

THESIS

AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH TO LITERATURE: CREATING A  
PARADIGM FOR LITERARY STUDY IN THE IB LANGUAGE A1 CLASSROOM

Submitted by

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## ABSTRACT

### AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH TO LITERATURE: CREATING A PARADIGM FOR LITERARY STUDY IN THE IB LANGUAGE A1 CLASSROOM

This study arose from one educator's interest in finding a way to help students more fully understand both what they are being asked to do in an International Baccalaureate Higher Level Language A1 course, and the principles on which these expectations are founded. The desire to clarify this for students rests on a foundational assumption that students are likely to perform better when aware of the philosophical guiding principles of a discipline and where they are to locate themselves among a number of possible ways to analyze literature. The study is primarily concerned with presenting these philosophical underpinnings to students in a manner that is accessible and achievable given the many other demands of the course, and whether this framework is useful in furthering student achievement.

As a classroom teacher, I conducted action research to this end, using initial and exit surveys to measure student perception and whether these perceptions changed. I also observed students in class and in individual conferences, and conducted a case study of three students' major written work for the course, coding for evidence of different ways of analyzing literature.

The study ultimately revealed that students did not fully understand, at the beginning of the school year, what modes of literary analysis were most appropriate for achieving well in the IB Language A1. Students' understanding improved over the course of the school year, evident both in the survey findings and in student work, though it remains unclear what role the framework, or paradigm, may or may not have played in this. More research, conducted with a greater number of students in a wider array of contexts, is necessary to more meaningfully explore the value of the paradigm and best practices for helping students to understand fully what exactly they are being asked to do in analyzing literature.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## DEDICATION

It is with heartfelt gratitude and love that I dedicate this thesis to my family:

To my parents, Greg and Carol Fell, for setting high but reasonable expectations, encouraging me to pursue higher education, and instilling in me a passion for inquiry and confidence in my academic abilities;

To my sister, Laura, for her unfaltering love, and for teaching me so many lessons in so many different ways;

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I vividly remember the experience, as an undergraduate English major, of sitting through weeks of lectures in my Introduction to Literary Theory course and wondering what the course was about. I remember doing well in the course – I completed the assigned readings and was able to repeat, on exams, what I had read about the different schools of theory and what each attempted to do – but I must confess I did not understand what any of it meant, or why it mattered. I stumbled through Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida searching for fragments of understanding that I could use as platforms for discussion in class, and I never did figure out who Claude Lévi-Strauss was or what kind of a place a denim designer was supposed to occupy in a literature class. In fact, it took me a few class sessions just to figure out it was not a literature class.

Sometime before the end of the semester, frustrated and frightened by my own lack of understanding, I reread about two-thirds of Peter Barry's *Beginning Theory*, including the introduction, in one sitting, and the fog began to dissipate. I still was not sure, though, what influence this was supposed to have on my understanding of literature, and I had almost no literature classes left to take for my degree and thus had little opportunity to practice or apply what I thought I was beginning to grasp.

During my student teaching and first year as an official English teacher, what little notions of theory I had fell by the wayside in light of my struggle to survive as the would-be expert at the front of the classroom. Slowly, though, aided by my students, I

began to see that something was amiss: they sometimes read and responded to literature in ways that I could not assess based on the criteria I was using. The tenth-grade International Baccalaureate (IB) class I taught that first year at least provided criteria; in my non-IB classes, however, the Six Traits model dominated my assessment of students' written analyses of literature, and I was often unsure how to reconcile students' varying approaches to literature with my expectations and the language of the rubrics my colleagues had created using Six Traits language. Even in the IB class, the criteria were presented to me in a rubric that my colleague teaching other sections of the course provided, and it was not until the end of that first year, when I was finally able to attend IB training, that I realized the origins of the rubric and its implications for how literature ought to be approached in the classroom. During this era of my early career, students' and my attempts at reconciling our perceptions yielded the kinds of questions I imagine most literature teachers have encountered from students:

- Why can't we just read the literature and respond to it? Why do we have to analyze everything?
- How can I be graded on my opinion about a text? If it's my opinion and I have explained it well, what else is there to consider?
- Why does every English teacher want something different?
- Does authorial intent matter? Why can't we talk about it?

It was not until the second semester of that first year of teaching, when I took a graduate course titled Theories of Teaching Literature, that I finally began to internalize what that undergraduate theory course was all about and realize that the tension surrounding literary analysis that I was experiencing in the classroom had everything to

do with it. Again, though, I was still in new-teacher survival mode – trying to learn the content of the courses, the Middle Years Program philosophy of IB, the skills of classroom management, the minutiae and logistics of attendance and grades, the many demands on my time and energy – and it took some time for me to begin connecting the pieces, seeing how those underlying questions of how meaning is constructed and how my and students’ varied approaches and understandings might explain some of our inability to understand one another and our visions of literature.

By my fourth year of teaching I was working exclusively in the IB program, armed with criteria that guided instruction and assessment. The more my students asked questions about why certain interpretations or theses were more analytical than others, the more I found the need to deconstruct the IB criteria and to articulate for students what exactly they were being asked to do, and why. My inquiries at IB trainings regarding what theoretical values underlay the curriculum were often met with blank stares or responses that quickly offered up more examples of different kinds of interpretations and why some were more favorable than others in a given situation. No one, it seemed, had much sense of theory, yet we were attempting to agree on our assessments of students’ analysis of literature.

As I began teaching Language A1 in the Diploma Program, a course that is considered the equivalent of a college-level course and for which students can earn college credit, the need for a stronger sense of theory became clear. My highly motivated and skilled students, some of whose natural analytical abilities put mine to shame, asked questions that I often floundered to answer. In my struggle to answer their questions and understand the criteria against which their work was being judged, I began to synthesize

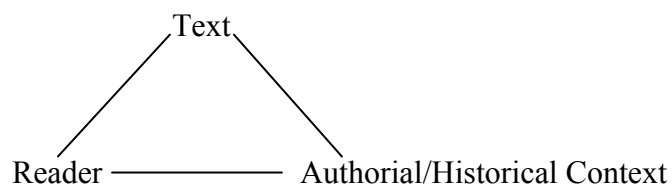
all I had learned about literature, analysis, and theory. In the meantime, I became acquainted with IB's Theory of Knowledge course, a course in epistemology which all students take as part of the IB Diploma Program. As I learned about problems of knowledge, knowers' perspectives, and ways of knowing, the missing pieces began to fit together.

I began to realize that those questions I had been fielding for several years, especially the ones in relationship to the IB criteria, arose from a wealth of ways of knowing about literature. Readers who read for personal satisfaction or realization may be less interested in what the author meant to say and more interested in what they derive from the reading. Those interested in more artistic concerns might prefer to examine how texts are constructed, and how authors' techniques shape and inform meaning. Others see this art as an artifact of sorts, representing a specific culture in a specific place and time. Interpretations might be based on one's personal and highly unique connotations of images or words but can also be grounded in a communal understanding of what an image or symbol traditionally means in a given culture.

For me, the most immediate concern was finding a way to help students understand what kinds of reading IB favors and to teach them to maximize their achievement in relationship to these values. At the same time, I did not want students – especially those who would receive college credit for the course and might never take a literature course again – to graduate and move on under the impression that they had mastered literary analysis, since what they were being trained to do is a specific kind of analysis, and other possibilities exist. I also noticed that sometimes students who were passionate about literature felt disenfranchised in the IB classroom because their

preferred ways of responding to their reading were not rewarded by the IB criteria, and I felt it my duty to validate their other purposes for reading.

I began attempting to address this by introducing students to a few schools of theory and quickly found that, though students could understand and apply a given lens, they did not necessarily understand the purpose of using that lens or how or why to select and apply a lens of their choice, and understanding New Criticism, Feminism, Marxism, Reader Response, and New Historicism did not necessarily translate into success with the IB assessment criteria. As I sought ways to articulate the underlying issues, I developed what began as a visual to accompany my explanation of the concept of literary theory to students. The original model was based on my rough memory of Richard Beach's model in *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response Theories* and likewise informed by my recollection of Louise Rosenblatt's diagram which represents her transactional theory of literature. While their models are focused on reader response, the one I developed was an attempt to illustrate visually the roles played by text and reader, like Beach and Rosenblatt, yet extended to include the context in which the work was written. In this model, the three major possible players in the meaning-making process are represented:



I came to refer to this a paradigm because in addition to being a visual representation of a philosophical concept, it also functions as a tool that we can use in locating the epistemological beliefs that guide a given interpretation of a text. As Guba explains, a paradigm can be understood as “a basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether of the

everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry” (Guba 17). Taken as a whole, the study of literature encompasses a set of beliefs about the roles played by the text, reader, and context of a work and the relationships between them, and by understanding how each guides interpretation, students are acting – or interpreting texts – in the manner described by Guba.

As the handout in Appendix A reflects, I created a visual way to represent the paradigm and began using the three extreme perspectives and the kinds of thinking behind each to help students see the breadth of possibility that exists in the interpretation of literature. Separating out these ways of thinking and then explicitly explaining what IB favors, and to what extent, allowed me to finally satisfy students’ questions with reasoning that made sense to them. What otherwise appeared to students as an arbitrary and mysterious method of analysis now could be explained.

Coming to these conclusions in the first place, though, was not easy work. I had to first come to an understanding of the IB criteria through questions asked at training, my own reading and scoring of sample work compared with colleagues’ and examiners’ scoring, and through review of the Subject Reports that IB publishes annually which explain what examiners were looking for on all the assessments and how students internationally approached the assessments and measured up against these expectations. This process alone demonstrated to me that providing students with criteria is not enough. My students, year after year, want to know what the differences are between the different levels of performance on the criteria. For example, in preparing their World Literature Assignments (see Appendix B for the correlating assessment criteria), students want to understand the differences between notions such as:

- “generally appropriate treatment of ideas,” “appropriate treatment of ideas,” or “highly appropriate treatment of ideas” (Criterion A)
- “personal response” or “independence of thought” (Criterion A);
- “adequate,” “good,” or “excellent” understanding (Criterion B);
- “knowledge and satisfactory understanding of the aspects of the work(s) most relevant [to the topic chosen for analysis]” versus “detailed knowledge of, and good insight into” these aspects, and how this compares to “in-depth knowledge” and “very good insight” (Criterion B)

Satisfying the foundational requirement of most IB assessments – represented in the World Literature Assignments by Criterion A, which measures “how appropriate [...] the aspect chosen for the assignment [is]” – requires a grasp of what is theoretically permissible, and understanding these intricacies of the criteria requires a working understanding of the theoretical questions themselves. If students are to fully comprehend how their work will be assessed, they must be led to understand the reasoning that informs the criteria.

The process also left me puzzled as to why there does not exist a rationale anywhere in the IB curriculum guides for Language A1 for the criteria themselves, or an explanation regarding what kind of reasoning informs them. After several years of inquiry into the issue I can see that a sound and consistent theory exists, yet it is not explained anywhere in a straightforward way. An instructor must wade through the criteria, sample essays, annual Subject Reports, and trial-and-error in instruction (read: trial-and-error in students’ examinations) to refine his/her understanding of exactly what kinds of analysis allow students to achieve the highest marks.

What I have clarified through this process is that IB favors a text-centered approach; students are expected to examine the artistry of texts, attending to literary features which are preferably identified with the use of technical language and examining the significance and effect of these features in understanding the text. This “understanding” must be objective enough, or explained thoroughly enough, that another reader could see its merit. Students can, and, in some cases, should, acknowledge how their knowers’ perspectives – ways of perceiving the world influenced by age, gender, race, nationality, family, personal experiences, and so on – influence their interpretations. However, students cannot construct entire analyses of their opinions regarding a text – for example, the likability of the protagonist, or whether a society’s treatment of an individual is justified in the reader’s view – and still expect to achieve at the higher levels of the criteria such as “Selection of the Aspect and its Treatment” or “Knowledge and Understanding of Works” (see IB World Literature Assessment Criteria, Appendix B). Students’ treatment of texts should demonstrate awareness of authorial and historical context – it would be relevant, for example, in discussing *Crime and Punishment*, for a student to note that women were viewed as an inferior class of people, and claiming anything to the contrary would be folly. Still, a student could not score well centering an essay on *Crime and Punishment*’s historical function with little attention to the artistry or themes of the text.

Designing a straightforward and understandable method for clarifying all of this to students near the beginning of the year became an important instructional goal for me. It allowed me to integrate some of the principles of Theory of Knowledge into the course, a goal that IB holds for all its subject areas, and to save much time and heartache, or trial-



and-error, in students' approaches. It also enabled me to teach students a refined approach to literature while still actively acknowledging other possibilities, and created a conceptual way to explain to students when their analysis missed the mark, and why.

The study reported here arose out of a few uncertainties I had in relationship to the paradigm:

- Do students demonstrate the need for a better understanding of the IB criteria at the beginning of the senior year?
- Does the paradigm itself, or the three perspectives it represents, make sense to students?
- Does the paradigm actually help students to better understand the criteria?
- Might the paradigm be a way of helping students understand the complex processes of analysis and interpretation in the literature classroom? In other words, is the paradigm a more fundamental way to approach literary theory in a way that helps students make sense of the methods that inform literary analysis?

Thus, the study was undertaken in the interest of exploring the use of the paradigm in connection with the IB Criteria and general study of literature in the IB Language A1 classroom.

## CHAPTER 2: MAKING A CASE FOR THE PARADIGM – A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The development of the paradigm, as discussed in the introduction, arose out of a desire to articulate for students the theoretical issues that underlie the assessment criteria which, in turn, drive the aims of the IB Language A1 course. The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) encourages an epistemological approach to begin with, as evidenced through the Theory of Knowledge course and the current push to implement the principles of this course in instruction in the subject areas. This notion is corroborated by remarks in *The Diploma Programme: A Basis for Practice*, a publication available to IB instructors through IB's Online Curriculum Center:

Learning how to learn is not taught as a separate course in the Diploma Programme; it needs to be infused naturally into the curriculum as part of the teaching and learning process that supports the development of learner profile attributes. A number of aims and objectives identified in the subject groups, supported by the theory of knowledge course, require students to reflect on and to evaluate the knowledge claims they encounter and the methodologies they are learning. This “metacognitive” approach to learning helps students develop the higher-order thinking strategies needed to become lifelong independent learners.

(5)

Interestingly, my searches of IBO's website ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)), IBO's Online Curriculum Center, and other searches of journals and periodicals revealed that, while there is a

wealth of research regarding many facets of the program, there is no locatable research centering on the instruction of Language A1, particularly with the focus on what “learning how to learn” looks like in the Language A1 classroom. *A Basis for Practice* does outline the aims of the course, as follows:

- to encourage a personal appreciation of literature and develop an understanding of the techniques involved in literary criticism
- to develop the students’ powers of expression, both in oral and written communication, and provide the opportunity for practising and developing the skills involved in writing and speaking in a variety of styles and situations
- to broaden the students’ perspective through the study of works from other cultures and languages. (7)

The emphasis on notions such as “personal appreciation of literature” and “the techniques involved in literary criticism” underscore the underlying theoretical framework inherent in the course. The implications of the course as a method for “broaden[ing] [...] students’ perspective through the study of works from other cultures and languages” adds another layer of complexity to instruction; taken together, these aims demonstrate that students are being asked to analyze literature for multiple purposes, one of which points toward an awareness of authorial and historical context.

Making sense of how best to approach this is intentionally left to the professional judgment of teachers within the program:

Teachers have the critical role of interpreting, developing and delivering the curriculum. Teachers have to create their own course of study, ensuring that the curriculum experienced by students is aligned with the prescribed course aims,

objectives and content and is adapted to the local context. Effective delivery of the curriculum requires teachers to be reflective practitioners who are critically self-aware of their own teaching and who model the thinking and approaches they expect of their students. (*A Basis for Practice* 11)

Thus, my process of interpreting the curriculum and deciding how best to deliver it, and the resulting development of the paradigm, is itself a practice validated by the aims of instruction within the IB Programme. As a reflective professional responsible to my students for their learning, I am also compelled to ensure that, in delivering the course, my practices are grounded in theory and research surrounding the teaching of literature. Regardless of the context within which a literature course is taught, an awareness of the theoretical values that underlie instruction clarifies and validates an instructor's approach.

Because IB harbors a strange space between secondary and university instruction, debate and research at both the secondary and university levels in regards to the place and role of theory in literature instruction is relevant to this study. While IB Language A1 is delivered in the secondary classroom, it is considered university-level study, evidenced by the ongoing practice of awarding college credit to students who successfully navigate the course. Further, while one must acknowledge the important distinctions between the study of literature at the secondary and post-secondary levels, some of the discussions among professors and university-level researchers are applicable to secondary aspects of English studies. An attempt will be made throughout the rest of the discussion to deal with the implications of these notions, examining the general place of theory in the secondary literature classroom with acknowledgment, where relevant, of special considerations that may apply in different teaching contexts.

### **Literary theory necessarily underlies all teaching**

Whether or not it is made explicit in instruction – and even if teachers themselves are not aware of it – the very process of reading and teaching literature involves literary theory. As readers work to make sense of texts, detail their reactions to what they have read, and/or comment on a text's features, they use a complex set of meaning-making strategies based on their ways of processing information and understanding the world, processes which themselves require making value judgments (Anderson; Langer; Fish; Goodman; Rosenblatt). Likewise, every decision a teacher makes – what to teach, how to teach it, and how to assess students' learning – is rooted in theory, whether or not s/he is aware of it. As Gerald Graff notes, "A literature instructor may not realize that even in making a seemingly elementary observation about a work's plot or the identification of its author, he or she has made a theoretical decision, a decision about what is important and worth talking about, as well as about what his or her students probably do not already know" (Foreword vi). This applies not only to teachers' modeling of interpretive strategies but also to what they ask of students. The process of asking students to respond to what they have read and assessing these responses requires teachers to make decisions about the purpose of reading and what they value in students' responses. Kathleen McCormick explains that "[t]he different ways students are asked to read imply particular values and beliefs about the nature of texts, the nature of readers as subjects of texts and as subjects in the world, and about meaning and language itself" (294). These convictions underscore the inevitable existence of theory in the literature classroom.

While the decisions literature teachers make have theoretical implications in the general sense, in classrooms where students are asked to make meaning from texts and to communicate this in some way to others, they are practicing literary criticism. The very nature, or process, of literary criticism requires the critic (in this case the reader, student or teacher) to make judgments about what a text means, and doing so requires, conscious or not, a philosophy about how meaning is inferred. Hence, literary theory, which seeks to explain where meaning derives and how it is known, necessarily underlies these practices. This notion is present even in the earliest stages of literary study; Eckert notes that “connections between literary theory and the elementary reading curriculum were identified in the mid-1970s, beginning with the publication of research such as *The Child as Critic: Teaching Literature in the Elementary School* (Sloan, 1975), and Stott’s (1981) report [Teaching Literary Criticism in the Elementary Grades: A Symposium]” ( “Bridging” 113). It is interesting, then, that although “[t]heory is always present in an English classroom, just like reading is always present in an elementary language arts classroom [...] secondary teachers rarely acknowledge using a specific theoretical perspective. Without this explicit instruction, students often don’t understand what a teacher is asking for when she directs them to infer, interpret, or respond to literature” (Eckert, *How* 7-8).

