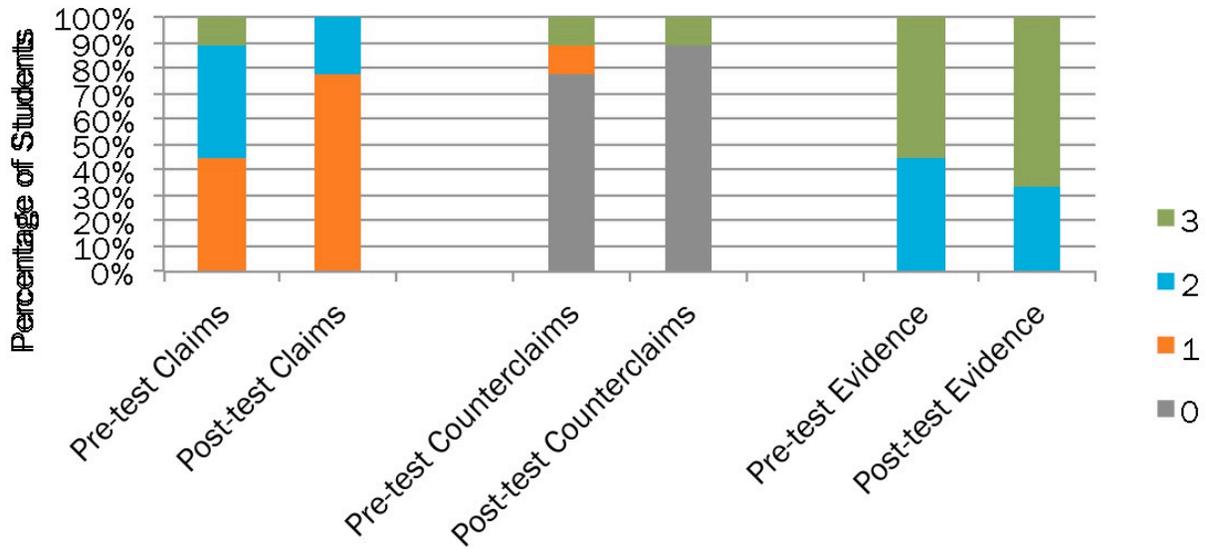


Figure 10a. Pre-Post Distributions of Rubric Score Points on claims, counterclaims, and evidence for Site 1, Fall, 2012

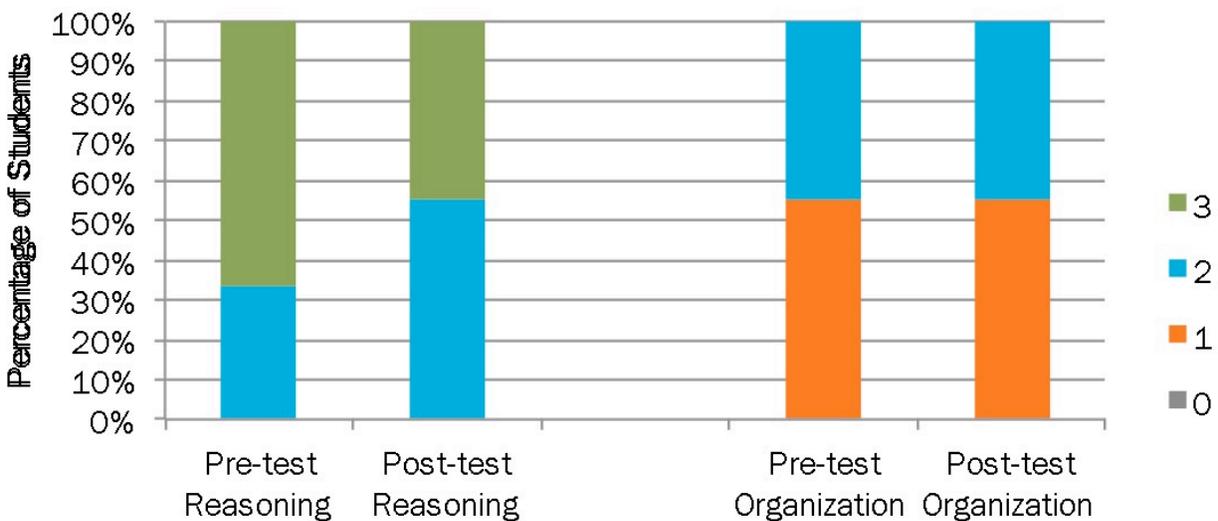


Figure 14b. Pre-Post Distributions of Rubric Score Points on reasoning and organization for Site 1, Fall, 2012.

Site 2 argument module. The argument module at Site 2 was enacted approximately three weeks into the second semester in Spring, 2013. The module was essentially the same as the one enacted in Site 1.

Assessment. The prompts for the pre/post were revised relative to the prompts that had been used at Site 1. This change was based on analyses of the responses to the ACT prompts at Site 1: most students provided opinions and there was a noticeable lack of criteria used for making a judgment although this was one of the instructional emphases of the module. We reasoned that if students were provided with short scenarios, they would be able to deduce criteria to use in stating their argument. Thus, we sought better alignment of the assessment task and the instructional emphasis. In this case, Prompt A asked students to determine if someone is a good friend based on a story about a young man who repeatedly gets into trouble and needs help from his friend. Prompt B asked students to determine if a young woman is mature enough to get married before finishing high school. Each scenario was two paragraphs and gave details about the characters' situations that were intended to provide them with a basis for developing criteria to judge friendship or maturity, depending on the scenario. Prompts were counterbalanced across students and testing times, with a total of 10 consented students providing data for pre and post module. Responses were scored using the same rubric score points for five dimensions as reported for Site 1.

