

Reading books in class: What “just to read a book” can mean

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Abstract

This article presents and analyzes qualitative ethnographic data from research investigating intensive reading in an English Second Language high school class. It focuses on selected teacher-student interactions and considers the effect of these interactions in terms of the processes and products of students’ intensive study of a fiction text. The article considers how the teacher asserted control over physically handling the text, the processes of reading it, and the classroom discourses about the text. Data analysis and discussion unpacks the teacher’s claim that what she wanted students to get out of their experience of reading *The Cay* was “just to read a book.” This claim, and the teacher-student interactions which followed, is considered against the backdrop of curriculum goals aiming to create sophisticated, critical readers. The article concludes by highlighting several critical pedagogical and intellectual implications arising from aspects of teacher-student interactions and provides direction for future research.

Keywords: intensive reading; ESL; classroom discourse; *The Cay*

Children arrive in school with a well-developed sense of ‘story’ (Eakin, 1999). High school English curricula seek to transform students’ “intuitive and personal” sense of stories into a sophisticated knowledge of and approach to reading which prioritizes critical thinking and the development of the skills of literary criticism (e.g., English in the New Zealand Curriculum, Ministry of Education [MOE], 1994, p. 16; or for a similar British view, see The Importance of English Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, QCDA, 2007, p. 61). In short, English curricula aim to transform the personal and intuitive into the sophisticated and critical. This aim is intended to be enacted through teachers’ pedagogical choices.

This seemingly laudable aim has been criticized by a variety of theorists and researchers for the effect it seems to have on the pedagogy implemented to achieve it. For example, critics such as Luke (1992) argue that in pursuing such a goal teachers “...collapse [students] into a unitary, collective entity of the literate subjectivity...” (p. 126). Others, such as Rosenblatt (1995), claim that this goal creates “...pressure on the teacher to work out neat outlines of the ideas about literature that his students are to acquire” (p. 232), often leading to the teacher simply giving

students the interpretation of the text. Critics such as Luke (1992) and Rosenblatt (1995) seem to worry that what will be accepted as sophisticated and critical reading will be narrowly determined and delineated by teachers based on their evaluation of “sophisticated” and “critical.”

The job of transforming the personal and intuitive into the sophisticated and critical is made more difficult by the limited time allowed for this transformation. Researchers such as Myhill and Dunkin (2005, p. 425) note that teachers who aim to achieve all the goals set by ministries of education must perforce proceed at a significant speed. This time pressure seems to result in classroom tasks and dialogues requiring brief responses to factual closed questions: the antithesis of responses based on sophisticated, reflective, critical thinking. For a small-scale but rich study of the pedagogical and intellectual effects of changes in the English curriculum in England in 2001, refer to Westbrook (2007) and White and Lightbown (1984).

Luke’s (1992) and Rosenblatt’s (1995) concerns find support from classroom research which has found that typical classroom discourse—not only discourse around reading literature—often situates and reinforces the teacher as the powerful knowledge holder and the students as the powerless receivers of wisdom (Fisher & Larkin, 2008; Nassaji & Wells, 2000). More specifically, research on the nature of the questions asked in class by teachers frequently highlights the limited and limiting nature of the discourse (Banbrook & Skehan, 1989; Cazden, 1988; Davidson, 2007; Guszak, 1967; Ho, 2005; Mehan, 1979; Myhill & Dunkin, 2005; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Wang, 2006; White & Lightbown, 1984). Such findings suggest that typical classroom discourse helps create a classroom context which is antithetical to achieving confident, autonomous, reflective lifelong learners.

When the investigative lens focuses on the teaching of literature, analysis of teacher-student interactions and classroom tasks frequently highlights the influential role teachers have in determining the processes of reading (how they read), and the products of reading (the meanings made). For example, Floyd and Carrell (1987) researched the effects of explicitly teaching background information about events and ideas in a text and found that such teaching facilitated comprehension and factual recall (Oh, 2001; Steffensen, Joag-Dev & Anderson, 1979). Other research shows that pedagogical choices can completely alter the experience of reading a text (both the processes of reading and the products evoked from that reading). For example, teachers can legitimize and elicit personal aesthetic reading (what the meanings and emotional connotations of the text are for each individual reader, Rosenblatt, 1978) as readily as they can legitimize and elicit impersonal, efferent reading (the objective, “factual” meanings, Rosenblatt, 1978) of fiction texts through adopting different pedagogical practices (Hade, 1992; Lewis, 1999, 2000; Many & Wiseman, 1992; Wiseman & Many, 1992).

Responsibility for managing and directing teacher-student discourse in much classroom research implicitly or explicitly places it at the feet of teachers (Wells & Arauz, 2006) and seems to assume that if teachers asked “better” questions, they would get “better” responses. Whereas it makes sense to see the power-holders as primary change agents, it is important to recognize the social and cultural complexity of classroom contexts in which teachers and students influence, and are influenced by, each other (Fisher & Larkin, 2008; Jackson, 1990; Nash, 1976). Under this view, teachers *and* students, with their own socio-cultural historical contexts, co-create any classroom event. To the extent that a teacher, for example, takes the mantle of the powerful

knowledge-holder, students support, acquiesce, resist or subvert the teacher's claim (and vice versa). Adding to this already complex set of factors and aspects of being-in-a-classroom is the idea that schools are institutions and therefore classrooms, as a part of an institution, influence the kinds of roles, identities and discourses that participants can adopt (for two different but related views on this issue, see Fairclough, 1994; Goffman, 1990).

In sum, although English curricula want students to become critical, sophisticated readers, theory and research suggest that pedagogical practices, which are intended to achieve this, in fact risk creating readers who are dependent on teachers telling them how to read and which meanings to make. Complicating this is the less well understood role of the student in responding to the teacher and classroom context of intensively reading texts.

The aim of this article then, is to qualitatively explore how the teacher and students in one ESL high school classroom appear to co-construct how the intensive reading of a text is to be done (process) and what is to be known about it (product). Underpinning this aim are two separate considerations: the first is the English curriculum's goal of transforming personal and intuitive reading into sophisticated and critical reading. In other words, how does what happens during the intensive reading experience add to students becoming sophisticated, critical readers? The second consideration speaks to the classroom teacher's stated rationale for having the students read the text at all: namely, the teacher wanted the students "just to read a book." That is to say, what in this context might the relatively innocuous "just to read a book" mean? By providing a fine-grained analysis of the intensive reading of a text, this article examines the complex relationships in teacher-student transactions around the intensive study of fiction in an ESL setting and adds to the ongoing debate about the teaching of fiction texts to ESL students in high school.

Background and Methodology

The research reported here has been extracted from a larger, year-long ethnographic case study research project which investigated the processes and products of high school ESL students reading texts both in class and outside the classroom context (Marianne, 2008). An ethnographic qualitative methodological paradigm was adopted in order to obtain rich data which could be used to triangulate the analysis and discussion about what meanings ESL readers made of the fiction texts they read and how they made those meanings (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 59–62; Morse & Richards, 2002, pp. 76–77).