While there is some controversy over the place of literary theory at the secondary level as well as at the college level, Applebee’s research in the 1990s revealed that teachers may not acknowledge these perspectives because they are not aware of them, suggesting a deficit in their educational backgrounds. It is reasonably clear for those on the front lines – the teachers sitting in the departmental meetings arguing over what skills

common assessments in literature classes should assess – that the history of literature instruction in the United States has cultivated at least two dominant, diametrically opposed factions: those who favor the formalist, text-centered approaches associated with the New Critics, whose ideas about how literature ought to be read and interpreted dominated literary theory from 1930-1960 and whose influence held sway in the educational system in varying modes and forms for much of the twentieth century, and those who favor the reader-response approaches which emerged and gained popularity in the latter half of the twentieth century (Bressler). Applebee’s research confirms this, revealing not only that “recent alternative approaches, including feminist criticism, had had little influence on their instruction” (Applebee, “Classroom” 122), but that these theoretical values have clear instructional implications:

Commitment to one or another critical approach is likely to carry with it an emphasis on a series of related instructional techniques. A New Critical approach, for example, is likely to emphasize techniques that focus on the text and ‘how it means’ (Ciardi, 1960), while a reader-response approach is likely to emphasize techniques that explore and justify a reader’s response in terms of the text and relevant experience. Given the extent to which teachers report supporting both approaches, we might expect to find a similar eclecticism in instructional techniques. (124)

Taken together, a lack of teacher awareness of the theories that underlie instruction and assessment and the assertion that particular approaches to literature have genuine implications for student learning suggests that a heightened awareness of theory is, at least, crucial for teachers. Also, the “eclecticism” to which Applebee refers is,

interestingly enough, evident in the IB Language A1 course; again, the section of *The Diploma Programme: A Basis for Practice* that deals specifically with Language A1 identifies “encourag[ing] a personal appreciation of literature and develop[ing] an understanding of the techniques involved in literary criticism” (7), a statement that itself points to both text- and reader-centered interests. While it may be difficult to reconcile these different approaches to literature, such reconciliation cannot even begin without awareness of the theories – and perhaps, even, the history that informs the theories – that underlie these different approaches to literature. Without some form of reconciliation, different kinds of reading, either within one classroom or evident as students move from one class to the next, are likely to confuse students and give the impression that the study of literature lacks any sort of objective, or at least consistent, foundation.

On some level, even when their theoretical stances are not explicit, literature teachers likely make reasoned decisions about the texts they select, the assignments students complete, the way learning occurs in the classroom, and what and how is assessed (Hillocks). Still, the more implicit or unconscious the theory that underlies these decisions, and the more they vary from literature classroom to literature classroom, the more likely students are to be unsure of what is expected of them. Applebee speaks to this inconsistency in remarking “Students are, of course, likely to encounter more than one set of ground rules within their studies of English. Depending upon the background and interests of their teachers, their response to *Beloved* may be cast as a feminist critique, a New Critical reading, a historical exploration within the African American literary tradition, or an exercise in cultural studies” ( “Engaging” 31). It is not uncommon for students to struggle at the beginning of a literature course – particularly in



producing the first essay for the course – as they are unsure of what the particular teacher is looking for. While some of the variation can be attributed to assessment criteria and how individual instructors interpret and apply that criteria, also related is the question of how the teacher perceives – or expects students to perceive – literature. Students, unaware of the complex ideas that account for some of the inconsistency in the discipline, are inclined to write it off entirely, claiming that “English” is too subjective which, in a logic-oriented culture, is nothing short of a death-sentence for those who would aim to persuade students that the discipline has purpose and relevance. As Gerald Graff explains,

Curricular disjunction is not a new problem, but its effects are more damaging as the academic climate becomes more conflict-ridden and teachers share fewer common assumptions about their subjects. [...] While this disparity can be exciting, many students become baffled or cynical and decide to give the teacher whatever he or she seems to want [...]. It may not even be easy to infer what the teacher wants, since that often ‘goes without saying’ among those in the know. Think how intimidating it must be to write a paper when you sense that anything you say can be used against you, and that the moves that got you an A in one course may earn you a C and a dirty look in the next. (Cain 45-46)

While Graff is renowned as an expert at the university level, the notions here are common to high school literature classes as well.

Wendy Bishop’s case study of a graduate student teacher reveals a similar conclusion, also evident at the high school level. Bishop’s study seeks to “illustrate the degree to which our students are sites of conflicting theories” (209). She gives the

example of the graduate student teacher, Dennis, remarking, in discussion of one of his professors, “I learned after the first exam, after *The Scarlet Letter*, the type of symbolism that he wanted . . . and the same with another professor” (214). In concluding his study of “Classroom Literature Instruction” Applebee likewise underscores the problem of the theoretical inconsistency in literature instruction:

The eclectic melding of reader- and text-centered traditions that was apparent in teachers’ goals and approaches raises a variety of questions about the consistency and coherence of the approaches teachers are adopting. It is clear that at the theoretical level, reader- and text-centered orientations offer incompatible visions of what matters in the teaching and learning of literature. Though each approach makes room for both the reader and the text, there are fundamental differences in criteria for adequacy of response and interpretation, in the role of historical and intertextual knowledge, and in what is considered of primary and of secondary importance in discourse about literature. Such differences cannot be reconciled, even through judicious borrowing from these competing traditions, though they can be ignored—as the responses in the present study suggest most teachers are currently doing. (137)

The notion that “such differences cannot be reconciled” calls into question the very approach to literature that IB calls for through its assessments and criteria. While the question of reconciliation may be debatable, at the very least, a lack of awareness of these distinct theoretical approaches to literature – or, as Applebee suggests, a systematic ignoring of them – only furthers students’ confusion.

It is no wonder that students are apt to see the subject as something less than a discipline, approaching the very texts they are asked to read with increasingly subjective stances since the entire nature of the discipline appears inconsistent. If we are to engage students meaningfully in the study of literature, and if literature teachers hope their passion for literature may be passed on to the students that fill their classrooms – if literature teachers hope to be taken seriously, helping students recognize the value of literature as a record of human experience and the process of making meaning from texts as a skill that transfers to all areas of their lives, then it is critical to reveal for students the kinds of thinking that inform our approaches. When instructors are unaware of, or do not acknowledge, these theories, they, however unwittingly, pit themselves against one another, creating yet another barrier to learning. The instructor who succeeds in teaching a student to read and respond to literature in a particular way for one class without acknowledging his/her theoretical values and the notion that there are other theoretical possibilities perpetuates the problem as the student moves on to another instructor with conflicting values. Thus, even when we are persuasive in our methods, we may be doing more harm than good, working in competition with one another rather than as a unified force, helping students to see and appreciate the vast ways literature can be experienced and understood.

### **Varying perspectives on methods of teaching literary theory**

While many might agree that explicit attention to theory is a necessity, there is also debate over how to approach the teaching of theory. Robert Scholes echoes the

notion that “If English is to be a discipline, theory must be at the center of our teaching” but warns that

Putting theory at the center of our discipline, however—even theories of textuality—does not mean treating works of theory as we are used to treating literary texts. It would be easy to turn the study of theory into a set of Great Theories, Great Theoreticians, Great Books all over again—and this is precisely what has happened in many schools that now require a course in ‘literary theory.’ This, in my judgment, is a mistake. ( “Fortunate” 112)

In his imaginative work “Teaching Theorizing/Theorizing Teaching,” in which five (fictional) professors discuss how an undergraduate course in literary theory might be constructed, James Phelan also underscores the folly of the survey approach, as “Betty” notes, “our usual ways of teaching theory, especially introducing it to students, are misleading. We teach students about schools and movements, about critical doctrines, beliefs, and positions, but it’s hard to find large numbers of flesh and blood theorists whose identities conform to the possibilities outlined by those positions” (227). While Scholes and Phelan are specifically addressing the question of theory at the university level, the concept transfers to high school instruction as well; while theory may have a place in the high school classroom, it is not at the foreground of instruction. The question, then, becomes one of how to embed theory in the study of literature.

In the interest of resolving some of the nuanced questions that complicate forming English curricula and seeking ways to help students understand the discipline as a whole, rather than sometimes-contradictory pieces of it, Gerald Graff proposes the notion of “teaching the conflicts” (Graff). Graff “trace[s] the problem [...] not to a deficiency on

the part of individual teachers, but to our collective failure to construct for students the intellectual community that we expect them to join” and suggests that, rather than continuing to labor over which texts or authors or movements or theories to teach, we should focus instead on “how the components fit together, whether they form an intelligible conversation or set of conversations in the minds of the students who experience them” ( “Organizing” 128). Bishop agrees that “it is necessary to ask [teachers] to share their attitudes and expectations, to articulate their tacit theories, for tacit theories rapidly come into conflict with the explicitly new theories being introduced into many programs, whether through coursework or dialogue or both” (209), but Graff goes much further to explore how “the conflicts” can be used “as a new kind of organizing principle to give the curriculum the clarity, focus, and common ground that almost all sides agree that it lacks and to engage our students in our most fundamental disputes” (132). Graff argues for an approach that presents students with an understanding not only of various theories but how they have emerged over time, often in response or reaction to that which came before. Richter likewise maintains “The best way to teach students to think for themselves—and to get them engaged in our conversation—is to be forthright about the irreconcilable differences within the profession over the interpretation and evaluation of texts and to highlight in our teaching precisely these differences” (ix).

### **The place of literary theory in the secondary classroom**

Graff, Phelan, and Bishop, along with a wealth of other voices in the debate over theory’s place in the curriculum (During, Fish, Menand, Sauer), center mostly on the

question of whether, and if so, how, to approach theory at the college level. The fact that there exists a debate over whether literary theory is appropriate even at the undergraduate level suggests that teaching theory in high school – or middle school, even – is even further debatable in terms of relevance and accessibility. As Deborah Appleman explains, “Literature teachers find it difficult to see, at least initially, how contemporary literary theory can inform their daily practice” and “Students and teachers alike find it hard to believe that something as abstract and ‘impractical’ as literary theory could be relevant to their lives” (2). Graff also acknowledges the oppositional arguments surrounding the teaching of literary theory, noting that “many teachers continue to fear that theory and close reading do not mix and that questions of theory can only interfere with their students’ direct experience of literature ( Foreword vi). Nevertheless, some practitioners (Eckert, McCormick, Moore, Soter) suggest that theory has a place even as early as middle school, and here, too, the solutions to how best to approach theory in the classroom vary.

Again, the discussion surrounding the teaching of literary theory at the high school level begins with the assertion that, foremost, teachers must be conscious of the theories that inform instruction. This notion is evident, though directed at the university level, in Robert Scholes’ *Textual Power*, in which Scholes argues foremost for teachers’ awareness of the theories that underlie their practices. He goes on to suggest that instruction articulate for students ways to make sense of texts in the interest of empowering them as critical thinkers, individuals with agency and authority. While he targets post-secondary instruction, the values for which he argues have great potential for empowering students in the study of literature in high school as well. Richard Beach,

whose work centers more on secondary education, likewise suggests that “In order to recognize how their own theories shape practice, teachers may find it useful to make explicit the response theories underlying how they themselves respond to texts” (4). He argues that instruction is largely informed by teachers’ biases and suggests a more conscious approach to the way texts are taught and read.

Beyond being aware of their own theoretical underpinnings, teachers must also consider what can be gained by allowing students access to the questions raised by these different ways of thinking about literature. Applebee suggests that “in using any of these approaches, the students are learning a variety of tools for analysis and interpretation, tools that enable them to participate effectively in a particular tradition of literary study – of talking and writing about literature” ( “Engaging” 31). Theory can enrich the study of literature, giving students “a purpose in approaching a reading task, help[ing] them make and test predictions as they read, and provid[ing] a framework for student response and awareness of their stand in approaching a text;” in other words, “They find new reasons to look closely at any given text (including those in popular culture) and added incentive to read” (Eckert, *How* 8). High school students (and even younger students, at least at the middle school level, as Eckert, McCormick, Moore, and Soter suggest) are empowered, rather than burdened, by a better understanding of the tools, language, and questions literary theory comprises. In the era of assessment, as it becomes apparent that students are growing less capable of reading – and thinking – critically (Hillocks), theory becomes an important tool in furthering students’ literacy and helping them “understand the interconnectedness of social conditions and reading and writing practices of a culture” (McCormick 294).

Perhaps one of the greatest sources of tension within English instruction arises from the incongruity between what students are asked to do and the tools they are given to complete the task: “Too often, secondary school teachers and college professors expect students to effectively use advanced reading strategies and interpretive approaches, requiring students to ‘read’ with an understanding that this means critically engaging with textual material and assuming an interpretive stance, without explicitly teaching them how to do so” (Eckert, “Bridging” 111). Expecting students to discuss literature at all requires some disclosure regarding what is known about the process of making meaning, since, as the multitude of literary theories demonstrates, it is possible for readers to make meaning and find significance in a variety of ways based on a number of different values and beliefs. As McCormick explains, “if students are to become active makers of meaning of texts, they must also be given access to discourses that can help them experience their own readings of texts” (305). Eckert extends this beyond the literature classroom, explaining how theory can “[expand] students’ repertoire of strategies for analyzing dimensions of meaning and [provide] structure to help students clearly conceive and articulate a response to a text” (113).

The potential for theory to encourage and enhance critical thinking brings further significance to the practice of teaching literary theory as its implications reach beyond the study of literature. Just as Scholes contends that “[criticism] is a way of discovering how to choose, how to take some measure of responsibility for ourselves and for our world” (73), Deborah Appleman and David H. Richter see the relevance of literary theory in the classroom both in enhancing students’ understanding of how meaning is constructed and in shaping critical thinkers who can apply skills learned in the literature classroom to the



way they understand and interpret the world around them. In 1985, Scholes suggested that “Criticism is our last best chance to loosen the bonds of the textual powers in which we find ourselves enmeshed” (73). This perspective is reiterated 15 years later in Appleman’s *Critical Encounters in High School English*, arguing that there is merit in incorporating literary theory in the secondary classroom because it “will better prepare adolescent readers to respond reflectively and analytically to literary texts, both ‘canonical’ and multicultural” (2). She later claims “Both teachers and their students are powerless if, as Winterowd said, they do not understand the theoretical context in which they function” and “The critical encounters encouraged by the approaches in [her] book will help us name our theories and consider multiple perspectives as we find our place in the texts we read and the lives we lead” (146-147). Eckert sees the potential effects of explicitly addressing theory in the classroom as far-reaching, for “When students at any level become more cognizant of the strategies they use for constructing meaning from text, they can begin to further question the cultural and ideological influences at work in a text, as well as the influences of their own values and beliefs in this transaction” (“Bridging” 116). McCormick phrases this as “learn[ing] to read the world simultaneously with learning to read the word” and explains how it enables “readers [...] to see themselves as interdiscursive subjects, to see texts as always ‘in use,’ and to recognize that different ways of reading have consequences” (308).

### **Approaches to literary theory in the secondary classroom**

As a wealth of textbooks on literary criticism illustrate, the dominant mode of teaching theory remains a survey approach. In his introduction to *Beginning Theory*,

Peter Barry demonstrates, however unwittingly, the problem of this approach, since “Theorists, like novelists, are dauntingly plentiful, and the subject of theory cannot succeed in lecture rooms and seminars unless we fashion it into a student-centered syllabus. [...] We need to make sure that what is presented as theory today likewise makes teaching sense” (3). His textbook, like many others’ (Appleman, Bressler, Moore, Soter), proceeds with a selective survey approach. While it is feasible for students to understand the concept of applying different lenses to texts and to learn the conventions of different schools of thought, there is still left the question of *why* we use these lenses. It is challenging to simultaneously work through a number of texts and also teach and practice applying theoretical lenses, such that the questions that underlie these theories are sometimes left unanswered, thus undermining the practice. Students offer up New Critical, New Historical, or Marxist or feminist readings, but then begin to wonder which to choose when, and how they connect. Richter’s premise in *Falling into Theory* seeks to solve these connections, and the organization of the textbook and the introductions to the sections therein are great steps toward this. Still, the textbook primarily comprises individual essays, leaving students to make connections and draw conclusions, and is aimed at college level courses.

If Eckert is right, and “The role of theory should not remain merely an intellectual point of reference for the experienced reader to use [...] but rather should become a method for developing that experience by encouraging reading, inquiry, and engagement with text for all students, extending the literacy pedagogies that began with a student’s first reading lesson” (“Bridging” 116), then it becomes necessary to develop innovative approaches to theory that make it applicable and accessible in the high school literature

classroom. Beach's *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response Theories* offers a step in the right direction. His model (6), demonstrating how different theories of response relate to different players in the meaning-making process (Context, Reader, and Text), makes great sense of a long history and broad articulation of reader response theories. Beach's model, however, focuses primarily on the roles played by the text and the reader, attending little to the role of the context in which the work was written. For Beach's purposes, "context" is defined in terms of the reader's context—the reader's "knowledge of conventions," "cognitive or subconscious processes, "engagement or experience," "social role and perceptions of the social context," and "cultural role, attitude, contexts" (8). Therefore, while drawing from Beach's synthesis of theoretical viewpoints makes good teaching sense, as it presents ideas in a more straightforward manner than a survey approach and helps make sense of different ways of reading, it overlooks attention to authorial and historical context, which also comprise a fair corner of the theory market. As Daniel Schwarz explains,

In my writing and teaching, I live by two basic rules: 'Always the text; Always historicize.' [...] My first mantra, 'Always the text,' leaves room for appreciating the felicities of language that render the particular and for responding to the aesthetic beauty of significant form. My other mantra, 'Always historicize,' includes understanding an artist within his historical and cultural context as well as being aware of the evolving responses that constitute the history of reading that writer. (xii)

Schwarz's view of reading and responding to literature synthesizes a full history of theory, attending to the New Critical tradition of focus on the text, but with simultaneous

attention to the context in which the text was produced and what Rosenblatt termed the “transactional” meaning that arises as a reader makes sense of the text. As Schwarz puts it, “Literary meaning depends on a triologue among: 1) authorial intention and interest; 2) the formal text produced by the author for a specific historical audience; and 3) the responses of a particular reader in a specific time” (14). This synthesized approach is also apparent in Anna Soter’s model, which takes into account “Reader Response Criticism,” “New Criticism,” “New Historicism,” and “Autobiographical Criticism” (6). These are interesting in light of Applebee’s claim regarding the irreconcilability of the “reader- and text-centered traditions” (“Classroom” 137) and demonstrate that, even if the different theoretical approaches cannot be reconciled, they can at least be used in complementary ways to make meaning of texts. Schwarz’s and Soter’s models validate, in many ways, the principles that underlie the IB criteria; collectively, these begin to unlock possibilities for clarifying theoretical possibilities in the literature classroom.

The greatest looming question, then, in the ongoing discussion surrounding the teaching of literary theory, is no longer so much whether to teach it, but how to do so in a manner that is student-centered and age-appropriate. Gary Waller demonstrates how reconciling the question of how to approach theory in the classroom is paramount if its full potential is to be realized:

If we can find creative ways of bringing together the variety of theories, methodologies, and conceptions of what “English” is—not just for administrative convenience, but as a means, as Graff argues, of actually staging or teaching the conflicts—then we may find ways not merely of making our curriculum appear innovative but, far more important, of preparing students for a fuller entry into a

genuinely participatory democracy. I believe that such an educational goal acknowledges that college gives students an opportunity not simply to ‘bank’ knowledge and methods, but to develop some perspectives on, some metawareness about, them—and also to act upon that awareness.” (201)

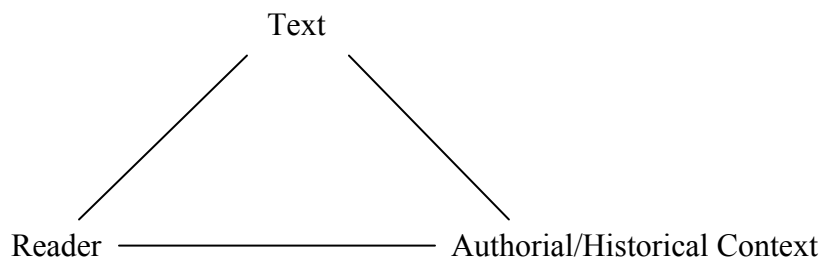
While this addresses the issue at the university level, the question of how best to approach theory in the secondary classroom remains largely unanswered and requires further research. If theory has a place at the secondary level, as many suggest it does, then we have to draw from what we have, which is mostly a conversation at the university level, to begin figuring out how best to address theory at the high school level.