The results indicated changes on three dimensions: claims, evidence, and reasoning, with the most dramatic shifts occurring for reasoning where the mode shifted from a rubric score point of 1 to 3, demonstrating students' increasing use of explicit warrants. The distributions of score points are shown in Figures 11a and b.

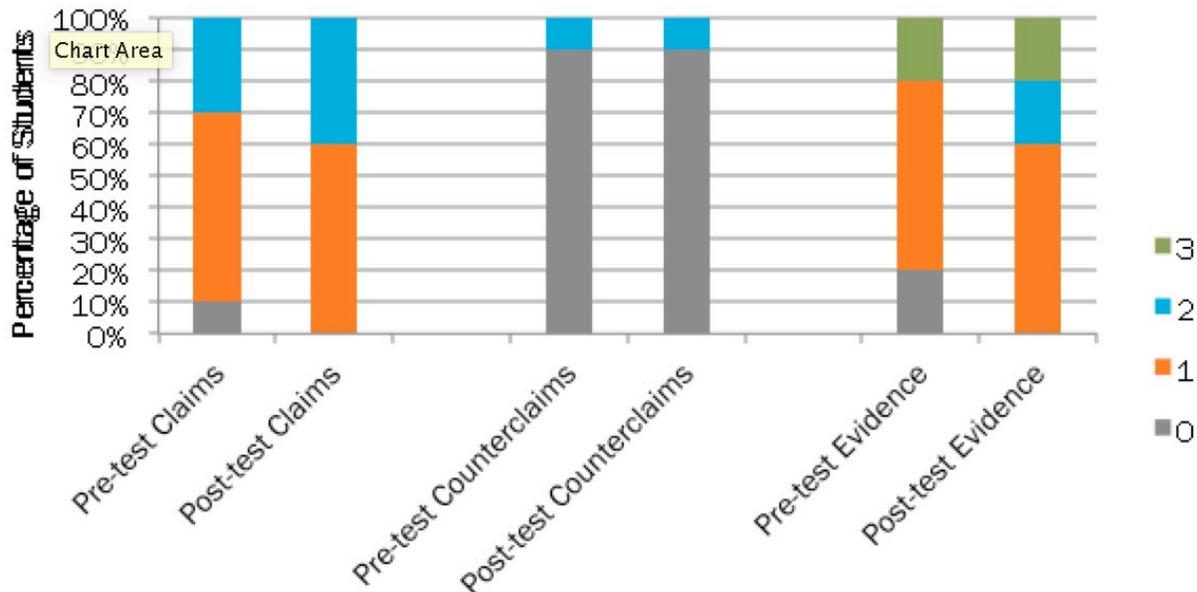


Figure 11a. Pre-Post Distributions of Rubric Score Points on claims, counterclaims, and evidence for Site 2, Spring 2013.

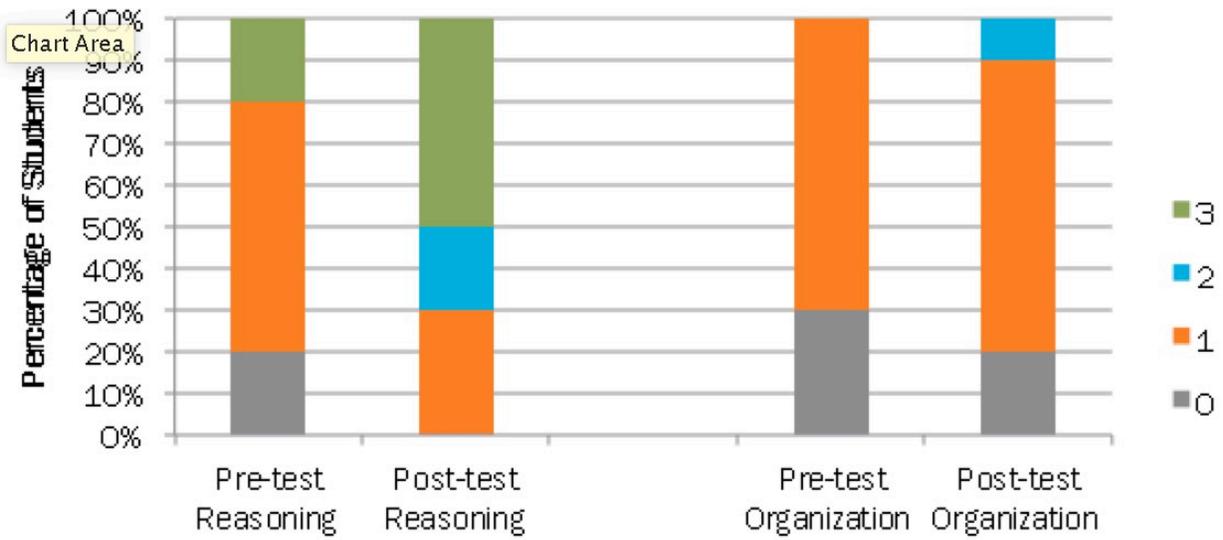


Figure 11b. Pre-Post Distributions of Rubric Score Points on reasoning and organization for Site 2, Spring 2013

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