The two research questions framing this investigation were:

1. What meanings ("product") did readers make of the texts they read?
2. How did they make those meanings?

An ethnographic methodology was used because it allows the phenomena of intensively studying a text within the classroom culture to be explored from an emic perspective (Morse & Richards, 2002). The intention was to capture the linguistic and behavioral patterns which in part constitute what it means to study a text intensively in a particular classroom, at a particular point in time

(Morse & Richards, 2002). Over the course of one school year, I attended each classroom lesson (90 classes, roughly 50 minutes each). I made extensive observational field notes of the students' discourse and behavior; audio recorded and transcribed the teacher's utterances (transcriptions were made within 36 hours of the lesson and incorporated observational field notes about student comments and behaviors); made copies of all worksheets given to the students; and, conducted interviews with the teacher and students. In total, the teacher participated in four semi-structured interviews over the course of the year lasting between 20 minutes and one hour (the questions were always given to the teacher the day before the interview), and the students participated in at least one semi-structured interview at the end of the year which included a discussion of the texts intensively read in class. In order to minimize the effect or potential influence of the researcher's year-long presence in the classroom, usually neither the students nor the teacher were asked to provide reasons for specific observed behavior or recorded dialogue. Whereas data of this nature would have added a source of triangulation (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 61), it may also have changed or influenced teacher and student behaviors and discourse as they became aware of my research foci. Thus, in order for me to interfere as little as possible with the classroom transactions, the participants were not interviewed about my recordings, notes or observations, or my analysis of those sources in a stimulated recall context.

Data were also made about students' self-selected readings of books read outside the classroom context (for an extensive reading program, see Day & Bamford, 2004). Data collection tools included recall protocols (Roebuck, 1998) inserted at the end of each chapter on which the students were to write whatever they could recall of the chapter just read and participate in a semi-structured interview about the book.

The data were iteratively categorized and analyzed over the course of the research. Categories such as "teacher amends student response," "student draws on prior knowledge," "student personal response," and so on were abstracted up from the data and themes were sought (Morse & Richards, 2002, pp. 129–143). Abstraction and further consideration of themes was done as new data were made and categorized. As more general themes such as "effluent response" became apparent, patterns began to emerge about the meanings readers made and how those meanings were made or influenced.

Research Site and Participants

The high school was located in a city in New Zealand. It had a large enrolment (over 1000 students), was considered to be in the middle of the socioeconomic range and had a significant socio-cultural mix of students. Of the eleven students from one Year 10 ESL class, nine students (aged between 12–15 years old) of varying English language proficiency and first languages agreed to participate in the research over the whole school year. Their English vocabulary levels were assessed using Nation's (2004) Vocabulary Levels Test. Most participants had a good grasp of the first 1000 words of English and were working toward acquiring the second 1000 words of English. The participants chose their own pseudonyms, and the letters 'ST' were assigned to the teacher. ST intensively studied two (modified) book-length texts, a collection of short stories and a film during the year. For the purposes of this article, I will draw on data for the first text ST taught—*The Cay* (Taylor, 1969, 1999). (See Appendix A for the researcher's synopsis.) These

data were chosen because *The Cay* was not only the first text the students were exposed to in the Year 10 ESL class (thus being in a sense their “foundation” for intensive reading in that class), but it also followed a pedagogical pattern that ST maintained throughout the year with other texts.

As the researcher is a kind of participant in their own research (Morse & Richards, 2002, pp. 87–89), brief details pertinent to this article need to be mentioned. The research was undertaken for a PhD thesis stemming from my experience as a classroom teacher in both mainstream and ESL high school education. Although I did not know ST prior to the research, we were both enrolled at the same university.

Presenting and Analyzing the Data

The overall aim of the data analysis is to enable an exploration of how the teacher and students appear to co-construct the intensive reading of a text: namely, how it is read (process) and what is to be known about it (product). I begin the data presentation and analysis by looking at ST’s reason for choosing *The Cay* and pedagogical approach to this text. Next I will explore how ST introduced the text to the students (the “before reading” phase) and student responses to this, and then explore how the text was physically read, used and discussed (the “during and after reading” phase). While wanting to avoid reductionist or deterministic inferences in presenting and analyzing the data this way, these foci provide a pedagogically typical approach to intensive reading (pre-, during, and post-reading phases) and a pragmatic way into the data. Using data from a context of reading outside the classroom, I will next suggest that ST has not adopted pedagogical practices which extend beyond what her students are capable of. Finally, I will consider the fit between what happened in the classroom and the English curriculum’s goal of transforming personal and intuitive reading into sophisticated and critical reading.

ST’s reasons for choosing The Cay, and pedagogical approach

During an interview with ST (March 24, 2006—after she and the students had completed the reading and study of the text) I asked why she had chosen *The Cay* (Taylor, 1969, 1999). She replied that she had taught the *original* version of the text in mainstream Year 9 English class and that it had been successful. She knew the *modified* version would be easy and that it was readily available as a class set. I asked her what key things (academic and or personal) she wanted the ESL students to get out of reading *The Cay* (Taylor, 1969, 1999), to which she replied:

umm just to read a book I, I didn’t really process what ahhh to oh I guess a few learning outcomes as far as the book was concerned was those setting plot character those sort of vocabs that we do when we study a piece of literature, ummm but yeah other than that it was just to read a book to, you know [quiet laugh].

ST’s response indicates that she did not have a predetermined set of pedagogical goals and outcomes in mind as she used the text. She did not “really process” what she was going to do with the text, but she had a general idea about covering some of the vocabulary pertinent to studying a text in class (e.g., “plot”). Perhaps this is in part due to her ongoing goal in ESL classes to be flexible and respond to the students’ needs as they become apparent. Her response

also suggests that the meaning of the concept of “just to read a book” is taken for granted, perhaps assumed to be context independent and commonsensical among teachers: “you know.”

Also of interest (for reasons that will become apparent in the data analysis below) is that ST does not say that one of her goals is to transmit a predetermined meaning of the text to the students, or to establish in the students a particular way of thinking about or reading the text. Of course it may be the case that she holds these goals, but chose not to articulate them at the time of the interview. Or perhaps more likely, she holds these beliefs below a level of conscious awareness. This below-conscious awareness is suggested in her response later in the interview: I asked ST if the questions she asked about the text during and after reading were the kind that readers should absorb and ask themselves when they study texts:

well interesting ... when I read that [question yesterday] I thought I don't know if they do because I'm not sure if that's the sort of thinking they've got ... I think that they should be and I'm thinking to myself, “Yes well that's my point when I am asking those questions trying to get out their knowledge” it, you know, elicit answers from them and at times with [*The Cay*] it was very hard work ... it would be great if they did [ask themselves those kinds of questions]... [but] I'm not certain that they do. I think ... they're coming at it from a position of the teacher's asking a question I have to give an answer, they don't process on any other level other than “what's the answer I'll give it and okay I've passed or I've achieved, I've given the answer” ...