Another embedded question is the potential of theory to help students more fully understand what is being demanded of them in a particular program or classroom without compromising their awareness of other ways of reading. As Fish confirms, “[t]he business of criticism [is] not [...] to determine a correct way of reading but to determine from which of a number of possible perspectives reading will proceed. This determination will not be made once and for all by a neutral mechanism of adjudication, but will be made and remade again whenever the interests and tacitly understood goals of one interpretive community replace or dislodge the interests and goals of another” (16).

### **A paradigm for literary study**

Working from Rosenblatt’s explanation of the transactional theory of literature and from Beach’s model, and informed by the context in which I teach (considering the values that underlie the IB Language A1 criteria), I came to synthesize all of these

considerations as indicative of the role the reader plays in the meaning-making experience. All of these considerations shape the “knower’s perspective,” a term coined in the IB Theory of Knowledge course. The text also plays a role, as might knowledge of the author and the context in which the work was written. From this, I developed the following paradigm for helping students visualize the three major players in the meaning-making process:



This paradigm was later bolstered by my discovery of Schwarz’s and Soter’s ways of synthesizing literary theory, which confirm the legitimacy of the model I developed based on my exposure to an array of theories over time.

What I propose, then, is a foundational approach to theory that characterizes the key questions that theory poses: where does meaning originate in the reading experience? How is it shaped? Who, or what, is the authority? Perhaps by helping students see the primary possible answers to these questions – the roles played by the text, authorial and historical context, and the reader – we can begin to help them conceptualize the rationales behind different schools of thought and the ways in which they respond to one another (both in agreement and disagreement) rather than overwhelming students with complex and highly specialized explorations of all the different schools of theory. If this paradigm can conceptualize theory, then it becomes a tool for plotting where different theories weigh in on the triangle.

### **Theory, the paradigm, and the IB Language A1 classroom**

The quest for this articulation arises from a long learning process in trying to articulate for students how they are being asked to read and analyze literature in the IB classroom and *why* they are being asked to read in this manner. My intent has evolved to focus primarily on using the paradigm as a way to articulate and conceptualize IB demands for students. The relevance of theory in the secondary classroom – or, at least, in the IB Language A1 classroom – thus extends into the question of whether there is a possible relationship between a theoretical understanding of the interpretive process and students’ fuller understanding of the criteria against which their interpretations of literature are measured.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### **Participants and Site**

The subjects of this study were all seniors enrolled in IB World Authors II at Foothills High School<sup>1</sup> during the 2009-2010 school year. The school enjoys a greater amount of ethnic and socioeconomic diversity compared to the other three main high schools in the city and district, though the majority population is white and the range of diversity within the Diploma Programme (DP) is notably narrower. Many students exercise the district's School of Choice option in order to participate in the IB Programme, simultaneously affecting the school's demographics as well as creating a slightly different, though not formally defined, demographic in the IB Programme. The overall school is comprised of 1.3% American Indian or Alaskan Native students, 3.7% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.9% Black, 18.5% Hispanic, and 74.5% White (Colorado Department of Education). The school's 2008 Five Year Self Study, completed every five years for the purpose of maintaining IB accreditation, reports that in the fall of 2008, when the students who participated in this study were juniors, the IB Programme at Foothills was comprised of 10.5% Asian students, 1% Black, 3.7% Hispanic, and 84.8% White (Hays). These data confirm that there are a greater percentage of Asian and White students enrolled in the program as compared to the general curriculum, and a much lower percentage of Hispanic students enrolled in the program. In recent years, IB has placed great emphasis on the importance of accessibility and inclusivity, an attitude that

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the high school, as well as students' names, have been changed to pseudonyms for the purposes of confidentiality



has been emphatically shared by the district and the IB Programme at Foothills High School. That said, the ratio of ELA and ELL students, as well as those with IEPs, 504s, and free-and-reduced price lunch plans, is still lower in IB than in the general population, especially at the DP level. Still, there are some IB seniors each year with IEPs, 504s, and/or free-and-reduced price lunch plans, and some whose first language is not English.

IB World Authors II is a course taken as part of the DP, the final two-year segment of the IB Programme. Subject recruitment began near the beginning of the school year when I explained to students that I would be formally studying an aspect of my instruction, particularly during the fall semester. Students were given assent forms in class (see Appendix C) and took consent forms home (see Appendix D) to be signed by parents; in all, 78 students agreed (with parent permission) to be part of the study.

The course, known as IB Language A1 in the Diploma Programme, is a two-year literature course that requires that students read and speak and write about a wide variety of literature. There are four parts to the two-year course, and the four parts may be taught in any order. At PHS, we teach Part 2, Detailed Study, and Part 4 ,School's Free Choice, in the junior year and Part 1, World Literature, and Part 3, Groups of Works, in the senior year. The students, then, had completed Parts 2 and 4 of the two-year course, as well as their internal assessments – the Oral Presentation and Oral Commentary. They completed Part 1 of the course and the World Literature Assignments – the external assessments – during the study. IB defines the types of works studied and the balance between Language A1 works, or works originally written in English, and World Literature works, or works in translation, and offers a lengthy list of works from which the texts for the course are selected. Thus, the instructors have some choice of what is

taught within the parameters defined by IB. The majority of the course, both in the junior and senior years, focuses on preparing students for their major assessments, though instructors have great freedom in deciding how best to prepare students.

The primary IB assessment related to this study is the World Literature Assignments. Students write two 1000-1500 word essays on topics of their choice; World Literature Assignment 1 is a comparative essay based off of two of the Part 1 works, and World Literature Assignment 2 offers students some choices – comparison, creative writing stemming from the text and accompanied by a statement of intent, analysis of a key passage, commentary, or a “formal essay” – and must be based off of a World Literature work from Parts 1, 3, or 4 of the course. For a variety of reasons, the texts from which students could choose for these essays were *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel García Marquez.

This was my fourth year teaching this course, and classes met three times a week for eighty minutes at a time. During the fall semester, students participated in a variety of classroom activities, engaged in class and group discussions, conducted second reads of three different novels (outside of class time), completed some supplementary reading, and wrote four formal essays (one college admissions essay, one expository essay on *Crime and Punishment*, a comparative essay on *Crime and Punishment* and *The Stranger*, and their IB World Literature Assignment One). Students completed IB World Literature Assignment Two at the beginning of second semester. All of these materials were potential data sources for this study.

## **Researcher's Role**

The format and objectives of this study qualify it as teacher research, as I acted as a participant-observer (Spradley), studying what occurred in the classroom as I participated as an instructor and facilitator and with the aim of potentially improving classroom instruction (Zeni). I emphasized to students and to parents, at Back-to-School Night in the fall, that I was committed to conducting the study without altering instruction for the sake of research; I was most interested in what happens in the course of routine instruction, and did not want students or parents to feel that the course would be different or students' instruction in any way compromised on account of my research. I very much saw myself as an "[insider] responsible to the students whose learning [I was] document[ing]" (Zeni 30). My aim was to improve students' understanding as I examined more reflectively how I was introducing and using the paradigm to clarify IB's expectations for students on their Language A1 assessments, particularly the World Literature Assignments.

## **Data Collection**

Following traditional methods of data collection associated with teacher research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle), my primary sources of data were students' responses to survey questions at the beginning and end of the school year, reflections on the first survey, oral remarks during group and class discussion, and essays. As many advocates of teacher research recommend (MacLean & Mohr, Hubbard & Power, Dyson & Genishi), I kept field notes throughout the semester to chronicle observations, student remarks, and

student conferences that were relevant to the research; these field notes constituted a secondary source of data.

## **Survey**

The survey itself was designed to reveal students' beliefs regarding how meaning is constructed as well as their perception of what IB believes or values. Because the assessment criteria are themselves open to interpretation, and because students may happen to hit or miss the mark depending on a variety of factors (topic choice, engagement in assignment, time spent working, writing process, understanding of and/or engagement in the text at hand, etc.), it becomes necessary to assess students' understanding of the criteria through methods other than essay-writing. One method for this is scoring sample papers based on the criteria – a practice also used in the course. Another is the survey approach, which encourages students to think more metacognitively about what they are doing when they read and interpret texts, and what kinds of interpretations and analyses allow them to score at the higher levels on IB assessments. Unlike the scoring of sample papers, this method acknowledges the existence of other possibilities and demonstrates not just whether they understand the criteria, but why, or on what basis.

Two surveys were designed for each class using surveymonkey.com. One survey was designed to measure students' personal perspectives on what factors into the meaning-making process, and the other was designed to measure their perception of IB's perspective or philosophy about literature. The purpose of having the students take the surveys from two perspectives was manifold. In a related pilot study conducted in the

spring of 2009, I had asked similar questions of students using an open-ended questionnaire and found that as they completed it they had difficulty remembering whether they were supposed to talk about what they believed or what they thought IB believed. Taking the survey twice through would remind them from which perspective to answer the questions, validate their individual theoretical perspectives, and offer me two sets of data to compare the extent to which students' perspectives align with IB's.

Separate surveys were designed for each class period in the interest of being able to study each class separately in case there arose a reason for doing so. The data here, however, comprise all three classes and were compiled by hand. Links to the surveys were posted within the school's website, and students were given verbal instructions for how to navigate to the links. Students completed the survey at the beginning of a class period in a computer lab. I escorted students to the computer lab and observed them from a distance in the interest of decreasing the level of self-consciousness they might feel while completing the survey. Upon returning to class, students were asked to explain, on a half-sheet of paper, what they observed regarding how their perspectives compared to IB's, and any relevant comments they had about this. Not all students were present in any of the classes, and while I requested that students who had missed class complete the survey at a later time, the total number of responses indicates that not all students did so. Thus, the data are reported as percentages rather than using raw scores, since the number of responses varies.

Students completed the surveys again on the last day of class, and again, responses were collected for student perspectives and for their perception of IB's

perspective. Again, not all students were present, and the data were compiled by hand, based on numbers of responses, and calculated using percentages.

### **Field Notes from Class Session Introducing the Paradigm**

In what remained of the instructional period following students' completion of the survey in October, I introduced the paradigm, drawing it on the board as indicated in Figure 1.

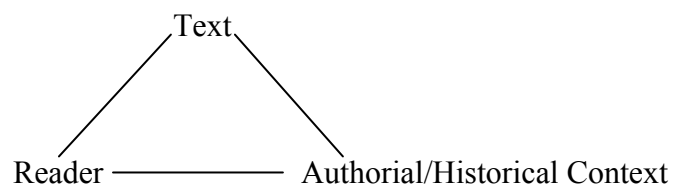


Figure 1. Epistemological Paradigm for Understanding Literary Theory

I explained how different schools of thought conceptualize the origin of meaning in the literary experience, beginning by explaining what an extreme text-, reader-, or authorial- or historical-centered reading would hold to be true about meaning. Students were also given a handout explaining some of the major tenets of each view (See Appendix A).

Following any relevant questions and discussion of the paradigm, students were told they would be applying a particular lens to a passage in Albert Camus' *The Stranger*, which was the text we were currently studying in class. Students were instructed not to construct a full commentary on the passage, since time would not allow for this, but rather to examine the details of the text their perspective would likely attend to and what one would likely conclude about those details. Students dealing with context were asked to identify what they would like to know about the author and/or time period in interpreting the text.

At this point, students were invited to self-select a perspective, with text-centered readers, reader-centered readers, and context-centered readers in different areas of the room. In the first- and third-hour classes, so many students gravitated to the reader-centered area that I asked them to redistribute themselves. In the second-hour class, an equal number of students chose the reader-centered and context-centered perspectives, but so few selected text-centered that here, too, I asked if some students would join the text-centered group. In all three classes, students volunteered to move without further prompting, and each perspective was reasonably well-represented, though the groups did not end up perfectly equal.

After they had time to read, make individual notes, and discuss within their groups, students reported out on what they would attend to in the passage given their perspective. Thus, the survey provided information about students' personal perspectives as well as their understanding of IB's perspective on how we know what we know about literature, and the exercise in class would demonstrate their understanding of each of the three major approaches as introduced in the paradigm.

In the lesson following the survey, students grouped themselves according to the three dominant perspectives (text-centered, reader-centered, and contextually concerned) and indicated what details a reader from each of these perspectives would attend to, or ask, in dealing with a given passage in *The Stranger*. The field notes from this lesson became part of my set of data for determining students' understanding of the paradigm.

## **Student Work Samples**

Students completed several essays over the course of the fall and early spring semesters. The first two essays were practice for World Literature Assignment 2 and World Literature Assignment 1, respectively, and students received general feedback as well as scores for each of the four criteria (see Appendix B). Students also completed their official World Literature Assignment 1 and World Literature Assignment 2 essays to submit to IB and received written teacher feedback, completed separately from the essay copies as per IB guidelines, before revising and submitting their final drafts to be marked by an IB examiner. All essays – including the “practice” essays completed for grades in the Foothills High School course – followed the same developmental process:

- Student draft of topic proposal and workshop of idea(s) with peers to check for viability according to assignment guidelines and criteria
- Submission of topic proposal to instructor for approval and/or feedback regarding whether the topic required alteration in order to maximize potential against the criteria, or clarifications of what the student might need to be particularly mindful of in pursuing the given topic
- Workshop of a professional draft with a group of peers
- Submission of draft to instructor

Ultimately, the drafts submitted to me at the end of this process were the primary sources of data in this study.



## Data Analysis

### *Surveys*

The context in which the surveys were completed informs the analysis of the survey data. Students completed a survey via surveymonkey.com at the beginning of October. At this point in the school year, we had completed our first unit of study on *Crime and Punishment* and students had completed one essay modeled after World Literature Assignment 2, for which they had received detailed printed and oral instructions, including an overview of the assessment criteria. Prior to taking the survey, students had raised questions regarding issues related to the different aspects of the paradigm – in other words, questions surrounding how we know what we know about literature:

1. How much do we need to know about Russian history and culture to understand *Crime and Punishment*?
2. Are we allowed to talk about authorial intent? (Many had the impression they were not, but others disagreed.)
3. Are we supposed to use a New Critical lens?
4. How do we know if our interpretations are valid?

While I addressed these questions as they arose, we had not explicitly discussed theory or epistemology prior to students' completing the survey. I had, however, indicated, in response to the above questions:

1. The relevance of historical context depends largely on the nature of the topic chosen for analysis (self-selected by students) and the claims being made. Students should avoid interpretations that would run contrary to the

historical and authorial context of the work and should conduct some research if the topic requires some knowledge of the author, culture, and/or time period. Several examples arose (based on students' topics), including questions such as what fraction of Saint Petersburg society at the time in which the novel is set would have ascribed to the teachings of the church, what doctrine this church would have followed, and/or how the church viewed poverty, prostitution, gambling, and drinking. Another example surrounded students' interest in, but limited knowledge about, Dostoevsky's non-fiction writing, such as *Notes From the Underground*, and whether he was an existentialist. Other students were interested in the politics alluded to in the novel as well as the concepts of nihilism and utilitarianism. The key guidance offered in class was to focus the bulk of the essay on textual analysis, but to take on the responsibility of outside research if necessary for the topic or claims within the essay.

2. Discretion must be exercised in how claims are presented; verifiable data (regarding the author and/or remarks he may have made about his work) can be included and must be cited. It would be difficult to know definitively, however, what a small detail of the novel was designed to accomplish unless the author had explicitly commented on it. On the other hand, an essay that focuses on criticizing (disagreeing with) Dostoevsky's emphasis on spiritual redemption (or why Raskolnikov ought not to have done one particular thing or another) overlooks what the

text itself is designed to do and becomes more a matter of opinions about life than an analysis of the text at hand.

3. New Critical practices are highly applicable to the oral and written commentary since the assessment requires them to conduct a close reading of 30-40 lines of text and is designed to focus primarily on language and technique of that passage alone, situating it within the context of the overall work (if known) in terms of plot, character, themes, motifs, and other techniques central to the work. (Students completed their oral commentaries during the junior year and therefore entered the senior year with ample practice with commentary writing.) However, the assessment criteria should inform what students do and do not attend to in analysis of texts. In the World Literature Assignments (for which they were specifically preparing when this question arose), Criterion B specifically calls for “appreciation of the cultural setting relevant to the assignment, where appropriate” (see World Literature Assignment Assessment Criteria, Appendix B).
4. Students should be able to explain their reasoning in such a way that others are likely to be persuaded, or at least follow the line of thinking. Knowledge of archetypes and widely used literary techniques should aid their analysis as relevant. Interpretations must be supported by textual evidence.

Thus, while I had not yet introduced the paradigm, I had addressed questions related to it. This is an important consideration, as students were (hopefully) already synthesizing

what was being said in class about how to approach literary analysis, and this knowledge would be reflected in the survey. Students had also been working with similar criteria during their junior year and, likely, had encountered similar expectations in the analysis of literature prior to that year as well. Thus, the survey measured students' perceptions of IB criteria at this particular moment in time, including some clarification from me regarding how I have come to understand and interpret these criteria. The function, then, was not to so much to measure their understanding before working with the criteria but rather to offer me a snapshot of their understanding of the criteria at that point so that I would be better informed regarding how to proceed in helping them to understand the multiple ways analysis might be approached, where they located themselves and IB theoretically, and what adjustments might need to be made to more fully align their analysis with the assessment criteria.

I analyzed the survey data by constructing charts that allowed me to compare responses over time. I focused on observing which aspects of the paradigm students saw as important in making meaning of texts, and to what extent, and compared their perceptions of IB's values at the beginning of the year to their perceptions of those same values at the end of the year.

### *Student essays*

The students' essays were read several times through to identify patterns relevant to the study (MacLean & Mohr, Hubbard & Power). Considering the paradigm was introduced as a way for students to conceptualize the different ways of thinking about where meaning derives in literature, I began examining what kinds of approaches

students were using in their analyses of the literature. Thus, as I read the essays, I aimed to isolate key points being made, including the thesis of the paper, major claims, and supporting points within those claims. For each point, I asked *On which aspects of the paradigm – text, reader, and/or context – does the writer rely to make his/her point?* After passing back through the data with this question in mind, I found that it became necessary to distinguish between events when students relied on some theoretical perspective to make a point and between events when claims were made but little analysis occurred; in other words, students would sometimes attend to text, reader, and/or context, but not necessarily for the sake of analysis. This led to the development of a second question: *What aspects of the paradigm does the writer attend to in attempting to make his/her point?* This allowed for observations of the presence of different approaches to literature even when analysis was not fully carried out – an important consideration, since analytical tools and perspectives were sometimes present even if the point was not fully made.

As patterns emerged, I created codes to mark the data according to these patterns. As I passed through different students' essays, noting different kinds and levels of analysis, I refined and further developed the codes as necessary (Dyson & Genishi). This led to the development of the coding chart in Table 1.