ST's response suggests that my interview question prompted her to bring into awareness her multilayered belief that students should be asking themselves similar questions to those she asks in class but that they don't.

Introducing The Cay to the students—pre-reading phase

ST introduced the text to the class near the start of the school year (February 21, 2006). The unit using the text took 13 part and whole class periods—approximately 12 hours total—and involved a range of tasks both written (in the form of worksheets and board work) and oral (reading out loud and answering the teacher's oral questions). ST distributed *The Cay* to the students at the beginning of a class and set the students the task of inspecting the front cover (see Appendix B for transcription conventions. Line numbers are used for convenient reference only):

1 ST: okay I'm going to hand you the book *The Cay* I want you to take one
2 and I want you to just look at the cover of the book. just look at the cover
3 of the book and I'm also going to give you a piece of paper this is just a
4 scrap piece of paper. Umm Rick can I get you to sit over there please?
5 James Bond can I get you to sit here with Miyamoto.

ST controls how the text is to be first encountered by the students, and who is to sit next to whom for this introduction. In this case, ST is separating two Japanese first language users, Rick and Miyamoto, in order to negate their potential use of Japanese (ST's comment, field notes). ST repeats that she wants the students to only look at the cover of the text (lines 2–3). ST's decision to control how the students handled the text (i.e., only look at the front cover) promotes uniformity between students, and also seems to be identifiable as a classroom task. It contrasts with observations of participants selecting their own texts—those not studied in class, but read as part of the class's extensive reading program. On their own, students showed a variety of ways of

choosing and interacting with new texts. For example, some would look at the front cover and then look at the back cover and read the blurb. Others would pick up a text, open it and read the first page. Still others would pick up a text and flick through the pages looking at the graphics. Occasionally participants would consider a book while standing beside a friend who would pass comment on the text (in either a shared L1 or in English) and encourage or discourage selection of that text.

So, although many students do look at the front cover of texts on their own (either fleetingly on their way into the text, or taking longer to apparently consider the cover picture), they do not spend much time inspecting it. ST's control of the introduction of the book goes without explanation or justification and implicitly suggests that the teacher is in control. The very next turn is a student (Nivea) asking:

6 can we look at it?

This question suggests that at least Nivea is aware of who is in control of how the text is to be approached. ST replies:

7 [...] okay ummm I want you to look at the cover, only the cover so
 8 that means only this bit here [indicating the front cover] and this bit okay? the
 9 cover. and in your group so Hard Stake and Oscar you're gonna work
 10 together and on this piece of paper one of you is gonna write down some
 11 things, okay? the answer to the questions just a few words, okay? I want
 12 you two to work together [indicating to James Bond and Miyamoto] together
 13 Ezy-Pac and Rick together and I want you to work together so one
 14 person does the writing and the rest of you are thinking okay. and
 15 there are four questions that you are going to answer or think about.

ST repeats what the students are to be looking at (lines 7–9) and supports comprehension by holding up the text and showing them the front cover. Given that ST was still establishing the students' level of English proficiency, this level of explicitness is unsurprising. ST continues to re-seat students according to her preferences, and directs students to have one person in the pair do the thinking and the other do the writing. ST then writes the following questions on the board, which were to be answered by each pair:

1. Where are the two people?
2. What is the boy doing?
3. What is the man doing?
4. Why does the picture show the man looking?

Whereas these students were generally compliant with ST's demands (over the whole year), only one pair appeared to follow her directives in this task, and generally the students worked at inspecting the front cover and answering the questions independently (field notes). A number of explanations are possible here. Firstly, ST had separated students who were familiar with each other (several students were friends or acquaintances from the previous school year, two were sisters, and Rick and Miyamoto had traveled from Japan to New Zealand together) and thus students may have been shy about interacting with strangers. Secondly, it is possible that because

The Cay was a new text, all students were interested in looking at the text and responding to the questions (see below), thus it was unsatisfactory to have just one from the pair ‘think’ about the book and the other be the scribe. The students may have been resisting ST’s control simply out of curiosity about a new book.

ST reiterates the task to the class (look at the front cover and answer the questions) and repeatedly encourages oral interaction between the students, eventually saying:

16 ST okay ‘coz this is a test of how you can talk together as well, how you can
17 work together.

Note also that perhaps what “just to read a book” means in ST’s class includes not only activities such as inspecting and answering questions about the front cover, but also tests how well students talk and work together. The concept of “just to read a book” in ST’s class is already multifaceted.

After slightly less than five minutes ST initiates a whole class discussion about their responses to the four questions on the board.

18 ST: okay let’s go over the thing. so, where are the two people.
19 Unknown male: in the island
20 ST: okay so got island [writing on board] what else? You’ve got beach, you
21 said something Hard Stake
22 Hard Stake: sitting on rocks
23 ST: ahh yeah sitting on the rocks, what else? what kind of island?
24 Ezy-Pac: deserted?
25 ST: maybe [...]
26 Hard Stake: what is deserted?
27 ST: deserted means nobody’s living there, there’s no one staying there it
28 you know no people.
29 Hard Stake: [inaudible]
30 ST: sorry Hard Stake?
31 Hard Stake: [still inaudible but he is commenting on having seen the text before]
32 ST: you recognize the story? okay [they’re on] a deserted island or they
33 might be armmm beach sitting on the rocks, anything else you can say
34 about where they are? {2} that pretty much tells us it doesn’t it. yeah
35 alright so that one’s done. {1.5} what is the boy doing?

This excerpt has a number of interesting features. Firstly, it supports findings from previous research which shows that students’ responses to the teacher’s questions tend to be short and factual (see lines 19, 22, and 24) (English, Hargreaves & Hislam, 2002, quoted in Myhill & Dunkin, 2005; Myhill & Dunkin, 2005). Rather than interpreting ST’s question as “where in the world could the two people be?” the students have opted to provide a short factual description (e.g., sitting on rocks).

Secondly, the excerpt is particularly interesting because of ST’s reaction (line 32) to Hard Stake’s comment (line 31) that he has seen the text before. ST acknowledges his comment with a recast of his unclear utterance ending in a high-rising terminal and follows up with “okay,” then

immediately moves on to recap what the students have so far supplied in response to her question. ST's reaction to Hard Stake's comment effectively acknowledges but then dismisses it as not currently relevant to her preferred focus, which is, answering question one. Although Hard Stake is the only student to explicitly say he has seen the text before, responses from other students suggest a prior encounter. At line 19, an unknown male suggests the two people are on an island. This is not apparent from the picture on the cover, and no student knew what a "cay" was. Similarly, Ezy-Pac's suggestion (line 24) that the island is a *deserted* island seems to spring from prior encounters with the text. In fact, Ezy-Pac, Nivea, Oscar and Hard Stake had all encountered the book the previous year (field notes). However, ST does not explore this fact any further (perhaps implying it has no effect or relevance for their reading, or at least is not important to her current goals), and continues with eliciting answers to her questions. Again, "just to read a book" has a nuanced meaning in this context, which seems to exclude the relevance of any previous encounter with the text. Interestingly, one could argue that this is one way of homogenizing and silencing students (Luke, 1992, p. 126), even though this was not ST's intention (field notes and interview). Indeed ST stated she would have preferred the students to have answered her questions with lengthy responses (interview).