Table 1: Coding Chart for Student Essays

Approach: (nature of topic, claims, examples, explanation) → On what does the writer rely to make his/her point? → What does the writer attend to in making his/her point?	Explanation	Code
Text/technique analysis	Analysis of detail and technique, (structure, narrative perspective, archetypes, symbols, etc.) – close reading	TA
Text explanation	Explanation of what is happening in the text (minimal analysis)	TE
Plot, character analysis	Analysis of character and plot development (focused more on ideas, general content than technique)	PCA
Plot, character observation	Observations of plot and character	PCO
Shared interpretation	Interpretation based on shared cultural/archetypal construct or understanding	ShI
Subjective interpretation	Subjective/more independent (less “shared”) interpretation/approach	SubI
Highly subjective interpretation	Highly subjective interpretation/approach	SubI+
Inductive approach	Text informs, or leads to, conclusion	I
Deductive approach	Text supports idea or impression	D
Authorial intent	Concerned with authorial intent	AI
Author’s life and times	Attention to authorial experience, context	auth
Historical context	Attention to historical context	H
Personal response	Writer acknowledges experience, knower’s perspective	KP

To establish reliability, I asked two other practitioners to code samples pulled from student essays. One of them, a university teacher educator, has nineteen years of secondary school teaching experience and is familiar with student writing. The second, a

public school English teacher with five years of experience, is familiar with the expectations of the IB program and the community in which the study took place. The samples were isolated to circumvent the added difficult of deciding where a particular point would begin and end. This kept the emphasis on the codes rather than on the nuances of analysis and claims in students' papers. A few of the samples appear in Table 2. Two columns appear to the left of each sample to allow space for raters to record two codes if necessary.

Table 2: Coding Sample

		Even though she may have lied, the reader is inclined to side with Angela given the double standard in the community [regarding virginity] and due to witnessing how she is forced into the marriage and how her mother beats her.
		The sofa turned bed took up "half the room," suggesting half his life is wasted to sleep.
		The Catholic religion specifically follows the idea that "thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). This commandment is surprisingly overseen by the townspeople who are characterized as being devoted to their Catholic faith and religion.
		The reference to "parade day" only solidifies their guilt because they were lined up in a fashion to witness entertainment, rather than prevent the future crime.
		[Raskolnikov's room] is portrayed as claustrophobic by being "so low-pitched that a man of more than average height was ill at ease in it and felt every moment that he would knock his head against the ceiling" (Dostoevsky 27). This suggests Raskolnikov as being "average" as opposed to extraordinary.
		Camus' notion of the absurd is embodied by the character of Meursault who experiences no emotion throughout the novel.
		The Magistrate is mislead by the previous successes he had with other criminals who "have always wept at the sight of this image of suffering," the crucifix (69). The Magistrate is so blinded by what he believes and so sure of his message that he is dumbfounded when Meursault rejects God's forgiveness. He resorts to accusing Meursault of not being fully human as he screams, "I am a Christian. I ask him to forgive you your sins. How can you not believe that He suffered for you?" (69).

The first round of rating revealed that the codes were difficult to consistently apply. The raters, including myself, spent some time discussing how the codes related to the paradigm, what was implied by "shared interpretation," and whether it was necessary to delineate between explanation and analysis. Through discussion, the raters agreed on sets

of codes which aligned with the three major components of the paradigm – text, reader, and context – and passed through a fresh set of samples using the codes “t,” “r,” and “c,” for text, reader, and context, respectively. In cases where more than one applied, raters recorded two codes. These revised codes were applied to 20 samples, and the two raters (other than myself) agreed on 15 of them, establishing 75% agreement.

These codes were then used in a final coding of the work of the three students I had selected for the case studies. Given my familiarity with the course and students’ writing and informed by students’ responses to the survey questions in October 2009, I expected that most of the claims or points made would be coded “t” for text, and the first two essays coded confirmed this. For this reason, my focus shifted to attending specifically to where students relied on, or attended to, their knowers’ perspectives as readers or the historical and/or authorial context and/or significance of the text(s) under examination.

### *Construction of Case Studies*

For the purpose of the study, it was relevant to examine not only students’ perceptions of IB’s theoretical framework and their ability to use singular approaches (each extreme of the paradigm) to texts but also how, or to what extent, their analysis of literature aligned with IB’s theoretical framework. While I was interested in students’ conceptual understanding, a primary objective of the course is to equip students to perform well against the criteria. Thus, it was relevant also to examine their approaches to the IB assignments and whether these approaches aligned with said values. This is evidenced best in the major essays written for the course, since the criteria are designed to measure



student performance on these essays. With 78 participants, the case study method was chosen as the best means to closely examine the work of selected students.

An attempt was made to select a heterogeneous set of students for the case study in the interest of examining students with varying theoretical values and approaches to analysis, so that their work might be measured against themselves and compared amongst one another. These “multiple perspectives” seemed fitting here as they “are important when conveying the complexity of the phenomenon in qualitative research” (Creswell 257). This was also a way to triangulate data in the interest of making the findings more accurate (Creswell 266).

I generated an initial list of students with the aim of representing a variety of attitudes toward and applications of the paradigm and developed descriptors to characterize students’ reactions to the paradigm and their application of ways of knowing – or their analytical approaches to literature – in their writing as they were apparent in October, near the beginning of the school year. The attitudes were assessed based on students’ responses to taking the survey (collected in October immediately following their completion of the survey), observations in field notes of students’ remarks in class, and notes on conferences with students (where applicable). Descriptors of application were based both on observations of the ways of knowing students attended to in class discussion as well as what I observed in their written work early on in the semester. The descriptors were designed to represent spectrums:

*Attitude toward paradigm*

Resistant—— Questioning—— Interested—— Receptive—— Enthusiastic

*Analytical approach to literature (as it aligns with IB criteria)*

Struggling—— Developing—— Emerging—— Aligned

The initial list comprised seventeen students whose attitudes were most discernable based on their reflections following taking the survey and my field notes. From there, I narrowed the list to ten students, selecting those who had conferenced with me at various points during the fall semester and for whom I therefore had the greatest amount and range of data.

Table 3: Notes on students for case study potential

Student Name	Attitude toward paradigm	Analytical approach to literature
Jack	Enthusiastic	Aligned
Amelia	Receptive	Aligned
Erin	Enthusiastic	Aligned
Jennifer	Enthusiastic	Developing
Matthew	Enthusiastic	Emerging
Daniel	Receptive	Emerging
Andy	Resistant/Interested	Developing
Kayla	Unclear	Struggling
Sophie	Resistant	Struggling
Katherine	Receptive	Struggling

I initially aimed to select students who represented each of the categories – Enthusiastic, Receptive, or Resistant and Aligned, Emerging, or Struggling – but eventually elected to

focus mostly on those whose application of interpretive strategies was either beginning (emerging) or struggling to align with the IB criteria. While there may be merit in a close examination of students who already demonstrated perceptive understanding of the IB criteria, the paradigm and research were designed to target students who, even at the beginning of the senior year, were still either unsure of what approaches to literature IB favors and/or how to execute these approaches. After eliminating the three “aligned” students from the study, I selected three among the remaining seven students who exhibited different reactions to the paradigm.

The three students ultimately selected for the case study were Matthew, Katherine, and Sophie, whose reactions to the paradigm were enthusiastic, receptive, and resistant, respectively, and whose written analyses of literature early on in the year indicated that they were either emerging (Matthew) or struggling (Katherine and Sophie) in aligning with the IB criteria.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Given the nature of the complexity of the survey and case studies and how they related to one another, and within the context of qualitative analysis, the report of findings was best suited with a narrative discussion (Creswell 262). Ultimately, the different types of data – survey, field notes, and students’ work samples – also afforded me the ability to triangulate, using a variety of tools and kinds of information to observe instruction from a variety of angles and to validate findings (Creswell 266).

### Surveys

The first four questions elicit responses regarding different aspects of the paradigm.

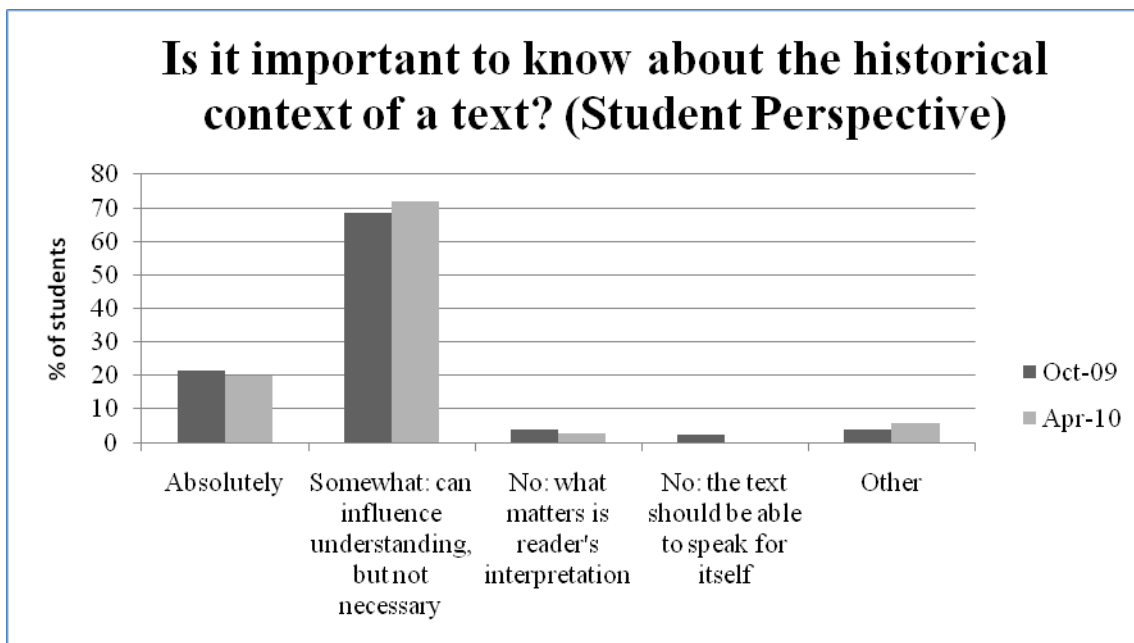


Figure 2: Historical Context – Student Perspective

*Students' "Other" Explanations, cut-and-pasted from surveymonkey.com, October 2009:*

1. It depends on what lense the reader is using. If the reader is looking at it using their own interpretation (i forget what this is called) then they don't want to know the history. if a person is looking at it through a historical lense then yes you want to know the history
2. I do think that its interesting to know about the author and where a book comes from, but i think that mostly it matters most what the reader interprets from the text.
3. The text should speak for itself while still maintaining absolute historical context - It must be a mix between the two, and not just one or the other.

*Students' "Other" Explanations, cut-and-pasted from surveymonkey.com, April 2010:*

1. It depends on the purpose behind reading a text, what the text itself is, and one's individual preferences.
2. It depends on the text. For example, you probably want to know some mythological history before reading the odyssey, but if you're reading something like Calvin and Hobbs or even Anthem by Ayn Rand you probably don't need to know the history of the text to create, find, and accept meaning from the text, author, and common social interpretations.
3. If the time and culture that a text was written in is known, then I definitely believe that the reader should take that into consideration, however, if it is not known, I still believe that a reader can get just as much if not more understanding (in a different way) from the text.
4. Some 'period pieces' require at least a cursory knowledge of the historical context, but on the whole, I wouldn't say it's necessary.

Looking at the graph, it is evident that students mostly agreed that, given how they are inclined to approach literature, historical context is relevant but not necessary, though some perceive historical context as more central. Very few were inclined to suggest that context ought not to be considered at all, and their attitudes changed little over the course of the school year.

Students' remarks in responding "other" demonstrate either a desire to further clarify their responses or a preference for more consideration of the purpose and setting for their reading. The second and third responses from the October survey point toward other possible responses (response 2 tends toward the reader's interpretation as most important while response 3 points more toward "somewhat"), and the third and fourth responses from the April survey echo the "somewhat" response, though the reasons for this vary slightly from the reasoning in the wording of the question on the survey.

The other three remarks, however, tend more toward acknowledging multiple reasons for and ways of reading. The first remark from the October 2009 survey reveals

an awareness of different approaches to reading, though it is interesting that the student does not indicate his/her preference here and instead responds to the question in a more neutral manner. Response 1 from April suggests also that one's response to the question would vary depending on purpose and text, but likewise alludes to "one's individual preferences" rather than indicating what his/her preferences are (as the "Personal Perspective" round of the survey was meant to elicit). Response 2 from April, unlike the others that contend that responses may vary depending on purpose, text and preferences, presents a more detailed explanation of how purpose and text might vary in such a way that preference is less of a consideration.

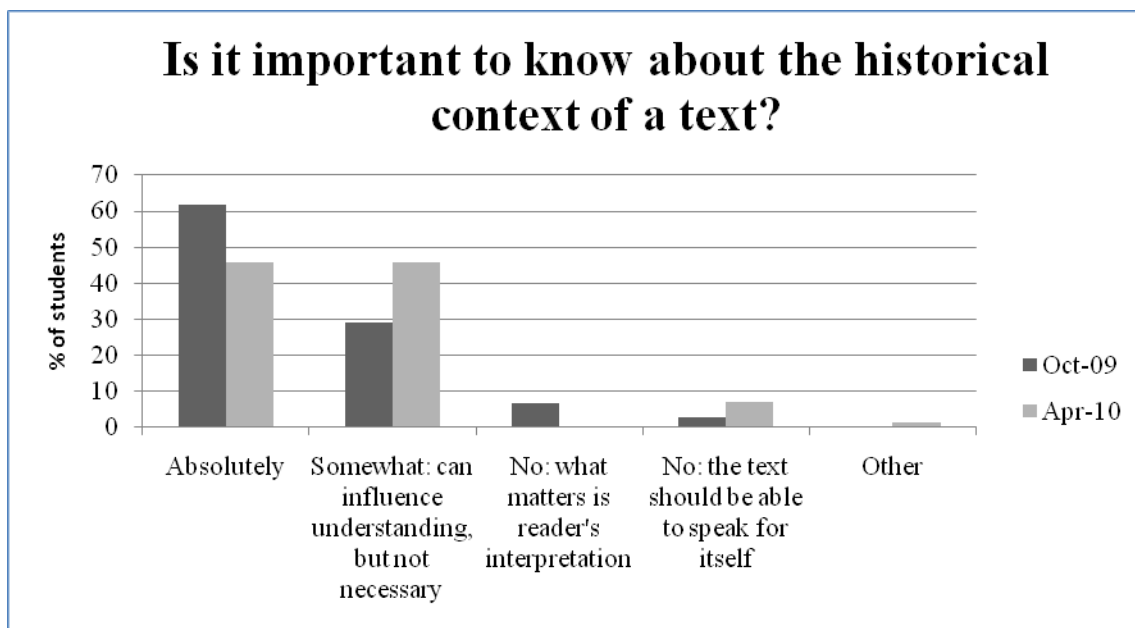


Figure 3: Historical Context – Students' Perceptions of IB's Perspective

*"Other" Explanation, April 2010:*

1. the text should speak for itself, but knowing about the time and culture can influence the reader's response

Taken together, it is apparent that, at the beginning of the school year, students perceived that IB is absolutely concerned with historical context – more so than they are. This

perception shifted over the course of the school year. At the end of the school year, students were equally divided regarding whether IB sees context as vital to understanding or as potentially useful or relevant, but not necessarily vital.

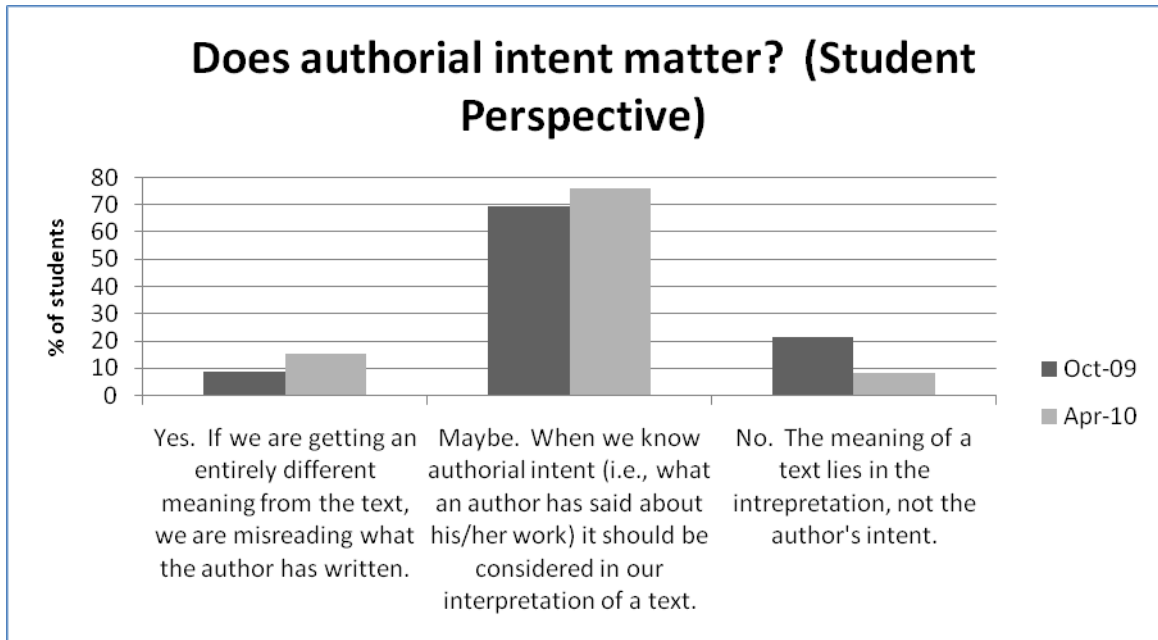


Figure 4: Authorial Intent – Student Perspective

Students overwhelmingly agree (69.6% in October 2009, and 76.06% in April 2010) that authorial intent may be relevant in understanding texts. The graph indicates that, by the end of the year, the trend moved toward seeing it as mattering (toward the left of the graph, either possibly or definitely) and away from seeing it as unimportant (far right), valuing only the interpretation.

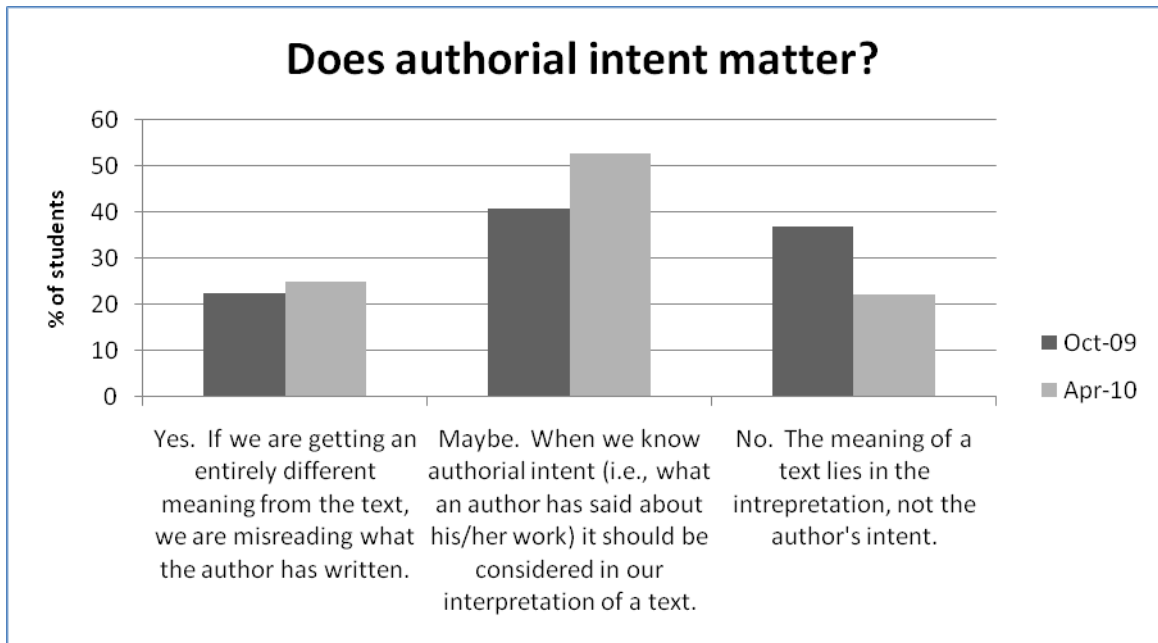


Figure 5: Authorial Intent – Students’ Perception of IB’s Perspective

This graph indicates that, near the beginning of the school year, students were more divided over whether authorial intent matters (or should be taken into account) in their written analysis for IB. By the end of the year, it appears that a number of students shifted from seeing it as unimportant (or impermissible in their analysis, as their remarks in class suggest) to potentially relevant, if known. Interestingly, while the majority of students see authorial intent as applicable if known (52.8%), the rest are nearly perfectly divided (25% yes, 22.2% no) and opposing in their opinions, despite the fact they are working with the same set of criteria and share the same instructor. Taken together, students’ perceptions of IB’s perspective changed more than did their personal perspectives.



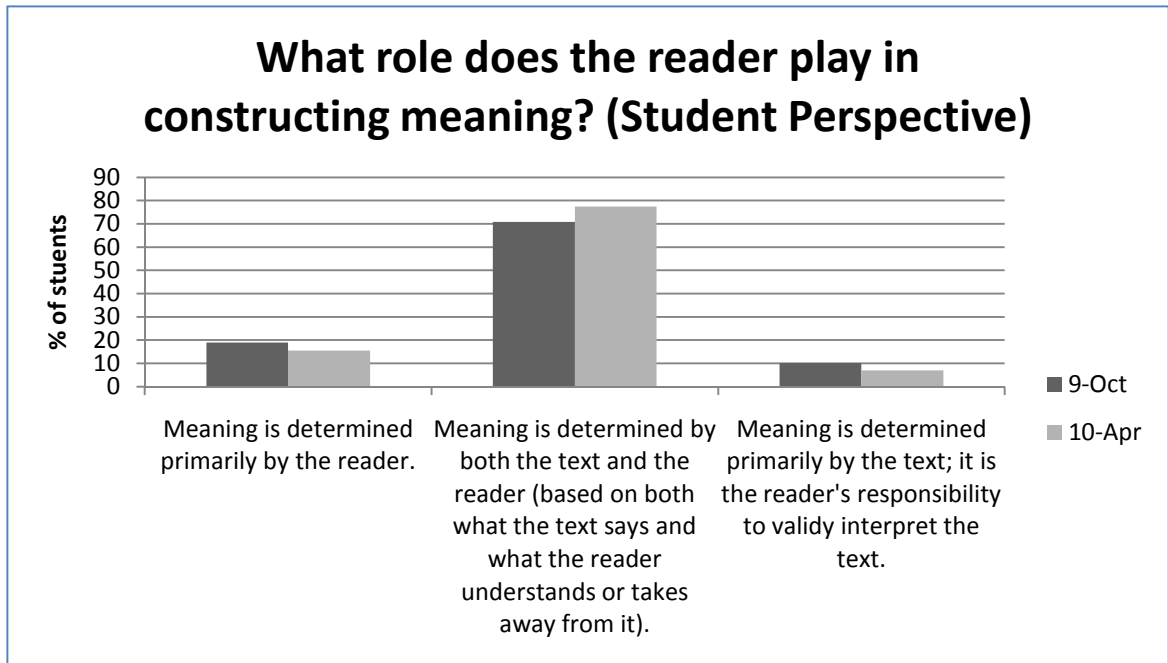


Figure 6: Reader and, or Versus, Text? – Student Perspective

Although some students indicate that meaning rests primarily in the reader or the text, most see meaning as dependent on both entities. Though the results suggest little change in students' personal perspectives over the course of the school year, the trend is toward seeing both reader and text as important in the meaning-making process.

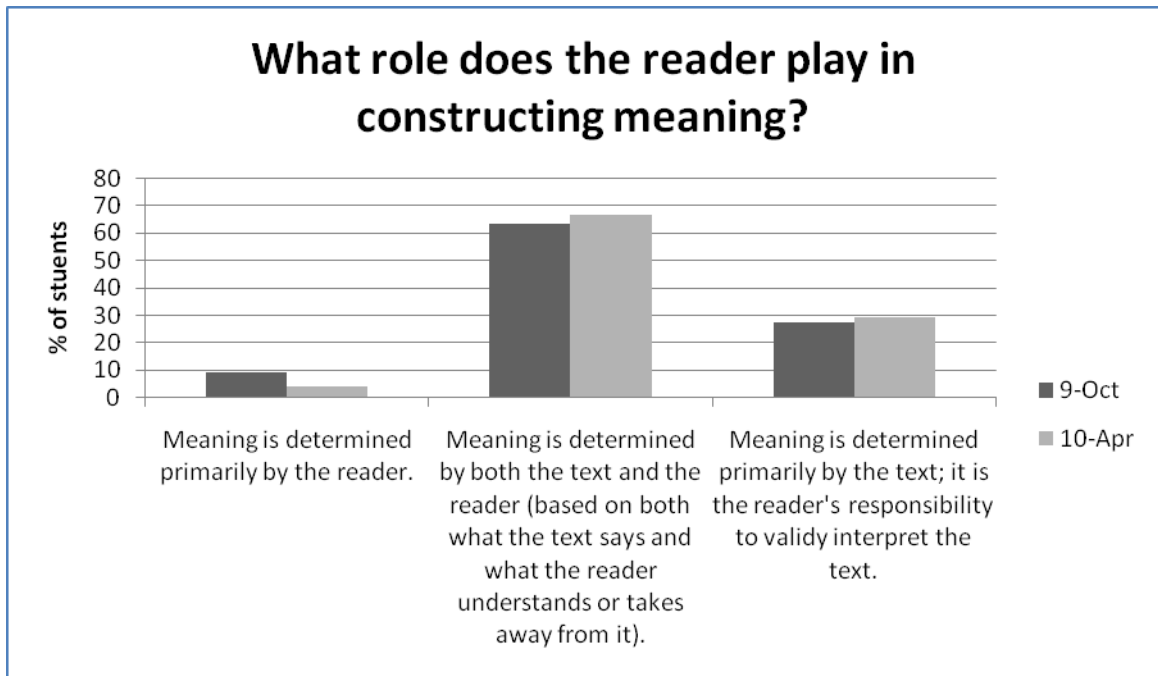


Figure 7: Reader and, or Versus, Text? – Students’ Perception of IB’s Perspective

The majority of students (63.2% in October 2009; 66.667% in April 2010) perceive that IB acknowledges the roles of both the reader and the text in the meaning-making process. While this mirrors their personal views, it should be noted that a greater number (nearly one third, both in the fall and spring) see the text as the primary determiner of meaning. In their personal perspectives on constructing meaning, more students perceived the reader as the primary determiner, suggesting that students perceive IB as more text-centered.

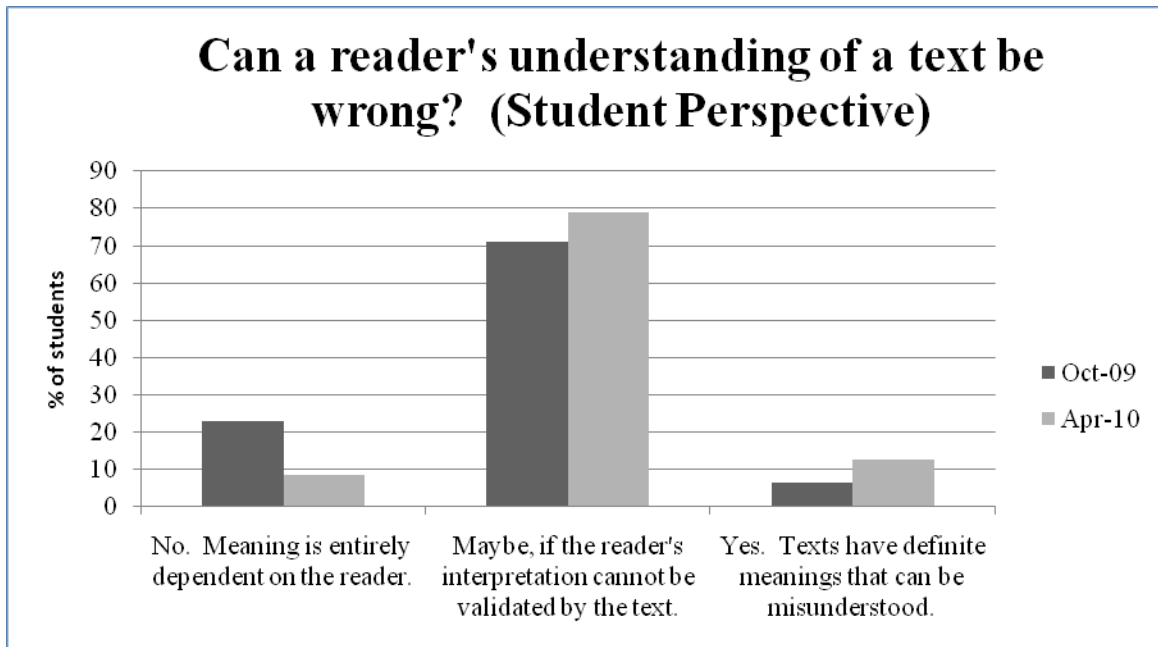


Figure 8: Reader Understanding – Student Perspective

Students agree, for the most part, that while readers' interpretations may vary, they must be validated by the text. Over the course of the year, 14.35 % of the students moved away from seeing meaning as entirely dependent on the reader. 7.97 % more believed that a reader *could* be wrong, if lacking textual validation (middle column), and 6.38 % more believed that a reader could be wrong, period, since texts have definite meanings (far right). The exact numbers here – a 14.35 % decrease in the first category and a summative 14.35 % increase the other two categories – suggest the likelihood that students shifted almost unanimously in the direction of seeing interpretation as less subjective, though the shift is small and the exact correlation is hypothetical in the absence of tracking individuals' responses to the survey.

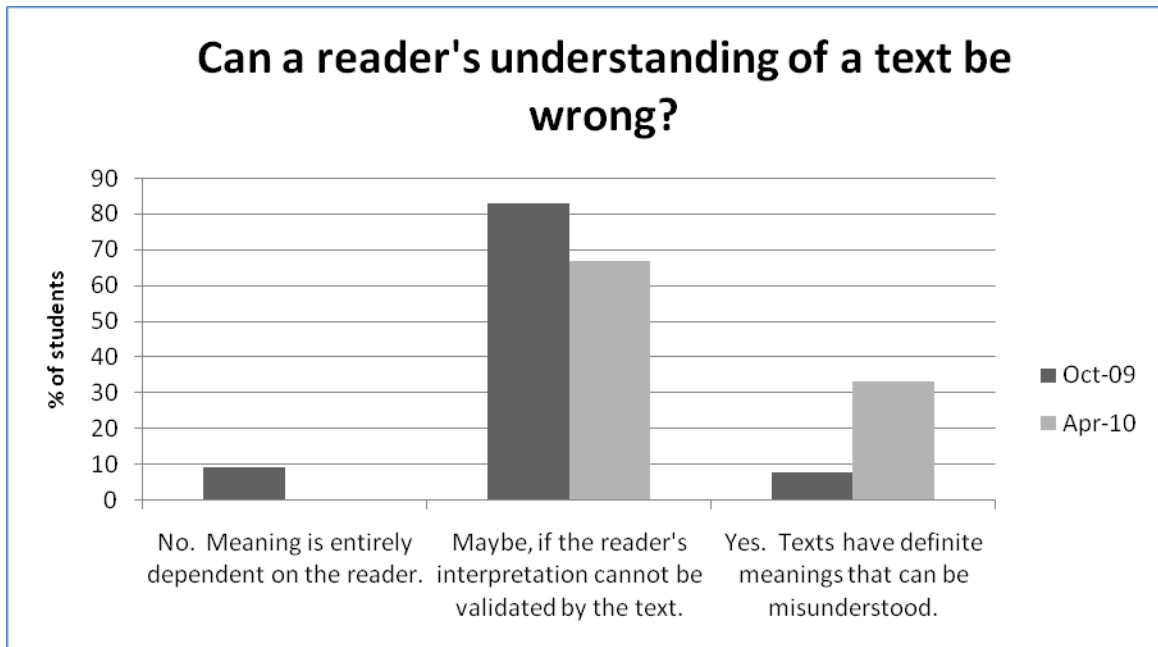


Figure 9: Reader Understanding – Students’ Perception of IB’s Perspective

The data here indicate that an increasing number of students perceive that IB believes a reader *can* be wrong. This mirrors the shift documented in Figure 8 in students’ perspectives as well, though here there is a markedly greater movement toward seeing texts as entities that can be misunderstood and away from the perception that IB will accept readings that are not as clearly rooted in the text.

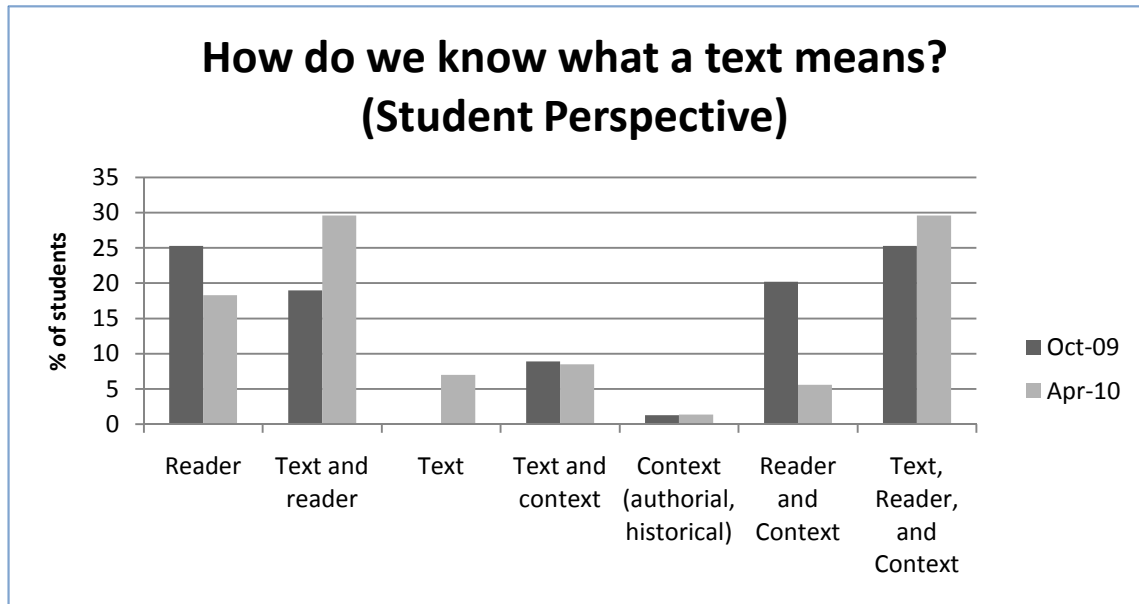


Figure 10: Text, Reader, and/or Context? – Student Perspective

At the beginning of the school year (indicated by the darker columns), the common factor among the four highest categories indicates that students favored meaning as being dependent on the reader, in varying forms: the two dominant perspectives were reader-centered (far left) or reader in addition to text and context (far right), followed closely by text and reader (second from left) and reader and context (second from right). The greatest change in students' personal perspectives over the course of the school year suggests a shift toward more emphasis on the text: the reader-only perspective (far left) and reader and context (second from right) show the greatest downward trends, while the text and reader (second from left), text (third from left) and text, reader, and context (far right) show the greatest upward trends. While there is still heavy emphasis on the role of the reader in the meaning-making process, the trend is toward considering this alongside the text and/or context in which the text was produced. Nearly two-thirds of the students

indicate the reader and text as origins of meaning, with exactly 50% of this group indicating the role of context as well.

In the interest of corroborating the overall shifts in emphasis in students' perspectives on meaning-making, I calculated which percentages of students indicated the reader, text, or context as important in some way (be it alone or alongside one or both other perspectives) at the beginning and end of the year, the results of which are indicated in Figure 11.

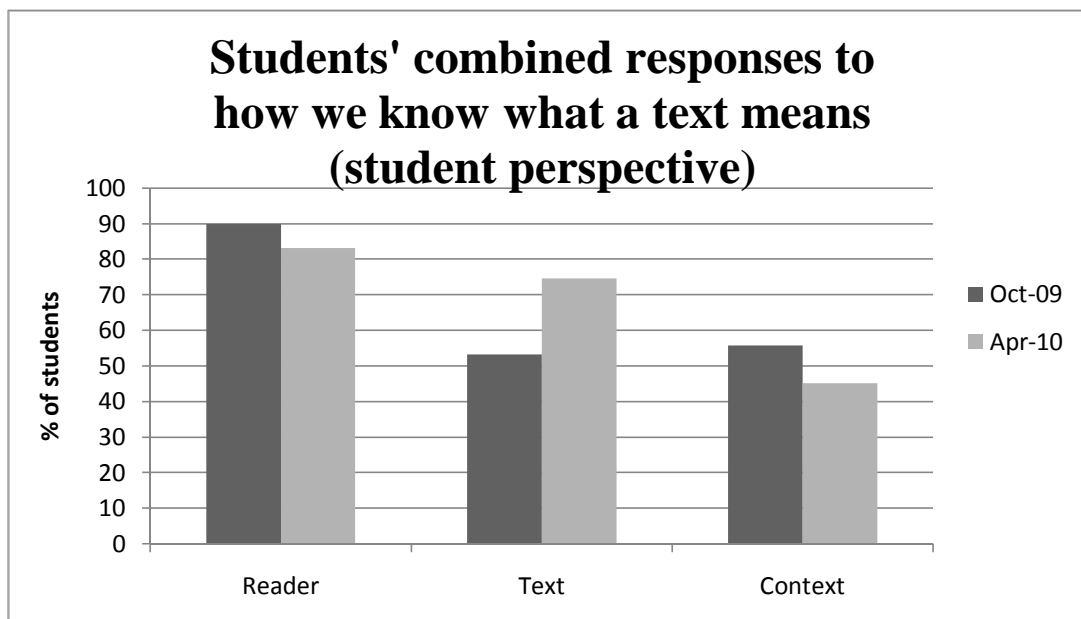


Figure 11: Percentages of students who indicated reader, text, or context is significant in how we know what a text means

Here, it is visually apparent that students viewed readers as playing a primary role when they were surveyed in October. While this perspective was still dominant at the end of the year, the greatest upward trend was in seeing the text as playing a role, while context appears to have declined in importance (though 45.1% still see it as significant).

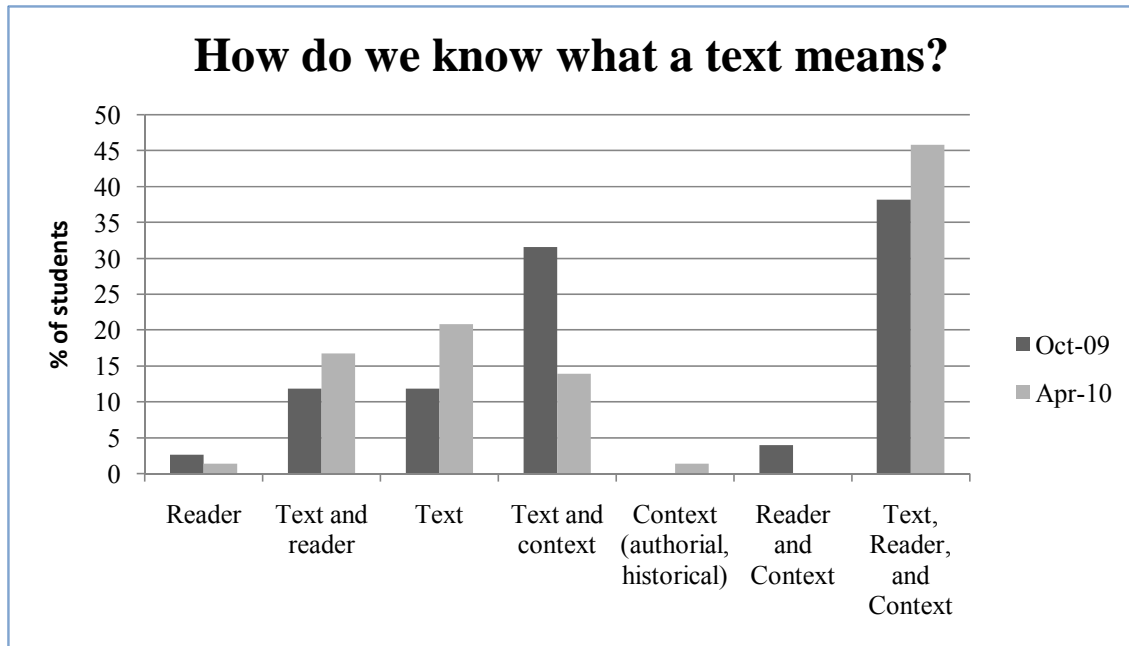


Figure 12: Text, Reader, and/or Context? – Students’ Perception of IB’s Perspective

Compared to students’ personal perspectives, there is a greater amount of consensus in students’ perceptions of IB’s perspective regarding how we know what a text means.