The third observation of interest in this excerpt is that ST is in control of how much the students are to give her. This is evident both in her prompts for more information (lines 20, 23, and 33) and in her ability to determine they have finished with that question (line 35), saying "so that one's done," and move on to the next one. Although ST had read the original version of this text and taught it to her mainstream Year 9 English class (and thus is a "primary knower;" see Nassaji & Wells, 2000), she genuinely appears to be wondering what the students will tell her (as opposed to having a set response in mind). Although prompting for more responses (lines 20, 23, and 33) can be interpreted as the teacher having a set response in mind, in this case ST's responses at lines 25 and 33–34 suggest that she did not have a fully worked out response that she expected the students to supply. This could be because the four questions ST wrote on the board were obtained from the Penguin Readers Factsheets Teacher's Notes *The Cay* (Pearson Education, 2000) (field notes). Thus, although ST had prepared for the class by deciding on which questions to ask about the book, she drew on the publisher's suggested questions to which she had not formulated a set of desired answers.

ST follows a similar pattern for questions two and three of engaging students, controlling the responses and determining when the questions were answered. Note that the first three questions could be answered by direct observation of the picture on the front cover of the text. Question four, however, perhaps requires speculation (Myhill & Dunkin, 2005), drawing on higher order thinking skills. As we will see below, the teacher-student discourse responding to it reveals ST's position as the knowledge-holder (in spite of several students having encountered the text before). ST decided to address question four after this interaction (concerning question three):

- 36 ST: [...] okay good what is the man doing?
 37 Hard Stake: looking for help
 38 ST: ahh okay looking for help why would he be looking for help?
 39 Unknown: [inaudible]
 40 ST: maybe they're lost, okay so where are the people {1.5} lost on a desert
 41 island. looking for help, what else is he doing could he be doing?
 42 Ezy-Pac: looking for a boat?

43 ST: okay looking for a boat. looking for a boat to rescue him, good.

Again, ST's questions appear to generate simple responses of fact from the students: "what is the man doing" (line 36) and Hard Stake responds with "looking for help" (line 37), which ST wants expanded with a reason (line 38). This pattern is repeated at lines 41 and 42; however, this time ST transforms Ezy-Pac's response (line 42) by adding a reason "to rescue him" (line 43) and then evaluates the interaction with "good." In any event, ST immediately continues on from line 43 (above) with:

44 ST: ummm, okay why does the picture show the man looking? mmm
 45 this is kind of hard, deeper question
 46 Rick: 'cause the man, because he puts his hand on the face
 47 ST: ohh yeah that's how it shows that he's looking because when we do this
 48 one [makes alternate hand/face gesture], why would he put his hand like that,
 49 what does that do?
 50 Ezy-Pac: clearly
 51 ST: to see clearly why?
 52 Hard Stake: sunshine in the eye
 53 ST: yep Andrea said it
 54 Andrea: because of the sun
 55 ST: yes the sun is very shiny. so if we do this [makes appropriate hand gesture] it
 56 helps us see something. [...] so they could be looking for boats or he could
 57 be looking for help or {1} yeah. [topic changes to questions about the nationality of
 58 the two characters, then returns to the question] okay well, I'm going to tell you a
 59 little hint about this last question so, why does the picture show the man
 60 looking? there's something wrong with the boy. the boy doesn't have
 61 something that the man has, okay now the boy is fishing, what do you do
 62 when you're fishing?

ST has signaled that this is a hard question (line 45) and after several attempts to elicit appropriate responses, ST sets herself up as both the knowledge-holder and controller. At lines 58–59 she implies she has the answer, but, rather than providing it, gives hint so the students may reach the conclusion she has in mind on their own. She does this by providing a fact about the boy (lines 60–61, "there is something wrong with the boy") which is not readily apparent from the picture on the cover of the text (as a student will comment—see line 87 below), and then asks a series of questions (lines 61–68).

63 Unknown: [inaudible]
 64 ST: you go fishing you know when you've got your fishing rod in the
 65 water what are you doing with your eyes [unclear overlap with Hard
 66 Stake] right? okay so yeah [overlap unclear with Hard Stake] if you're fishing you
 67 are looking for what? you're looking for fish of course. okay so you're
 68 looking for fish this boy is he looking for fish?
 69 Students: ((several students together)) no
 70 ST: why not?
 71 Oscar: because he's blind

Oscar reveals his prior knowledge of the text in his response (line 71), which ST modifies to "maybe he's blind" (line 72, below). This is an interesting modification to make because ST,

whether intentionally or not, is effectively denying Oscar's status as a person knowledgeable about the text. Oscar knew the boy was blind because of his previous encounter with the text; however, ST recasts Oscar's response as "Oscar says maybe he's blind..." (line 72). No explanation was sought for why ST did this (or if she was aware of doing it);, but ST's recast suggests she is in control over what will be learned about the text and when. ST then clarifies that everyone in the class understands the word "blind."

- 72 ST: Oscar says maybe he's blind, do you understand blind?
 73 Nivea: yeah
 74 ST: what does blind mean?
 75 Hard Stake: I know [inaudible response about the boy missing his family]
 76 [overlap student voices female says "you can't see anything"]
 77 ST: you know [inaudible]. he's blind so he misses his family? mmmm Hard
 78 Stake he might miss his family yes but that's not [Hard Stake continues his
 79 turn overlapping ST—inaudible] I ask you what this word [blind] means what is
 80 this word, Rick, blind. do you know what it means? {2}

In this section, not only does Hard Stake arguably try to show his prior knowledge of the text (line 75), but he also tries to change the focus from answering the question to revealing something about the boy and his family. ST acknowledges Hard Stake's contribution (lines 77–78) but firmly rebukes him for attempting to subvert ST's topic choice (lines 78–79) and tries to silence him by nominating Rick as the student who should respond to her question (line 80):

- 81 Rick: [inaudible]
 82 [unclear but Hard Stake calls out that the man is not the boy's father]

Rick's inaudible response is drowned out by Hard Stake's determination to subvert or disturb ST's control over the topic (ST described Hard Stake as a likeable but "cheeky and challenging" student when she was asked to describe each student in her class during an interview). Again, it is possible that Hard Stake is demonstrating his prior knowledge of the text and wanting to make a point about what interests him about the text (the boy missing his family). ST focuses on Rick's comment and ignores the substance of Hard Stake's utterance but eventually notes the fact of his interruption (line 83):

- 83 ST: if you are blind your eyes don't work. alright Hard Stake?
 84 Hard Stake: yep
 85 ST: do you know anybody who is blind? [this dialogue continues for some
 86 minutes and then ST returns to crafting the response she wants to question four]
 87 [unknown student comments that the boy does not look blind]

At line 87, a student comments about the picture on the cover (which, intriguingly, may also be a veiled comment about the difficulty of answering question four based solely on the front cover). ST picks up on this, acknowledges it, but then quickly moves back to her preferred focus:

- 88 ST: no, he doesn't look blind but actually he is so what is the man doing then?
 89 if the boy is blind the man is? [...] what is he doing?
 90 Ezy-Pac: [inaudible]
 91 ST: he's looking for?