Even before the introduction of the paradigm, students perceived IB as being concerned with all three elements (reader, text, and context), as illustrated in the column furthest to the right (38.16%). The next-highest shared perception (31.58%) in October was that IB sees meaning as being dependent on the text and context, noticeably omitting the reader’s role in making meaning (as compared to the other area in which some consensus is evident). The greatest downward trend from the beginning to the end of the year occurred in attention to text and context (middle columns). The greatest upward trend is in attention to the text (third column from left), followed closely by attention to all three elements and then text and reader. These results indicate that, while there is some

uncertainty regarding the roles of reader and context in IB's vision of literary analysis, students are keenly aware of the need to focus on the text.

Given how the merging of responses regarding the roles played by reader, text, and context helped elucidate trends in students' perspectives, I repeated this process with the data on students' perceptions of IB's perspective:

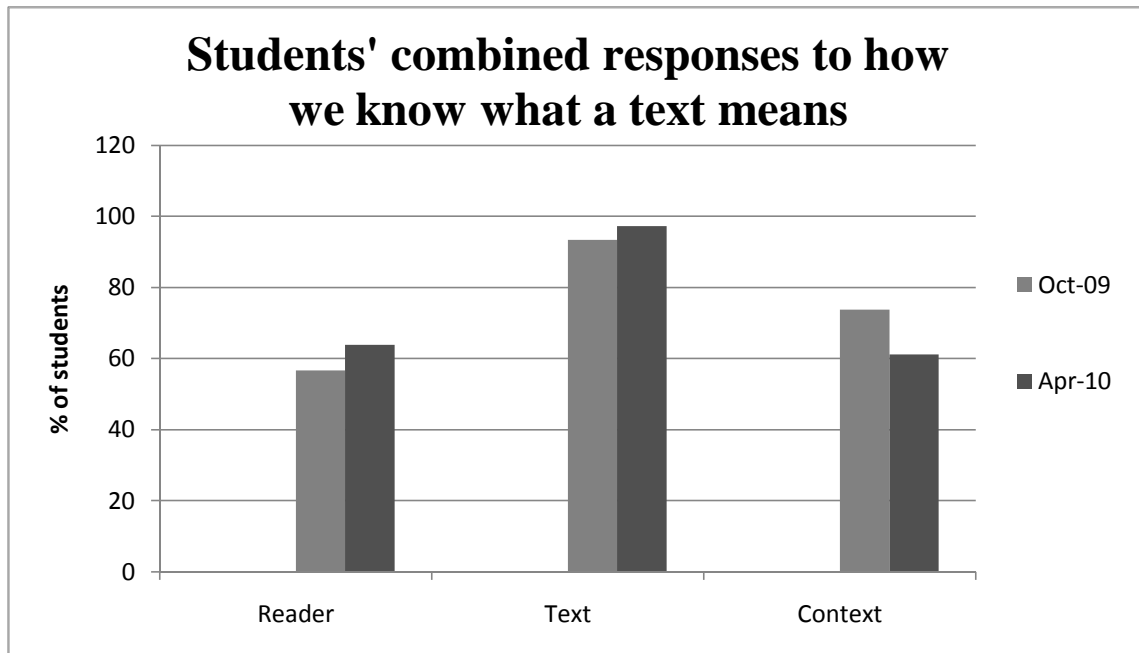


Figure 13: Percentages of students who viewed reader, text, or context as significant in IB's perspective on how we know what a text means

This organization of the data confirms students are highly aware of the need to focus on the text. The impression that IB sees readers as meaning-makers was shared by slightly more students at the end of the year, increasing from 56.6% to 63.9% (emphasis on slightly), while fewer students indicated that they believed IB sees context as an important part of the meaning-making process, dropping from 73.7% to 61.1%.



### *Findings from the surveys*

Perhaps not surprisingly, the first four questions yielded the highest numbers of responses in the middle categories. It may be that students perceived these as the safest answers, or that the other selections were too extreme; having students rate the importance or role of different ways of knowing on a scale might yield different results. Comparatively, students' tendency to select the middle responses was more evident in rating their personal perspectives than in rating their perceptions of IB, with 68.4% - 78.87% of students selecting the middle option in each of these questions in the initial and exit surveys. In responding to the questions from IB's perspective, as few as 28.95% and typically no higher than 66.7% selected the middle options, with the one exception of 82.9% responding "maybe," in October, to the question about whether a reader can be wrong (Figure 9). This comparison, paired with the fact that students' perceptions of IB changed more than their personal perspectives over the course of the year, lends greater credibility to the usefulness of the survey in gauging students' understanding of IB.

The results of the survey in October revealed that students did not understand IB criteria for literary analysis on a theoretical level. Of the students surveyed, 61.84% believed the consideration of historical context to be absolutely necessary, while the better answer would be "somewhat," which only 28.95% of students chose (Figure 3). Perhaps the IB Mission Statement and IB's emphasis on internationalism influenced students' responses to this question, a notion that reveals one reason students in the program may have difficulty understanding how Language A1 fits in the larger scheme of the Diploma Program. This does not, however, account for the discrepancies in other areas, such as only 40.8% – not even half – of the students perceiving that IB sees

authorial intent as potentially relevant (see Figure 5), with nearly as many (36.8%) perceiving that IB sees it as irrelevant. A better majority – 63.2% – perceived that IB sees meaning as determined by the reader *and* the text, though nearly a third (27.6%) believed IB views meaning as determined primarily by the text (Figure 7). These results pointed toward a genuine need to clarify for students what the assignments and criteria aim to measure, and what IB actually values in literary analysis. The introduction to the paradigm provided language and a visual to use in the interest of helping students to understand better when, how, and why to rely on different ways of knowing about texts.

The question regarding whether a reader’s understanding could be wrong aligned much more closely with IB at the beginning of the year, with 82.9 % of students agreeing that it is possible if the reader’s interpretation cannot be validated by the text (Figure 9). Interestingly, this shifted *away* from an accurate perception by the end of the year, with 66.7% of students still answering “maybe,” but 33.3% believing that IB sees texts as having definite meanings that can be misunderstood.

With this exception, students’ survey responses at the end of the year demonstrate a more accurate understanding of the criteria, though the tendency is toward seeing the text as more central to meaning at the cost of acknowledging the roles of the reader and the context of the work. The survey results also reveal that not all students came to the same conclusions regarding IB’s perspective. Some of this can be accounted for in students’ understanding of the survey questions themselves, and it is to be expected that, when dealing with such complex theoretical ideas, not all students are likely to come to the same conclusions. There is also the question of whether students may be able to fulfill the criteria without being able to explicitly explain or conceptualize them. Still, as

an instructor working to unmask the secrecy of IB and literary analysis, I would hope for a greater consensus.

### Field notes: Student application of each of the three perspectives

Table 4 details what each group discussed and/or reported out on in the lesson in which they were asked to apply each of the three perspectives represented by the paradigms.

Table 4: Notes on students' application of the three perspectives

Period	Text-centered	Reader-centered	Contextually concerned
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreshadowing</li> <li>• Water imagery</li> <li>• Oasis, silence</li> <li>• Light<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Juxtaposition<sup>2</sup>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light and dark</li> <li>• Shouting and silence</li> <li>• Water: oasis and drowning</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Repetition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “smile”</li> <li>• Voices being drowned out</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Others' conversations more focused on materials</li> <li>• One couple not talking – silence seems preferable to shouting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marie is clingy</li> <li>• Reactions to mother and son</li> <li>• Arabs inspire thoughts of racial profiling, oppression</li> <li>• Noise pollution in the passage – personal connotations of music, idea of harmony</li> <li>• Marie's expectations of emotion make us critical of Meursault</li> <li>• Importance of the mother-son relationship: Meursault is between different kinds of people, so we might interpret the significance based on our experiences of those types of people</li> </ul>	<p>Would help to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significance of clothing at that time (online search)</li> <li>• Where novel set, time period</li> <li>• Cultural tension in Algeria (history)</li> <li>• Camus' religious perspective, whether he had had bad experiences with religion</li> <li>• Whether Camus had spent time in jail</li> </ul> <p>Other observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noticed biographical note at end of novel: Camus fought for Muslim rights; therefore, the book could be commentary on racism</li> <li>• Biographical note important to this perspective</li> <li>• Camus not racist – similar to accusations of Mark Twain and</li> </ul>

			<i>Huckleberry Finn</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Translator's note: limitations of translation; difference between British and American translators</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sun, light</li> <li>Darkness</li> <li>Water</li> <li>Significance of other visitors</li> <li>Chasm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal associations (i.e. never been to prison, influences interpretation)</li> <li>Relying on archetypes disregards the minority perspective – very Western approach</li> <li>Could claim Meursault is gay and use context and text to support it?</li> </ul>	Would like to know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is the minority?</li> <li>Has the author been to prison?</li> <li>Would there have been visitation?</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Juxtaposition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tall/short</li> <li>light/dark<sup>3</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>Physical separation: corridor, staircase</li> <li>Oasis of silence<sup>4</sup></li> <li>Smiling</li> <li>Sound</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passage as metaphor for senior year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>want college like Meursault wants Marie</li> <li>different kinds of relationships</li> <li>light and sounds irritable, like school, stress</li> <li>identifying with not knowing how to express something</li> <li>make the most of Marie's being there, like making the most of senior year</li> </ul> </li> <li>Attention to "bass accompaniment" because of background in music</li> </ul>	Would like to know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How the society felt about different groups (French and Algerian)</li> <li>Was Camus married?</li> <li>What was Camus' relationship with his mother like?</li> <li>Had Camus been to jail?</li> <li>Original text (how it reads compared to translation)</li> </ul> Other observations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camus' journalism – the fact that he wrote a piece on the happiness of Muslims – demonstrates his sympathy with the Arab population</li> <li>The "point is to live" (drawing from <i>Myth of Sisyphus</i>); connects to Meursault "mak[ing] the most of being with Marie"</li> </ul>

- 1 – Student asked group, “How can we make meaning with just this passage?”
- 2 – Student noted that the juxtaposition could be indicative of Meursault’s inner conflict
- 3 – Reflects segregation
- 4 – Connects to murder scene

While students had varying amounts of time to work through this exercise, with first period having the longest and second period the shortest, the observations from each group in each class demonstrate students’ ability to delineate between what the three different kinds of reading would likely attend to.

*Findings from field notes: student application of the perspectives*

While this exercise did not reflect students’ understanding of the criteria for the World Literature Assignments or how best to balance and apply different ways of approaching texts in order to meet these criteria, it did reveal an important first step: students understand the differences between the different kinds of readings. This did not verify that all students had this ability since the work was done in groups, students self-selected their perspectives, and students worked within their perspectives and heard from the others. As a group, however, it was evident that in the whole-class setting, there was an understanding of the three major approaches to interpretation. Given the inquiry approach of the class – most instruction is focused around giving students opportunities to explore their questions about the texts and, as a community, to discuss what they are wondering and finding – this shared understanding laid the foundation for future communal discussion and learning. Without the ability to delineate between the three perspectives, it would be illogical to expect students to move forward into understanding what kinds of approaches to use in satisfying the IB criteria. This informal assessment of

students' understanding was critical, then, in my decision to keep moving forward, rather than spending more time on any one approach.

## **Case Studies**

### Matthew

Matthew is a high-achieving student in all subjects, but particularly in the humanities. His foremost passion is for theatre, and he tended to be high-energy in class. He sometimes would get carried away in his goofiness, but he was generally concerned with being respectful and productive. He was naturally engaged in the class, and his perspectives are easy to gauge because they were so frequently and readily offered in class discussion and our one-on-one conversations. Matthew asked several probing questions regarding our epistemology in class and often stayed after class or came by my office to ask further questions, share insights, or generally discuss literature.

As indicated in the discussion of the study's methodology, Matthew was enthusiastic in his initial response to the paradigm. To be fully accurate, he began by questioning its relevance; on the day I introduced the paradigm to the class, as I began explaining the three major players in the origins of literary meaning, he asked, "Why does all this matter? Why can't we just read and interpret?" This led to some class discussion regarding the need for having a standard agreement for what is valued in literary discussion and analysis. Jennifer remarked that the paradigm can help us articulate what one is basing claims on, which can make the analysis more valid and persuasive. Several students bemoaned the connections to their Theory of Knowledge course at this point, but here Matthew chimed back in and began explaining how the

paradigm allows us to explain how we know what we know about literature. By the time he was done, I had little left to add. In essence, I began the explanation, and the students reasoned through it from there, with Matthew both beginning and ending the class discussion.

While he was readily persuaded by this event of the paradigm’s usefulness and demonstrated in another discussion the following week his understanding of the kind of analysis IB is looking for, his writing reveals the difference between perception and application. His practice World Literature Assignment 1, a comparison between *The Stranger* and *Crime and Punishment*, sought to “[examine] the role religion plays in the alienation of the condemned, Meursault and Raskolnikov.” The topic is highly appropriate to the assignment, and much of his approach was appropriate given the criteria, focusing foremost on the text. There were fourteen discernable claims about each novel which were primarily text-based. He attended a number of times to the reader and the context as well, some of which helped him to satisfy the criteria, and some of which hindered him from achieving at the higher levels. Table 5 demonstrates the frequency of references to reader and context, where “aligned” refers to references that satisfy the task and criteria, and “misaligned” indicates references that fall outside of the ways of knowing deemed acceptable for the kind of literary analysis IB seeks.

Table 5: Matthew’s types of claims in Practice World Literature Assignment 1

Matthew’s Practice World Literature Assignment 1: The Role of Religion in <i>Crime and Punishment</i> and <i>The Stranger</i>					
	Reader & Text	Reader	Reader & Context	Context	Context & Text
Aligned	4	3	-	1	-
Misaligned	-	4	-	-	-

Of the three references to the reader’s perspective categorized as aligned, two of them occurred in the essay’s conclusion.

Matthew’s subsequent essay, the World Literature Assignment 1 completed for his IB External Assessment, focused on technique, exploring how the “descriptions of buildings in Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* and Garcia Marquez’s *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*” [...] “serve to reinforce the societal values.” Again, most of the claims in the essay focus directly on the text, and, as Table 6 demonstrates, reliance on reader and context is less apparent in general.

Table 6: Matthew’s types of claims in Official (IB) World Literature Assignment 1

Matthew’s Official (IB) World Literature Assignment 1: Descriptions of buildings in Dostoevsky’s <i>Crime and Punishment</i> and Garcia Marquez’s <i>Chronicle of a Death Foretold</i>					
	Reader & Text	Reader	Reader & Context	Context	Context & Text
Aligned	-	2	-	-	3
Misaligned	3	-	-	-	-

Here, the three instances of “misaligned” reliance on reader and text are all claims that are plausible but not fully explained or supported by textual evidence.

Matthew chose the creative option for his World Literature Assignment 2, an unconventional approach to literary analysis which invites creative writing but requires that it demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the texts. It must be accompanied by a statement of intent which clarifies the textual basis for the student’s creative endeavor, then validates the approach, or genre choice, and offers a brief abstract explaining what the creative piece is meant to do and how it achieves this purpose. The unusual nature of this assignment makes it difficult to compare to Matthew’s previous two essays detailed here, though it can be noted that the choice itself stems from a very reader-centered



perspective. Matthew was interested in the mysterious young reporter alluded to briefly in the court proceedings near the end of the novel and chose to write what he imagined the reporter would have written about the trial, juxtaposed by a portion of an article written by “the special correspondent for a Paris paper” (Camus 84) also present at the trial. The statement of intent and the creative piece itself demonstrate good knowledge of the text. In short, the approach itself is a fusion of the text and reader perspectives. Matthew demonstrated a keen awareness of the demands of his task in his statement of intent in noting that “As a reader of this book rather than a character in it, I will have a different opinion of Meursault because I have insight into what he is actually thinking. [...] I have to neglect what I already know about Meursault from the book [...] and really consider how Meursault would appear based on the little evidence presented at the trial.” While difficult to quantify, this demonstrates great awareness of the role that perspective plays in understanding any situation, as well as in interpreting literature.

Table 7 details the discernable references to different ways of knowing present in both the statement of intent and the creative piece itself.

Table 7: Matthew’s types of claims in Official (IB) World Literature Assignment 2

Matthew’s Official (IB) World Literature Assignment 2: The Young Reporter’s Article					
	Reader & Text	Reader	Reader & Context	Context	Context & Text
Aligned	1	2	-	-	2
Misaligned	-	1	-	-	-

Considered collectively, it appears as though Matthew’s reliance on ways of knowing beyond the text decreased with each assignment. However, the nature of the tasks and the topics selected are variables that must also be accounted for. The first essay lends

itself more to attending to both reader and text, the second more to focusing entirely on the text, and the third to a fusion of reader and text. Of the non-textual ways of knowing Matthew utilized in the three essays, 50% were misaligned with the criteria in the first essay, 60% were misaligned in the second essay, and 20% (one instance) was misaligned in the third assignment. It could be that Matthew's propensity toward personal response led him to select the creative option, and devise his particular approach, in the third assignment.

In the absence of having more of Matthew's work to examine, it becomes useful to explore how other students' work appeared and developed over the course of these three assignments.

### Sophie

Sophie was neither a quiet nor particularly vociferous participant in class. She did not seem reluctant to have her voice heard, though she did not consistently contribute. As her junior year English teacher agreed, she was very interested in the portrayal and treatment of women in literature (and in general), and many of her remarks in class and self-selected essay topics dealt with issues surrounding female characters in the novels.

While Sophie was reasonably quiet on the day the paradigm was introduced and applied to a passage in *The Stranger*, I know from her response to the question regarding what the survey revealed to her about how her perspectives about literature align with IB's that she perceived herself as somewhat aligned. She remarked, "I noticed that it was hard to distinguish my perspectives and those of IB. I think one big difference though is that I primarily view literature as entertainment and when I read books outside of school I don't analyze, I just enjoy the book and learn about the culture, etc."

Following the submission of her comparative essay on *Crime and Punishment* and *The Stranger*, the first essay examined in detail in the case study, Sophie made an appointment with me to discuss the scoring. Her comparison of the novels rested on her judgment of whether the protagonists' punishments were justified in her view, rather than examining what the texts or authors seemed to suggest about said punishments. She explained, on the verge of tears, that she did not understand my assessment of her writing since, in her view, whatever a person takes away from a book is accurate; a reader cannot be wrong, she argued, because they are explaining a perspective, and literary analysis is entirely subjective. Here, I invoked the paradigm to explain to her that while her approach might be welcomed by those who favor a more reader-centered approach, it does not fulfill the IB criteria, which might welcome the reader's personal response at some point in the essay but which call upon the student to know and understand the work – the text – more so than to explore their personal opinions.