- 92 Ezy-Pac: [inaudible]
 93 ST: is he? help? what is
 94 Andrea: fish?
 95 ST: yeah the boy can't see the fish so the man is standing there helping him
 96 and the man might say "oh, there's a fish over there on your left" and so
 97 the boy will be like putting his fishing rod over there. {1.5} okay so, right,
 98 what we need to do now, there's ten minutes to go yet, in your esol book,
 99 you need a new page okay? a new page [dialogue continues]

ST provides her preferred response at lines 95–97 and may have decided to do this because it is a “deeper” question (line 45), the class is almost over (handwritten notes, and line 98), and therefore the students might not guess her intended response in time. Thus, ST builds on Andrea’s one word utterance (line 94) telling students why the man is looking “for” the boy (note that ST does not say the man “might” be..., but rather “is”...[line 95]—again reinforcing ST’s knowledge about the book and right to provide that knowledge). After a short pause (1.5 seconds), she switches to another topic and task (lines 97–98).

This, then, was how ST introduced *The Cay* to the students. This initiating, pre-reading phase sets up ST as being in control of:

- how the text is to be handled (for example, by everyone looking at the front cover and answering questions);
- who determines the topic or focus of discourse about the text (despite Hard Stake attempting to alter the topic based on the fact he’d seen the text before, and that the boy misses his family);
- when enough knowledge about the text has been gleaned;
- who is the knowledge-holder and judge (despite several students having encountered the text previously);
- how that knowledge is to be gotten (i.e., by responding to ST’s questions or guessing at her hints); and
- the pattern of student responses which are acceptable to ST, although perhaps not the most desired by ST (brief factual responses of three or four words, despite ST usually asking for more information).

We can see evidence of control over these aspects of intensively reading a text continuing the next day. Picking up where ST left off in the last lesson (defining “setting”), students had to cut out and color in maps of the Caribbean region. ST spent most of this lesson eliciting information from the students about what they knew of the continents, the countries the students came from, and the Caribbean geography, climate and weather. In addition to the map task, ST had students do a “focus on form” task involving conjunctions. ST tied in these tasks with the text:

- 100 ST: now we're gunna turn over a have a look at a map of this place, now the
 101 story [holding up *The Cay* text] remember back to this story [laughing softly, looks at me]
 102 a long time ago? [you've] probably lost the fact that we are working towards
 103 looking at the story. these people [on the front cover of *The Cay*] are where are
 104 these people?

After several more minutes of questions about Curaçao and establishing that one of the main

characters comes from Curaçao, Hard Stake enquires where the other character comes from. ST responds:

- 105 ST: well I'm not sure, we might need to read to find out. anyway that's enough
 106 of [unclear] all that we're gunna stop that now. [...] so tomorrow we'll start
 107 reading the book.
 108 Hard Stake: I can start now?
 109 ST: no [unclear], so [continues with an explanation of what the class will do in the
 110 last 10 minutes of class time.]

In two periods, ST has set tasks which establish several facts about who the characters on the front cover are, and where the story is set. ST's utterance (lines 100-103) and quiet laugh with a glance at me suggests she is aware of how long it is taking to get to actually reading the text. Yet when Hard Stake asks if he can start reading the book in the last 10 minutes of class, her response is a bald "no" and an immediate introduction to the last task of the day.

I argue that, like the first day, this second period of *The Cay* reinforces ST as the power-holder (controlling how the book will be read—the process of reading), and knowledge-holder (controlling what will be known about the book—the product of reading). She has the power to set tasks and decide when the text will be read, as well as the power to determine what is important to know. Although ST spent some minutes asking students questions and eliciting responses about where one of the characters comes from, Hard Stake's question about where the other character comes from is set aside (line 105). For the students, it could be argued that the information about the geographic location (et cetera) of Curaçao is implicitly important because ST (the power-holder) has chosen to include it in the class (Hade, 1992). Additionally, through her continued pattern of eliciting responses from students, sanctioning and or amending their responses, she has reaffirmed her position as the knowledge-holder. Interestingly, when a gap in her knowledge is identified (see line 105 above), she hints at her gap ("I'm not sure"), defers an answer (perhaps the text will tell us) and then quickly moves onto the next task.

During and after reading The Cay

On day three, ST begins to read the text. Again she asserts control over this process, beginning with distributing the book again and asking:

- 111 ST: [...] so remind me of what we have learned so far about this book.

This prompt elicits a series of facts about what the students have learned in the past two days. Interestingly, one inference here is that *The Cay* is to be learned about as a group, rather than uniquely experienced by each reader. (For a discussion of the effects of viewing texts as something to be learned from versus experienced, see Rosenblatt, 2005, pp. 96–105; see also Many & Wiseman, 1992, for a research-based discussion of this distinction). After several minutes, ST says:

- 112 ST: [...] we've been waiting to read the book for days, so here goes. oh actually
 113 I know what I was going to do before I got you to read the book, I was going
 114 to get you to finish this sentence

115 [sounds of exasperation from several students including Nivea and Ezy-Pac]
 116 ST: yeh yeah [...]

In spite of clear signs of frustration from several students, possibly at the further delay in beginning the book (line 115), ST inserts a question about predicting what happens in the story, requiring a written response from the students. There is no explanation about why students should do this, nor do they ask why. Once this is done to ST's satisfaction (just over five minutes) she re-begins:

117 ST: okay most people have written a something about that. alright. so let's start
 118 at the beginning and we will read the introduction which tells us a little
 119 bit about the story {1} ahh maybe Nivea you could read the introduction.

Moving from close inspection of the front cover to learning about geographical aspects of the setting to a prediction task, ST now controls the process of reading the words on the page. She directs one of the students to read the "introduction."

In addition to controlling what parts of the text must be read, ST controls the physical reading aloud activity of the selected reader (Nivea):

120 ST: yeah just wait until everyone get ready, everyone's looking at the book [...]
 121 ummm right ummm so Nivea is gunna read this bit.
 122 Nivea: [begins to read]
 123 ST: wait wait wait, can everyone hear Nivea
 124 Hard Stake: no
 125 ST: no, you need to be a little bit slower, and a little bit louder
 126 Nivea: [clears throat and restarts]

In this way ST proceeds through the first pages of the text. ST selects a student to read a section (of unspecified, varying lengths) and encourages them to read slowly and loudly, occasionally correcting mispronounced words and inserting questions or comments; (for example, "remember Willemstad from the map?"). ST selected students to read whom she felt were comfortable with the idea of reading aloud (interview), but she suggested no particular plan or purpose in having them do so, except to practice reading aloud and thus pronunciation (field notes). Again, activities like reading aloud, having one's pronunciation corrected, or speed of reading moderated and so on, are classroom activities which are not, for the most part, done by students reading outside of this context. During the end-of-year student interviews, most participants said they did not mind reading aloud so much, but would not choose to read that way. One participant commented that he sometimes read aloud to hear his own pronunciation (James Bond) and another occasionally read aloud to his younger brother (Oscar). The two sisters (Nivea and Ezy-Pac) were observed reading to each other things of interest in a popular women's magazine during free reading time in class (field notes).

After having most of the students in the class on day three take a turn at reading aloud, ST then read aloud most of the rest of the text to the class (over the remaining nine days). As ST—or occasionally the students—read through the text, ST would interrupt the reading of it. Sometimes she paused to check the students understood some aspect of the story up to that point:

- 127 ST: [...] okay so when they tell umm when they tell Phillip that they might
 128 have to leave the island, how does he feel?
 129 Ezy-Pac: he was sad
 130 ST: why is he sad?
 131 Ezy-Pac: he don't want to go
 132 ST: why what does he like about his island of Curaçao?
 133 Ezy-Pac: the beach and the market
 134 ST: yep
 135 Ezy-Pac: chickens and laughing with the men
 136 ST: yeah, yeah he likes the people he likes the beach
 137 Nivea: he's a island boy [grinning at Ezy-Pac and then ST]
 138 ST: yep okay good. alright ahh Hard Stake can you read the next part?

Ezy-Pac and Nivea's responses have elements of being personalized responses; that is, their comments are derived from and speak to a personal evocation (feelings, reactions and responses) from the text (Rosenblatt, 1978). Perhaps analogous to Hard Stake's comment that "the boy misses his family" (line 75–79), these evocations are overlooked or not noticed by ST. It should be noted that Nivea and Ezy-Pac were born in a South Pacific island country and still maintain strong familial ties there (field notes); they thus have a rich sense of the island life interpretable from the text, as both participants self-identify in certain contexts as "island girls" (mirroring Nivea's "island boy" comment at line 137). This rich sense comes through in Ezy-Pac's slightly longer turns at talk (lines 131, 133, and 135). She appears to find it easier (and one wonders if it is also more pleasurable) to be more forthcoming that she has been in previous dialogues about why the boy might miss his beloved tropical island than she has been in previous dialogues (for example, see lines 24, 42, 50, 90, and 92, above).

This is noteworthy because when readers have prior knowledge about or experience of an aspect of a text, their "comprehension" of it is assisted (for example, see Johnson, 1982; Steffensen, Joag-Dev & Anderson, 1979) and their evocations from the text are facilitated (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1995). Moreover, it is interesting because, although ST has canvassed students' prior knowledge of, for example, "blind people" (see lines 85–86 above) in order to spark connections with their personal, prior knowledge (interview with ST), she does not pursue this or even appear to acknowledge this in the above interaction (lines 127–138). Rather, she appears to be looking for the few small facts Ezy-Pac supplies, and then moves on. ST was not asked about this, but it is possible that she did not notice the opportunity because, unlike the issue of being blind, being an "island boy" was not her focus.

On other occasions ST paused to focus on a grammatical point, because, for example, it was the "type of thing that comes up in tasks in other assessments at junior level and that they [the students] will be doing later on in the year"—interview with ST:

- 139 ST: okay [...] let's stop there for a moment. now this [unclear] ship went
 140 down, what does this mean? went down?
 141 Hard Stake: go down
 142 ST: it's a phrasal verb here
 143 Ezy-Pac: slip down
 144 [ST draws a diagram of a ship on the water and then under the water on the board].

- 145 ST: which is what we call a phrasal verb okay, so not really, this the verb went,
 146 past of go and down is a preposition so together, this means “went down” so
 147 yeah [...] it means sink [...] so we’ve got the boat here on top of the water and
 148 if it goes down
 149 Nivea: titanic [private laughter]
 150 ST: Titanic indeed [...] now also I wanted to ask you [...]

Given that the students had not indicated a gap in their understanding of the story so far, ST’s decision to pause at this dramatic point in the story when the ship had been torpedoed and is sinking might seem somewhat odd. All participants commented during the end-of-year interviews that they were always eager to read onward at moments of high tension in books. They openly admitted that when a task I set them while reading at home (such as writing in the recall protocols—what they could recall from passages just read) interrupted an exciting point in their reading, they were irritated and would occasionally read on and then return to the task (see also Many & Wiseman, 1992, about interruptions to reading at moments of high interest). Thus, ST’s decision to pause at a moment of high tension and explore a grammatical issue is likely to be implicitly understood by students (and ST) as an aspect of studying texts in class, which incidentally reinforces her power to control the reading process. Although not on this particular occasion, it should be noted that there were several instances where ST interrupted the reading at moments of high tension, and that at least some students would combine responding to the set task with covertly continuing to read the text; viz, subtly subverting her control over the reading event.

Sometimes ST paused to point out what to her was an important aspect of the story and ensure that students “got it”:

- 151 ST: okay so [...] that’s an important moment. because Phillip liked the war he
 152 thought the war was exciting but he now he thinks what?
 153 Ezy-Pac: it’s dangerous//
 154 Hard Stake: //it’s dangerous
 155 ST: yes he realizes it’s not exciting and it’s not [unclear] okay [...]

Again, note that although ST asks students to explain an aspect of the story, ST takes the response and reformulates it into what satisfies her (line 155 builds on Ezy-Pac and Hard Stake’s comment). In this particular example, the reason ST quickly built on the students’ offerings was to minimize the interruption (field notes after class discussion) and move on with the story.

Predominantly ST paused in her reading in order to ask questions which either drew on information students had discussed in previous classes (for example, when the text referred to Virginia, ST asked: “so where is Virginia?”) or were considered by ST to be important in the passages she had just read. Generally, ST tried to keep these interruptions short, saving longer questions and worksheets until the end of a chapter in the text.

In general, ST’s approach to reading *The Cay* was to occasionally have students read aloud, but more often to read the text aloud herself, thus keeping all students uniformly together in a linear progression. (Having rejected Hard Stake’s request to begin the book before the other students, ST also rejected Oscar’s suggestion on day five that everyone should now read the text for

themselves). She would pause to ask questions concerning students' understanding of grammatical points, word meanings, plot points and so on at various times in the text, often seemingly regardless of students' immersion in the action of the story (Many & Wiseman, 1992, p. 266).

Overview: What Does “Just to Read a Book” Mean?

The analysis thus far has suggested the complexity of what it means “just to read” *The Cay* in ST's Year 10 ESL class. Before I look at selected connections and disconnections between ST's pedagogical choices and the English curriculum's goal of transforming the personal and intuitive into the sophisticated and critical, I want to quickly recap features of the processes and products of ST's intensive reading of *The Cay*.

Beginning with the relatively banal contextualizing fact that ST was compelled by the school's ESL curriculum to study at least one text intensively, she chose *The Cay* for pragmatic reasons: a class set existed; she believed it would be easy; and, because she had previously studied the original version of the text with mainstream students, she believed she was familiar with the modified text. (However, for an analysis of several significant differences between the original and modified versions of *The Cay*, which make that belief risky, see Marianne, 2007).