Thus, while Sophie's practice World Literature Assignment 1 did refer often to the texts, it was with the aim of offering her opinions regarding events in the two novels, and therefore most of her claims are reader-centered, with little or no attention to technique, what the authors themselves may have been trying to achieve, or the relevance of the times and places in which the novels were set. Sophie went on to revise this essay but, given her workload, was not able to find the time to completely revamp her approach. The revised essay demonstrated an attempt to attend to technique and effect, though the thesis still remained focused on Sophie's opinions, using analysis of technique to offer more detailed explanations of how the texts affected her response.

Sophie's second essay – the official IB World Literature Assignment 1 – aimed to explore the objectification of women, particularly Sonia and Marie, in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Stranger*, respectively. A coding of her essay reveals that most of the claims are textually focused, though not all of the claims are accurate. The references to the texts are used sometimes to demonstrate how the authors revealed perspectives of women in their respective societies and more often to illustrate how women in these novels appear to be objectified according to Sophie's twenty-first century perspective as a young woman. The obstacle here was in Sophie's reasoning, since she focused foremost on what the protagonists' views of these significant female characters suggested about society, overlooking the greater context of the novels which confirms that the protagonists are both unusual specimens within their respective societies. Compared to her first essay, there is a stronger textual basis for her claims and more focus on the text. Here, her interest as a reader is used to inform how she approaches the text, and her conclusions, which focus on what this objectification of these women reveals about the authors' social commentaries, demonstrate a movement toward consideration of authorial and historical context.

Sophie's third essay – her official World Literature Assignment 2 – explored the roles of honor and religion in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. An important basis of the analysis is Sophie's view of the connection between honor and religion in the novel: "The importance of honor seems to be an aspect of Christianity, the dominant religion followed by the townspeople." She further validates this with the example of the murderers confessing to the priest immediately following the murder and claiming their innocence. Thus, while much of the essay relies on the text to demonstrate García Márquez's critique

of the Church, Sophie sees the code of honor as originating from the religion rather than seeing the Church permitting the fulfillment of the code. The distinction is small, but one implies the Church has caused Santiago Nasar's death, while the other criticizes the Church for allowing it to happen. This distinction is not resolved in the essay, and the essay wavers between discussing honor and religion, sometimes connecting them. In accordance with the paradigm, Sophie adopts a textual focus in the essay, with some challenges in narrowing that focus and understanding the text, with an ultimate aim of exploring how the text comments on an aspect of society. She concludes that the novel "suggests that expecting so much from ones' religion and community will get you nowhere and will most likely let you down," and that "the honor and pride of the community members takes precedence over rational judgment."

From start to finish, Sophie's essays began with a heavy emphasis on the reader's perspective and moved toward attempting to focus more on how the texts demonstrate certain attitudes and beliefs, and what this reveals about the societies in the novels, a seeming move toward consideration of authorial and historical context.

### Katherine

Katherine was particularly reticent in class, speaking very rarely unless working in a small group or called upon in the larger group. She missed class more than average and was frequently tardy, which may have affected her understanding of assignments and expectations, especially early on in the course. Her first essay of the year, written on *Crime and Punishment*, was preceded by a topic proposal which I approved but which she later abandoned in favor of an autobiographical reading of the novel, examining how various characters and events in *Crime and Punishment* mirrored people and events in

Dostoevsky's life. The topic was so unlike any I had seen an IB senior pursue in over three years teaching the course and the essay so well-written in the technical sense that I was compelled to research its originality, concerned that the paper may have been lifted from another source. While I eventually deemed it to be the original work of the student, given the nature of the task and the criteria, the essay did not score well.

At parent-teacher conferences, approximately one week after Katherine's paper was returned to her, I sat across from her parents who, despite their ability to access the details of Katherine's assignments and grades online, were shocked and angry to find that she had a C in the class. After discussing the possible natural consequences of Katherine's frequent tardiness and absences from class and the nature of assignments she had missed, at which point her parents were starting to turn in their seats and gather their belongings, I also remarked that she had struggled with the first essay. Mom and Dad quickly faced forward again, asked what mark she had received, and Dad began ranting about how they had discussed the essay in detail at dinner one night and he had shared with her his knowledge of Dostoevsky's life and work, encouraging her toward the topic she eventually pursued for the paper. Before I could respond, he continued to insist that Dostoevsky's childhood and experiences in prison clearly informed his writing and that, in fact, his experiences were so compelling that they were his inspiration for writing in the first place. Dad went on to ask how it was that an English teacher who had selected this book for the course could be so unaware of such facts and unappreciative of the historical significance of Dostoevsky's work. I used this as an opportunity to explain how, in the program, through both the Theory of Knowledge course and an epistemological approach to literature in the World Authors course, we address with

students different ways of knowing and that, while authorial intent and historical significance are valued in some schools of literary theory, IB looks for a particular kind of reading in the literature course. Katherine's thesis dealt more with historical significance than the art or themes of the novel. Though I was attempting to validate his view and go on to explain IB's perspective, I was unable to finish as he remarked, in slightly harsher words, that he had heard enough and promptly walked away, leaving Mom to lecture me about how Sophie was being "looked at" by a long list of prestigious schools and therefore I could not award her anything less than an A in the course, and we would need to meet with the IB director to resolve this issue.

So it was that Katherine began the course with a context-centered approach to the literature. The day after I spoke to her parents she scheduled a conference with me, at which time we discussed the nature of the topic, her reasons for deviating from her original proposal, and why the essay did not score well despite being well-written and well-researched. Katherine was very receptive to my explanation and, when asked, was able to articulate a range of topics more suitable to the task. She selected a new topic, completely rewrote the first essay, and went on to satisfactorily devise appropriate topics on future essays.

Katherine's next essay, her practice World Literature Assignment 1, explored how the protagonists' relationships with their "female counterparts" – Sonia in *Crime and Punishment* and Marie in *The Stranger* – affected and/or mirrored their character evolution. In comparison to her first essay, this topic is much more suitable for the nature of the assignment and criteria. She takes a more text-centered approach, making 18 claims about the text itself, as well as 3 reader-centered remarks, 7 reader- and text-

centered remarks, and 1 remark that links the text and its context. Most of the reader- and text-centered remarks are conclusions about whether the protagonists' lives are meaningful based on their relationships with Sonia and Marie based on general impressions rather than textual evidence demonstrating whether or not the protagonists or authors deal with the question of whether there is meaning in the protagonists' lives. She twice attempts to attend to her knower's perspective, mentioning "twenty-first century Americans" in the introduction and conclusion, and once makes a value judgment in the body of the essay when she remarks that Meursault and Marie's relationship "lacks true depth." Here, the approach to the essay is closer than her previous essay to fulfilling the demands of the assignment, though with the need for more textual verification of claims.

Katherine's subsequent essay – her official World Literature Assignment 1 – focuses on the "roles of mother figures in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and *The Stranger*" with the aim of demonstrating how they "help to portray the importance placed upon tradition within their respective societies." Much like Sophie's third essay (her World Literature Assignment 2), Katherine's topic stems from a personal response to the works – her interest in the roles of the mothers, even though this is not one of the more prominent aspects of the works – explores this interest through the texts, and aims to then draw conclusions about the societies based on the texts. Her approach uses her reader's perspective, sometimes noting "it can seem outrageous that such high importance is placed upon purity and chastity" or seeing the "societal traditions and expectations as severe," as well as attention to context, noting how characters' "devoutness serves as the backbone for their beliefs and traditions" as well as "the societal importance of ritual" and that "In all cultures, mothers play an important role in the development and growth of



their young.” In contrast to Sophie’s essay, Katherine’s claims about the novels are more grounded in clear textual understanding and evidence.

### *Findings from case studies*

In some cases, the topic itself determines what ways of knowing students rely on in these assignments, underscoring the role of the instructor in discussing students’ topic selections with them before they begin writing to confirm that the approach taken will align as best as possible with the assessment criteria. Where students feel compelled to make personal judgments, these are best dealt with in the essay’s conclusion, though personal *interest* may – perhaps *should* – inform initial topic selection. Claims about the texts must be fully explained and/or supported by textual evidence to verify they are centered on the text rather than the reader’s opinion or judgment.

In all three cases, students demonstrated an increasing ability to frame claims in manners appropriate to the tasks. Matthew’s evolution is the most difficult to gauge given the disparity between the types of assignments, and while his achievement was consistently higher against the criteria than the other two students in the study, he demonstrated less growth. Still, his gravitation toward the creative option might indicate a preference toward a style of response to literature and awareness that the creative option allows more personal response than does the traditional essay. Sophie still tended toward her perspectives about the novels, but managed to begin focusing more on the texts and their internal logic and artistry, attempting to move toward a sense of the literature as having a social purpose or function. Katherine completely reframed her approach after the first essay, gravitating a little too far toward a reader-centered approach but

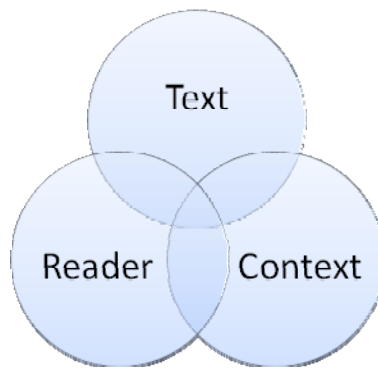
eventually finding herself pursuing a personal interest or insight, examining texts with the aim of elucidating what they reveal about human relationships and, potentially, the authors' viewpoints.

## CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The data demonstrate that students' understanding of IB tasks improved over the course of school year. This is not a surprising finding, as one would expect such understanding to improve. The study also revealed the complexity of categorizing the different theoretical approaches students make in analyzing literature. In the absence of being able to verify what role the paradigm and epistemological approach played in students' learning, given the many other contributing factors such as class discussion, teacher modeling, and essay feedback, and the perennial trend of students' increasing ability to satisfy the IB criteria regardless, I can only attest that the development of the paradigm has helped clarify instruction and move students toward higher levels of achievement earlier on in the school year. The experiences with Sophie and Katherine demonstrate the need for teachers to be able to articulate what kinds of responses to literature they are looking for and *why*, and in this case, the paradigm offered a way for me to validate these students' approaches while simultaneously steering them toward an approach that better aligned with IB's theoretical framework for literary analysis.

My extended absence, which spanned most of the third quarter of the school year, prevented me from being able to continue encouraging the epistemological approach to literature, and when I returned to the classroom in late March of 2010, I found students were eager to relocate the task of Paper 2, with its distinct set of criteria and for which they were then preparing, according to the language of the paradigm. Students were familiar with the Paper 2 criteria, had completed practice exams, and had read examples

of previous students' written exams, but in two classes, students initiated the question of whether the reader's role was still as significant since they would be answering an essay prompt rather than selecting their own topics for analysis on the assessment. This seemingly insignificant event indicated to me that, while I cannot claim that the paradigm is the best approach, it is a useful instructional tool, affording us the language and theory necessary to clarify how best to approach the literature. Following the study, I realized that the paradigm is better represented by a Venn diagram:



The visual representation of the potential areas of overlap among the three perspectives and invites students to spatially locate an interpretation in terms of what values inform it. This revision itself has numerous implications for classroom instruction and establishes a basis for further research improving on that reported in the current study.

Students' interest in the paradigm and related questions in class also suggest that IB students welcome a more metacognitive understanding of the tasks they are asked to complete in literature classrooms. Further research with different sets and greater numbers of students, in other IB classes, other programs, and at other levels is needed to begin exploring the value and effectiveness of an epistemological approach. More generally, while there exists an ongoing *discussion* of the place of theory in literature

classrooms, from junior high and middle school on up through undergraduate courses, with forerunners like Deborah Appleman systematically studying their practice, more research on the effects of addressing theoretical issues in the literature classroom is needed to verify for would-be critics that students thrive and tension decreases when students understand *why* they are asked to respond to literature in various ways.

Stemming from this study is also the question of the disparity between students' perspectives about where meaning derives compared to IB's perspectives. This raises the question of whether we aim to persuade students that literature ought to be studied in a certain way. Is it the role of the English teacher to encourage students to read more and enjoy literature, or to better understand it? What does understanding look like, and who decides? Do we mean to teach literature for the sake of enjoyment, appreciation of an art form, or as a platform for cultural studies? As Hillocks' research demonstrated decades ago, and as the ongoing "conflicts" (Graff) suggest, there is a wide range of answers and approaches to dealing with these questions. At the very least, we can begin to ease the age-old tension in the literature classroom by clarifying for students what our objectives are as individual teachers and educating them regarding others' possible stances and approaches such that students are capable of moving from one teacher with some language with which to communicate and verify the expectations in a given course and the rationale behind them.

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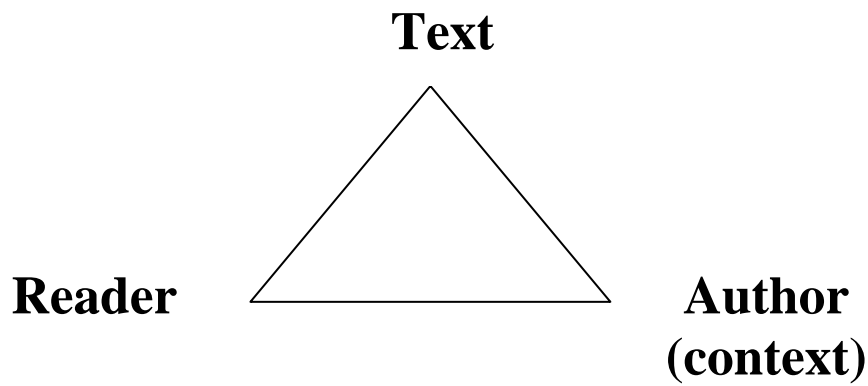
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## APPENDIX A



*A reader-centered* reading holds that:

- Meaning exists only through the reading experience—meaning is constructed only through the experience the reader has with the text
  - The tree does not make a sound if no one is around to hear it fall!
- The text has no definite meaning or value; its meaning is determined by what the reader brings to the text and concludes because of it
- Readers belong to “interpretive communities,” shaped by common experiences and backgrounds; groups of readers may agree upon some elements as having more significance than others
- The “quality” of the text or its effects is judged according to the reader’s, or interpretive community’s, values

Limitations:

- Can be extrapolated to suggest that any reading of a text is valid (subjectivity)
- Does not view the author or historical context as necessary or necessarily relevant

*A text-centered* reading holds that:

- Meaning is constructed entirely within the text; a good reader can objectively analyze the function or purpose of a text by examining what it says
  - The tree reverberates vibrantly even in the midst of utter desolation
- To best understand a text, we must closely examine its structure and craft (attention to narrative style, word choice, archetypes, etc.)
- Biographical/historical fallacy: The author’s background and the historical context of the work are irrelevant and should *not* be considered in shaping an interpretation of the text
- Intentional fallacy (“the death of the author”): The author’s intended meaning—even if it is verifiable through an outside source (the author’s journals, interviews, statements about the work)—is not relevant. Once the text is “born,” it becomes an entirely separate entity that belongs to the world of meaning and cannot be shaped by external or biographical forces
- Affective fallacy: see “reader-centered” reading—exposes the subjectivity of reader response and the related problem of emotional relativism

*An author-centered* reading holds that:

- Meaning is created by the author; the author’s background and historical context affect how the work is read and understood
  - The tree must exist before it can fall, and its fate—whether it falls—is in the hands of its creator
- The author’s intentions are relevant to understanding the text, and readers should look to the text to discern this possible intention
- The context of the work—its audience, original language, timing—must be considered

Limitations:

- Authors do not always provide us with declarations of their intentions; some would argue that art fails when it has to be explained
- In the absence of definitive evidence of authorial intent, how can the author’s purpose be determined?
- Readers sometimes mistakenly read the text as a reflection of the author or time period

## APPENDIX B

## World Literature Assignment

### A: Selection of the Aspect and its Treatment

*The achievement level for this criterion is determined primarily by the treatment of ideas, not the selection of the aspect.*

- *How well has the candidate defined the aspect chosen?*
- *How appropriate is the aspect chosen to the assignment?*
- *How well has the aspect chosen been explored in relation to the assignment?*
- *To what extent has the candidate expressed a relevant personal response?*

#### Achievement Level

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | The candidate has not reached level 1.  |
| 1 | <p><b>Little attempt to define the aspect chosen; the treatment of ideas is generally inappropriate to the assignment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the aspect chosen is generally not appropriate to the assignment</li> <li>• the aspect chosen has little focus</li> <li>• the treatment of ideas is generally not relevant to the aspect chosen or</li> <li>• the assignment consists mainly of paraphrase.</li> </ul> |
| 2 | <p><b>Attempt to define the aspect chosen; the treatment of ideas is to some extent appropriate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the aspect chosen is to some extent appropriate to the assignment</li> <li>• the aspect chosen has focus, but it is too wide</li> <li>• the treatment of ideas is sometimes not relevant to the aspect chosen or</li> <li>• the assignment consists in part of paraphrase.</li> </ul>        |
| 3 | <p><b>The aspect is defined and followed by a generally appropriate treatment of ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the aspect chosen is appropriate to the assignment</li> <li>• the aspect chosen has a specific and generally relevant focus</li> <li>• the treatment of ideas is relevant to the aspect chosen, and includes a personal response to the work(s).</li> </ul>   |
| 4 | <p><b>Clearly defined aspect followed by an appropriate treatment of ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the aspect chosen is appropriate to the assignment</li> <li>• the aspect chosen has a specific and relevant focus</li> <li>• the ideas show independence of thought and their treatment is relevant to the aspect chosen.</li> </ul>  |
| 5 | <p><b>Clearly defined aspect followed by a highly appropriate treatment of ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the aspect chosen is highly appropriate to the assignment</li> <li>• the aspect chosen has a specific and relevant focus</li> <li>• the ideas show independence of thought and their treatment is highly relevant to the aspect chosen.</li> </ul>  |

## World Literature Assignment

### B: Knowledge and Understanding of Work(s)

- *How well does the candidate know the work(s) studied?*
- *How much understanding has the candidate shown of the work(s) studied in relation to the assignment?*
- *To what extent does the candidate appreciate the cultural setting relevant to the assignment, where appropriate?*

#### Achievement Level

- 0 The candidate has not reached level 1.
- 1 **Little understanding of the work(s) studied**
- knowledge but little understanding of the aspects of the work(s) most relevant to the assignment
  - a few links between works, where appropriate
  - little appreciation of the cultural setting relevant to the assignment, where appropriate.
- 2 **Some understanding of the work(s) studied**
- knowledge and some understanding of the aspects of the work(s) most relevant to the assignment
  - a link between the works, where appropriate
  - some appreciation of the cultural setting relevant to the assignment, where appropriate.
- 3 **Adequate understanding of the work(s) studied**
- knowledge and satisfactory understanding of the aspects of the work(s) most relevant to the assignment
  - meaningful linking of works, where appropriate
  - appreciation of the cultural setting relevant to the assignment, where appropriate.
- 4 **Good understanding of the work(s) studied**
- detailed knowledge of, and good insight into, the aspects of the work(s) most relevant to the assignment
  - clear and meaningful linking of works, where appropriate
  - good appreciation of the cultural setting relevant to the assignment, where appropriate.
- 5 **Excellent understanding of the work(s) studied**
- in-depth knowledge of, and very good insight into, the aspects of the work(s) most relevant to the assignment
  - meaningful and perceptive linking of works, where appropriate
  - excellent appreciation of the cultural setting relevant to the assignment, where appropriate.