Analysis of the first two lessons of *The Cay* argued that ST's pedagogical practices and students' responses implicitly or explicitly placed ST in control of:

- how the text is to be physically and intellectually handled;
- who determines the topic or focus of discourse about the text;
- who is the knowledge-holder and judge;
- how that knowledge is to be gotten; and,
- when enough knowledge about the text has been gleaned.

ST's control over these aspects of the processes and products of reading *The Cay* continued throughout the remaining lessons.

Based solely on this classroom intensive reading data we might infer that ST was providing a very structured, simplified way for ESL students to read and understand a fiction text. Students were provided with or guided toward discovering contextualizing facts (such as geographical location [lines 18–35]), prompted to draw on their own background knowledge of aspects such as blindness [lines 44–86], prompted to generate predictions about the story [lines 112–118], guided toward understanding characters' perspectives and feelings [lines 127–138, 151–155], and assisted with grammatical issues [lines 139–150]. We might also infer that this was what the students needed (or ST believed they needed). Thus, students were being assisted toward becoming sophisticated, critical readers in a structured, simplified way.

However, this begs the question of what students as readers of fiction for pleasure did without the teacher. Perhaps they were incapable of drawing on their own background knowledge, predicting story lines, or adopting various perspectives. Earlier I highlighted the differences

between how ST introduced *The Cay* to the students compared with how they selected and introduced themselves to a text. What else can data from students' self-selected reading outside the classroom tell us about students' extant processes and products of reading? In the methodology section above I explained that one of the data collection tools I used to obtain data about students' reading in contexts outside the classroom was to have students complete "recall protocols" about what they could remember of each chapter in a self-selected book. Thus, participants read texts (of comparable linguistic levels to *The Cay*), completed recall protocols at the end of each chapter (writing whatever they could recall from the pages just read), and sometimes participated in interviews about the texts.

Here are extracts from a participant's (Oscar) interview about his reading of *The Withered Arm* (Hardy, 2004, modified). Oscar's data was purposely selected because it illustrates the points I wish to make. He was not the most able student in the class, but he was in the top four students. After asking Oscar for a summary of the story, to which he gave a 518-word response (see Appendix C), I asked him what he liked most about the book:

- 1 Oscar: I liked the most when ummm when Rhoda Brook was there when Gertrude put
- 2 her arm on the neck
- 3 Marianne: ahh right that's the end yeah, why do you like that bit the most
- 4 Oscar: ahhh. hmm, because ahh umm Gertrude saw that ahh the boy the boy is was
- 5 ahh Rhoda's Rhoda's Brook child and ahh her her husband like ahh Farmer Lodge and Rhoda
- 6 Brook ahh married and got that ahh child and she and Gertrude put her arm on it, yep.
- 7 Marianne: did you expect that ending? did you think that was what was going to happen?
- 8 Oscar: ummm, no
- 9 Marianne: what did you think was going to happen.
- 10 Oscar: ahhh, Gertrude like got better and better and ahh live happy and ahmm
- 11 Rhoda Brook like ahh get more friendly to Farmer Lodge and ahh Gertrude.
- 12 Marianne: mhm and when did you think that would happen sort of in the middle of
- 13 the book or at the start? or at the end?
- 14 Oscar: mm. when mm just before Gertrude and Rhoda Brook [first went] went to the
- 15 wise man?
- 16 Marianne: how did you feel reading [that end part]?
- 17 Oscar: ummm like that's scary as well, scary and like mystic like ahhh magic thing

Then I asked him what he thought about curing a withered arm by placing it on the neck of a dead person and Oscar queried:

- 18 ahh how come like people already dead and the blood not through ahhh his body and
- 19 can turn ahhh her arm [quiet laugh]
- 20 Marianne: so you don't don't believe it?
- 21 Oscar: [smiling] no

After asking Oscar which character he liked the most, to which he replied "Rhoda," I asked him why he liked her the most:

- 22 Oscar: {6.5} she like ahh {2} she and [unclear] like spiritful and she just do nothing do
- 23 nothing to Gertrude like not do "ahhh" [imitating a jealous woman's behavior- screaming etc]
- 24 like ahh arguing with the new wife

Analyzing Oscar's responses to the interview prompts allows us to infer that he is capable of:

- drawing on his own background knowledge (e.g., jilted partners can be jealous; lines 21-23), real medical cures for withered arms do not include the use of a corpse; lines 18-21,
- predicting story lines (e.g., that the story would have a 'happy ever after' ending; lines 7-15), and
- adopting various perspectives (lines 10-11, 21-23) including his own as a reader immersed in a story (aesthetic reading; line 1) and a reader analyzing a story (efferent reading; lines 18-21).

A single example from the reading outside the classroom context is used here to provide a suggestive contrast with the data from the intensive classroom data. Having suggested that Oscar (and by extension the other participants) was capable of processes that ST thought were difficult for the students (interview), I want to now move on to a discussion of the pedagogical and intellectual implications of ST's intensive study of *The Cay*.

Pedagogical and Intellectual Implications

ST's pedagogical approach to *The Cay*—her use of tasks and strategies, arguably positioned the students as predominately powerless and naïve. Students were not free to answer as they chose, they did not have the “power” to assert their interpretation (e.g., lines 88-97, where Ezy-Pac's suggested interpretation is discounted and Andrea's suggestion is taken up), and their prior encounters with the text were overlooked or dismissed (see discussion under line 35). They did not have the power to read the text as they wanted (e.g., to read at their own pace), or to explore issues as they arose (e.g., Hard Stake's comment about the boy missing his family or Nivea's 'island boy' comment). ST's dialogue and interactions with the students in the class seems to have resulted in the students reading the text the way she viewed the text, limiting the dialogue (compare Oscar's response to a 'why' question concerning *The Cay* [at line 71] with his response to 'why' questions concerning *The Withered Arm* [lines 4-6 and 22-24]), and constrained students' interpretations to predominately guessing what ST wanted to hear.

If this analysis is accurate then the problem is that the global goal of education (that is, to foster a sophisticated knowledge of and approach to reading which prioritizes critical thinking and the development of the skills of literary criticism, Ministry of Education, 1994) is potentially disconnected from readers' everyday, personal interactions with texts. And it is these personal everyday sites of reading where sophisticated and critical reading may have the greatest implications for intellectual growth (Rosenblatt 1995). If pedagogical goals aim to foster a certain kind of intellect and ability to critically interpret texts, then ST's pedagogical choices in handling, reading and exploring *The Cay* seem to have in fact done the opposite. The students were homogenized in handling, reading and interpreting the text (Luke, 1992). Unsurprisingly, their responses to the worksheets revealed not critical thinking, but conformity with ST's beliefs about the text (as per Rosenblatt, 1995). For example, there was little diversity in the description of the main character (Phillip), and each student's “main ideas” from the text were predominately the same (tasks on worksheet 6).

Intellectually, the implications are worrying. Although ST sought to assist her students, and had their interests in mind, some aspects of her pedagogical practices crafted reliant, tentative readers who had to guess what the teacher wanted to hear in order to be considered as having “understood” the text (that is, having acceptably responded to her oral questions and completed the worksheets). Notwithstanding that conformity with a teacher’s interpretation of a text may facilitate students passing exams (a very real concern for teachers, students and parents), the worry is that, intellectually, students become reliant upon others for what becomes the “correct” interpretation of a text. In the broader context of overall intellectual development, an ability to draw on secondary sources of information, others’ interpretations, and an ability to explore reasons for differing interpretations are vital aspects of becoming a critical, sophisticated reader (Cooper, 1989; Many & Cox, 1992; Purves, 1985; Rosenblatt, 1995). These abilities are not facilitated when the teacher controls the process and products of reading. Paradoxically, the right answers and the right behavior (in ST’s class for this research project) mitigate against becoming a sophisticated, critical reader.

The analysis and discussion of the data suggests that it is worthwhile unpacking ST’s claim that she wanted the students “just to read a book.” This point echoes other researchers’ calls for teachers to be encouraged and supported in action research projects aimed at raising teachers’ awareness and reflection on what they do in class (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 191–194; Barkhuizen, 2008). Clearly what was going on in ST’s class (both in terms of how students physically read the text and the meanings they made of it) was the result of complex, interconnected and sometimes competing demands of what it means to study a fiction text in a certain context. ST did not have a consciously worked-out, detailed set of learning goals for the students for this text, nor did she view the intensive reading of the text as anything particularly “special,” it was—“just to read a book [...] you know.” However, her pedagogical choices had significant impact on the students’ reading of the text, and therefore impact on their intellectual development as literate language learners and users.

Moreover, had ST looked at readers’ processes and products of reading in contexts outside the classroom (e.g., Oscar’s data in the extensive reading program), she may have been better able to see that the MOE’s aim of transforming students into sophisticated critical readers was not well served by her tight control over the use of *The Cay*. Again, providing ST with the encouragement and support needed to explore the connections between different contexts of reading (for example, intensive reading and extensive reading) might have altered her pedagogical choices.

Future Research

As with most qualitative research, this article explores and interprets a small data set and thus does not justify generalizations. However, what has emerged in the analysis and exploration of the data are issues of interest to teachers (and theorists) concerned with reflecting on their own pedagogical practices and the (dis)continuities with curricula demands.

Future research should extend these findings by conducting prompted recall interviews which aim to reveal the reasons for participants’ dialogic choices and behaviors in class, and their

interpretations of each other's dialogic choices and behaviors (Dörnyei, 2007; Duff, 2010). As previously stated this was not done in the present research in order to minimize researcher interference in the context of the whole school year. However, by exploring this issue using an action research paradigm, the problem of "interference" is avoided and a valuable additional source of explanation is created. This could reveal the reasons for teachers and students linguistic and behavioral choices in class. In other words, why they do and say what they do and say in class.

Lastly, analysis of reading data made outside the classroom context suggests that further research investigating how readers make meaning with texts on their own would generate a more accurate picture of readers' so-called "intuitive and personal sense of stories." Using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies might generate a more complex and generalizable way to understand the individuals in ESL classrooms, thus providing teachers with the tools to more appropriately scaffold or assist readers into sophisticated and critical reading. Moreover, investigating the processes and products of reading in other contexts (than intensive study in a classroom) would add, as this study has done, a source of triangulation to our understanding of the context of classroom reading (i.e., what is similar to or different from the context of classroom reading).

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Appendix A

Researcher's synopsis

In *The Cay*, the two key characters are Phillip (an eleven year old American boy) and Timothy (an aged West Indian sailor). The story is set during World War Two in the Caribbean. Phillip's mother and father live on an island in the Caribbean which is being attacked. Phillip's mother decides (against her husband's advice) to flee the island and return home to America. The boat they flee on is sunk and Phillip ends up alone on a raft with Timothy. The bulk of the story takes place on a deserted cay and revolves around Timothy and Phillip surviving together in spite of their differences and the difficulty of the situation.

Appendix B

Transcription conventions

The transcript excerpts have been amended herein to facilitate readability whilst retaining an element of their dialogical nature. Hence the transcription conventions have been kept to a minimum.

.	a period indicates a falling tone and a pause of slightly less than one second
,	a comma indicates a short pause less than is indicated by a period
{1.5}	indicates a longer pause: number indicates seconds or part thereof
[...]	excised dialogue
//	indicates one utterance overlapping with another
[comment]	square brackets and comment is either the researcher's best guess for what was uttered, or, describes an action, or clarifies the reference of the sentence
?	indicates a rising intonation

Appendix C*Oscar's summary of The Withered Arm*

This extract has been significantly altered to facilitate readability. All recasts, repetitions and fillers have been deleted.

A farm owned by Farmer Lodge, he wants a new wife and he found a young wife then he put to his farm and, after a few days, she can do, in other hand there is a woman, a boy and she got like afraid and then the boy, the old lady asked for boy to look at Farmer Lodge wife and then he told her what she look like and then she like sad, and gets thinking, and one night Rhoda dreaming about something and the phantom look like Farmer Lodge wife and she looks cold and she like scary and she always show her left hand. And there is a ring there.

And then Rhoda like, scared and pulled out to that woman and she, and Gertrude, come to her house then give first to her son, then she saw her withered arm, and the finger that was, then Gertrude told her when does it happen and a one time and that's the same as Rhoda's Brook dream.

And six years later the withered arm still there and she, and she go away with Rhoda to the wise man and Rhoda not allowed to go in, just Gertrude. Gertrude saw a face in a cup of water, and then she went home with Rhoda more pale face. A few weeks later people add a word "witch" before Rhoda's name. Six years later her withered arm still there and she decide to go to the wise man again and ask what's the cure? And the wise man say cure is put her withered arm on a dead man that just get killed, no, is already hanged and people like bring that body down and she needs to put her arm on his neck.

And so a week later there is, people want to hang somebody and she want to go to the jail, and luckily her husband ask that he wants to go away for about three nights, and Gertrude went to the jail went to the town that there is a jail there, with her horse then she find a house and a man that

inside that house ask her what happened and, she ask him that is it true that if somebody got withered arm and put on hanged body is that true, and then the man said yes that's true then she went to the jail, then she found a little door behind the jail, and, at twelve o'clock that's the time that people want to hang the man. And the man that has the house come with Gertrude to the jail then he asked Gertrude to wait about three minute and then a few minute later, there are men with a coffin come to the room.

When Gertrude start to put her arm do on the top of on the dead body's neck, she scream and she heard somebody as well. And then she looked at she saw Rhoda Brook and her sad husband and suddenly she know that the dead young man is Rhoda's Brook child that, and a few weeks later Gertrude died.

About the Author

Marianne holds a PhD in applied linguistics from the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. She is currently teaching high school English and History at the Berlin International School, and delivering a Masters level teacher education module in using literature and other media in the ESL and EFL classrooms for the Freie Universität, Berlin.