## World Literature Assignment

### C: Presentation

*Levels 3-5 are awarded only to candidates who have remained **within** the prescribed word-limit.*

- *How effectively has the candidate presented the assignment?*
- *How precise and relevant are the candidate's references?*
- *How detailed and meaningful is the statement of intent provided, where appropriate?*
- *Has the candidate remained within the prescribed word-limit?*

#### Achievement Level

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>0</b> | The candidate has not reached level 1.   |
| <b>1</b> | <b>The formal structure and/or development of ideas are generally not effective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• little evidence of a structure to the assignment selected</li> <li>• a few references to the work(s), but they are generally not pertinent to the assignment</li> <li>• where appropriate, the statement of intent provides few details about the aims of the assignment.</li> </ul>            |
| <b>2</b> | <b>The formal structure and/or development of ideas are to some extent effective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence of a structure to the assignment</li> <li>• references are occasionally to the point</li> <li>• where appropriate, the statement of intent includes a few details about the aims of the assignment.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>The formal structure and/or development of ideas are effective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adequate structure to the assignment</li> <li>• references are generally to the point</li> <li>• where appropriate, the presentation of aims in the statement of intent is generally clear and includes some details</li> <li>• the candidate has remained within the prescribed word-limit.</li> </ul>       |
| <b>4</b> | <b>The formal structure and/or development of ideas are very effective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear and logical structure to the assignment</li> <li>• precise and pertinent references to the work(s)</li> <li>• where appropriate, the statement of intent is clear, detailed and relevant</li> <li>• the candidate has remained within the prescribed word-limit.</li> </ul>                        |
| <b>5</b> | <b>The formal structure and/or development of ideas are highly effective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purposeful and effective structure to the assignment</li> <li>• precise and highly pertinent references to the work(s)</li> <li>• where appropriate, the statement of intent is clear, detailed and highly relevant</li> <li>• the candidate has remained within the prescribed word-limit.</li> </ul> |

## World Literature Assignment

### D: Language

- *How clear is the candidate's written expression?*
- *How well has the candidate observed the conventions of written work?*  
(The conventions of written work relate to elements such as paragraphing, grammar, spelling, citation of references.)
- *How appropriate is the register selected by the candidate for the particular assignment?*  
(Register refers, in this context, to the candidate's sensitivity to elements such as the vocabulary, tone, sentence structure and idiom appropriate to the task.)

#### Achievement Level

- 0** The candidate has not reached level 1.
- 1** **Little use of appropriate language**
- generally inappropriate register for the assignment selected
  - frequent lapses in the conventions of written work.
- 2** **Some use of appropriate language**
- generally appropriate register for the assignment selected
  - some lapses in the conventions of written work
  - some consistency or clarity of expression.
- 3** **Adequate use of appropriate language**
- appropriate register for the assignment selected
  - the conventions of written work are generally followed
  - consistency and some clarity of expression.
- 4** **Good use of appropriate language**
- the register is effective and appropriate for the assignment selected
  - the conventions of written work are closely followed
  - clarity, consistency and general fluency of expression.
- 5** **Excellent use of appropriate language**
- the register is highly effective and appropriate for the assignment selected
  - careful attention is given to the conventions of written work
  - clarity, consistency and fluency of style.

## APPENDIX C

[August 2009]

Dear students,

In the interest of continually improving classroom instruction, I will be embarking on a study of our learning this semester (the fall of 2009) in IB World Authors II. This study will be the subject of my master's thesis for Colorado State University (I am currently a student there seeking a master's degree in English Education) and will be overseen by my CSU advisor, Louann Reid, who is a professor in the English Department at CSU.

I am specifically going to be studying your understanding of the way we make meaning from texts or, in other words, how we know what we know about literature. If this wording sounds familiar to Theory of Knowledge, it is! We will be taking a more epistemological approach to literature this semester in hopes of increasing our awareness of how interpretations can be formed and what kinds of interpretation IB is looking for.

I would like you to know that the course is not being altered for the purpose of the study; I am interested in closely examining what happens in the normal course of classroom instruction and learning. You will be completing assignments, including questionnaires, and participating in activities and discussions that relate to my research focus, all of which are part of the course itself and would take place regardless of the study being conducted. The questionnaires, which will be administered near the beginning and end of the semester, are designed to gauge your thoughts about how we know what we know about literature, your understanding of how IB is asking you to read and interpret literature, and how your ideas compare to what IB values. I am interested in your genuine thoughts and perspectives and want you to know that there are no right or wrong answers, and how you respond on these questionnaires will have no effect on your performance in the class.

Agreeing to participate in this study means that you are giving me permission to consider your written work and contributions in class conversations as part of my analysis. If I decide to write about something you have said or written, I will protect your identity by either not using your real name (assigning a pseudonym) or referring to your ideas in general terms.

Granting or declining permission for me to study your work and classroom contributions will not affect your grade in any way. You will not be rewarded for participating or penalized for not participating. Either you or your parent/guardian may decline permission. If you agree to participate and then change your mind, you may withdraw your assent at any time by writing and signing a note to me indicating that I no longer have permission to study your work or contributions to class. If you decline permission, you will still be expected to participate in activities and complete assignments as they are part of the course and would be conducted even if I weren't conducting this research.

It is my hope that this formalized study and reflection might have a positive impact on your, and future students', quality of instruction in IB World Authors II. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [thunt@psdschools.org](mailto:thunt@psdschools.org) or at (970) 488-6083, or contact my university advisor, Louann Reid, at [Louann.Reid@colostate.edu](mailto:Louann.Reid@colostate.edu) or at (970) 491-5264.

I will also be asking your parents for their consent for you to participate in this. If you are okay with me including your work and classroom contributions in my study, please sign and date below.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

## **Consent to Participate in a Research Study Colorado State University**

**TITLE OF STUDY:** An Epistemological Approach to Literature: Creating a Paradigm for Literary Study in International Baccalaureate Language A1 Courses

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Louann Reid, CSU Department of English, Eddy Building, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1773; PH: 970.491.5264; E-MAIL: Louann.Reid@colostate.edu

**CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Tiffany Hunt, Language Arts Teacher, Poudre High School, 201 Impala Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80521; PH: 970.488.6083; Email: thunt@psdschools.org

**WHY IS MY CHILD BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?** I am asking if your child may participate in a formal study I am conducting of approaches to analyzing literature in IB World Authors II. As a student in this course, your child might (with your consent) be part of this study.

**WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?** I, Tiffany Hunt, the course instructor for IB World Authors II, am conducting this study. I am a student at Colorado State University, and this study will be the basis of my master's thesis; I am seeking a master's degree in English Education. The study is being monitored by my university supervisor, Louann Reid.

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?** The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of using an approach to reading and analyzing literature that teaches students to understand where meaning comes from. The data collected to this end will be analyzed and used to inform my instruction throughout the school year and in subsequent International Baccalaureate classes. Depending on what I learn, I may modify instruction to better prepare students for IB exams and/or to increase students' understanding of ways to approach literary works.

**WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?** I will be studying my and students' work and conversations in IB World Authors II. All aspects of the study will be completed in the classroom during normal classroom hours. All observations will be of routine class practices; the course will not be altered to facilitate the study. The study will take place during the fall semester, concluding in December.

**WHAT WILL MY CHILD BE ASKED TO DO?** Your child will be asked to complete assignments and participate in discussions as s/he would be asked to do whether or not the study was taking place. The study is of routine instructional practices. The classroom work that is related to this study includes student questionnaires at the beginning and end of the semester, participation in reading and responding activities, students' reflections on their interpretations of the texts (as evident in homework assignments, essay cover letters, or essays), and general class discussions. The questionnaires, which will be administered near the beginning and end of the semester, are designed to gauge students' thoughts about how we know what we know about literature, their understanding of how IB is asking them to read and interpret literature, and how their ideas compare to what IB values. I am interested in their genuine thoughts and perspectives; there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to these questions, and the content of students' responses will not affect their performance in the class.

**ARE THERE REASONS WHY MY CHILD SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There are no known reasons not to participate.

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

- One potential risk of participating in this study is the possible loss of confidentiality. This risk is minimized by my practice of using pseudonyms (a name other than your child's given name) if I quote

your child's remarks or responses. I will not use your child's actual name in discussing or writing about this study.

- It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but I have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

**ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?** There are no known benefits to your child for taking part in this study. The aim of the study is to improve classroom practices so that students might perform better on the IB exams, but this is only a *hoped-for* outcome and in no way a guarantee.

**DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?** Your child's participation in this research is voluntary. If your child decides to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I OR MY CHILD GIVE?**

I and the principal investigator, Louann Reid, will see this information. We will keep private all research records that identify your child, to the extent allowed by law.

Your child's information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When I write about the study to share it with other researchers, I will write about the combined information I have gathered. Your child will not be identified in these written materials. I may publish the results of this study; however, I will keep your child's name and other identifying information private.

I will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that your child gave us information, or what that information is. For example, your child's name will be kept separate from your child's research records and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key.

**CAN MY CHILD'S TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?** Your child's participation in the study will not end early unless at your request.

**WILL I OR MY CHILD RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?** Neither you nor your child will be compensated for participating in this study.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD IS INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH?** The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

**WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?**

Before you decide whether to allow your child to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the principal investigator, **Louann Reid**, at **(970) 491-5264**. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

*"This consent form was approved by the CSU Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on (Approval Date)."*

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tiffany Hunt

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Staff

Parent or guardian permission is required for students' participation in this study:

PARENTAL SIGNATURE

As parent or guardian I authorize \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) to become a participant for the described research. The nature and general purpose of the project have been satisfactorily explained to me by Tiffany Hunt and I am satisfied that proper precautions will be observed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's date of birth

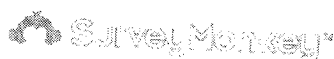
\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## APPENDIX E



You have a **BASIC** account | To remove the limits of a BASIC account and get unlimited questions, upgrade now!

## How Literature is Read and Understood: Personal Perspective, Period 1 Edit

Default Report

+ Add Report

### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 31  
Total Completed Survey: 31 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment. <input type="text"/>	90.3%	28
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate. <input type="text"/>	19.4%	6
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others. <input type="text"/>	35.5%	11
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities. <input type="text"/>	45.2%	14
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft. <input type="text"/>	6.5%	2
We read literature to learn about other cultures. <input type="text"/>	12.9%	4
We read literature to better understand history. <input type="text"/>	22.6%	7
Show replies Other (please explain) <input type="text"/>	12.9%	4
answered question		31
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself. <input type="text"/>	35.5%	11
Meaning is determined by the author. <input type="text"/>	45.2%	14
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place). <input type="text"/>	25.8%	8
Meaning is determined by the reader. <input type="text"/>	87.1%	27
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

	Create Chart	Download
	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text. <input type="text"/>	29.0%	9
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge. <input type="text"/>	48.4%	15
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it. <input type="text"/>	9.7%	3
No: the text should be able to speak for itself. <input type="text"/>	6.5%	2
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Show replies    Other (please explain) <input type="text"/>	6.5%	2
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

	Create Chart	Download
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written. <input type="text"/>	12.9%	4
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text. <input type="text"/>	71.0%	22
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent. <input type="text"/>	16.1%	5
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

	Create Chart	Download
	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader. <input type="text"/>	12.9%	4
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it. <input type="text"/>	71.0%	22
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text. <input type="text"/>	16.1%	5
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?


	Create Chart	Download
	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader. <input type="text"/>	25.8%	8
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text. <input type="text"/>	61.3%	19
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood <input type="text"/>	12.9%	4
Hide replies Comments (optional)		3
1. It helps to be able to validate opinions by the text, but an opinion can be based solely on memory and experience of the individual and have an unexplainable significance.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:56 AM	Find...
2. Depends on the type of text. Scientific text leave little room for interpretation, but in other areas differing interpretations are more equal.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:54 AM	Find...
3. Sometimes it seems like a text is written to be interpreted in whatever which way and then it doesn't matter.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:52 AM	Find...
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?

	Create Chart	Download
	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined. <input type="text"/>	29.0%	9
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) inform the interpretation. <input type="text"/>	19.4%	6
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft. <input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="text"/>	6.5%	2
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period. <input type="text"/>	12.9%	4
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="text"/>	32.3%	10
answered question		31
skipped question		0

8. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

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		Response Count
	 Hide replies	4
1. I think that the answer to number 7 is all of them. we use everything we have, everything our teachers have offered us, our thoughts/emotions, our knower's perspective, what we know about the author, the languag and craft. All of this is used when we are detirmining the meaning of the text.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:56 AM	Find...
2. It is essential for us to learn something important from every piece of literature that we read. If we get nothing out of a book, even with adequate analysis, we are either reading a very bad book or looking at the book in the wrong context.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:54 AM	Find...
3. It's difficult to separate what I think of literature from what IB thinks of literature from looking at texts through IB perspectives for so long.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:54 AM	Find...
4. The thing about authorial intent is that it doesn't necessarily have to be considered in our interpretation, but I think that authorial intent somewhat matters although personal interpretations are as equally or even more important.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:54 AM	Find...
answered question		4
skipped question		27



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## How Literature is Read and Understood: Personal Perspective Edit

Default Report

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### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 21  
Total Completed Survey: 21 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment. <input type="text"/>	85.7%	18
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate. <input type="text"/>	14.3%	3
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others. <input type="text"/>	42.9%	9
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities. <input type="text"/>	66.7%	14
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft. <input type="text"/>	14.3%	3
We read literature to learn about other cultures. <input type="text"/>	52.4%	11
We read literature to better understand history. <input type="text"/>	33.3%	7
Other (please explain) <input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
answered question		21
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself. <input type="text"/>	52.4%	11
Meaning is determined by the author. <input type="text"/>	14.3%	3
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place). <input type="text"/>	33.3%	7
Meaning is determined by the reader. <input type="text"/>	90.5%	19
answered question		21
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	23.8%	5
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/>	71.4%	15
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
No: the text should be able to speak for itself. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
Show replies <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	4.8%	1
answered question		21
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.8%	1
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text. <input type="checkbox"/>	47.6%	10
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent. <input type="checkbox"/>	47.6%	10
answered question		21
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	28.6%	6
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	66.7%	14
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.8%	1
answered question		21
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	23.8%	5
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	71.4%	15
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood <input type="checkbox"/>	4.8%	1
Hide replies Comments (optional)		2
1. but also each readers understanding is different, and that understanding could be wrong for someone else	Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:20 AM	Find...
2. A reader's interpretation can differ from the author's original intent, but this doesn't necessarily render it invalid.	Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:19 AM	Find...
answered question		21
skipped question		0

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?

Create Chart


Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined. <input type="checkbox"/>	33.3%	7
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) inform the interpretation. <input type="checkbox"/>	14.3%	3
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	9.5%	2
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.8%	1
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	19.0%	4
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	19.0%	4
answered question		21
skipped question		0



8. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

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		Response Count
 Hide replies		
6		
1. All of the possible answers in this survey are completely valid. For example, even though I myself "know what a text means" based on what I feel and experience on an individual level, I acknowledge that other ways of perception and understanding are there. Someone else may need the context of the author's life, or they may need to analyse the text to a large extent. The responses I've given are not meant as a kind of blanket statement for how literature should be read, but rather my own interpretation of the topic.	Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:23 AM	Find...
2. I understand that a lot of factors (like the historical context and authorial intent) should be considered when interpreting the text, but I also strongly believe that the interpretation of a text should be left to the reader even if there is not enough textual support because it is how a reader feels.	Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:22 AM	Find...
3. While I do take into account what the author may be trying to communicate, I primarily take into account my initial responses to the text and formulate my own meaning from it all.	Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:21 AM	Find...
4. While there is no doubt that we gain meaning from the text, and extract significance from the text, what that meaning and significance is is determined primarily by the reader, and how he or she understands the text.	Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:20 AM	Find...
5. I think that meaning is primarily created by the reader, but in most cases the text contains some meaning as well, and that must be accurately interpreted by the reader and then compared with the readers personal insight.	Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:20 AM	Find...
6. To me a lot of the meaning of literature is how the readers interprets it based on previous knowledge and experiences but that doesn't always mean that the reader fully understands the text or literature.	Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:20 AM	Find...
answered question		6
skipped question		15



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## How Literature is Read and Understood: Personal Perspective, Period 3 Edit

Default Report

+ Add Report

### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 27  
Total Completed Survey: 27 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment.	74.1%	20
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate.	14.8%	4
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others.	51.9%	14
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities.	55.6%	15
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft.	11.1%	3
We read literature to learn about other cultures.	33.3%	9
We read literature to better understand history.	14.8%	4
Show replies    Other (please explain)	3.7%	1
answered question		27
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself.	44.4%	12
Meaning is determined by the author.	55.6%	15
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place).	33.3%	9
Meaning is determined by the reader.	88.9%	24
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	11.1%	3
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/>	88.9%	24
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
No: the text should be able to speak for itself. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written. <input type="checkbox"/>	7.4%	2
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text. <input type="checkbox"/>	85.2%	23
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent. <input type="checkbox"/>	7.4%	2
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	18.5%	5
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	74.1%	20
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	7.4%	2
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader. <input type="text"/>	18.5%	5
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text. <input type="text"/>	81.5%	22
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood	0.0%	0
Hide replies Comments (optional)		1

1. There are some times when a reader does not have enough worldly experience to understand allusions or extended metaphors in the text so the meaning can be completely misunderstood. However, I believe that interpretations are right if they are supported by the text.

Wed, Oct 14, 2009 9:51 AM

Find...

answered question

27

skipped question

0

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?

Create Chart

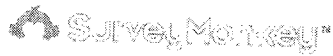
Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined. <input type="text"/>	14.8%	4
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) inform the interpretation. <input type="text"/>	22.2%	6
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft.	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="text"/>	11.1%	3
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period. <input type="text"/>	29.6%	8
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="text"/>	22.2%	6
answered question		27
skipped question		0

8. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

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	Response Count
<div><div><div><div></div><div>Hide replies</div></div></div><div><div>1. I often struggle with the question of authorial intent: Did the author actually put this as a literary device or am I reading too much into it? I think that good authors consciencely put literary devices in their works so it is important to analyze these devices, but one must be careful not to overanalyze every single sentence and word because sometimes they function simply to move the plot along. I also think that it depends on the each particular text in deteriming whether background information about the author's culture and time period are relevant and it was difficult to generalize for that question.</div><div>2. I don't really feel like there is anything else to add, except that I think that reading for meaning and entertainment are two different things and that people look for different sources of meaning based on the intent of the reading. If a reader is reading for entertainment, then personal meaning can stand alone despite what the author intends.</div></div></div> <div><div>answered question</div><div>skipped question</div></div>	<div>2</div> <div>2</div> <div>25</div>



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## How Literature is Read and Understood: IB Perspective, Period 1 Edit

Default Report + Add Report

### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 31  
Total Completed Survey: 31 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment.	0.0%	0
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate.	38.7%	12
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others.	35.5%	11
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities.	0.0%	0
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft.	93.5%	29
We read literature to learn about other cultures.	61.3%	19
We read literature to better understand history.	22.6%	7
Other (please explain)	0.0%	0
answered question		31
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself.	54.8%	17
Meaning is determined by the author.	35.5%	11
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place).	45.2%	14
Meaning is determined by the reader.	67.7%	21
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	54.8%	17
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/>	29.0%	9
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	9.7%	3
No: the text should be able to speak for itself. <input type="checkbox"/>	6.5%	2
Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written. <input type="checkbox"/>	12.9%	4
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text. <input type="checkbox"/>	48.4%	15
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent. <input type="checkbox"/>	38.7%	12
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	9.7%	3
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	67.7%	21
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	22.6%	7
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?

Create Chart

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	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader.	0.0%	0
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text.	93.5%	29
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood.	6.5%	2
Hide replies		3
Comments (optional)		
1. In IB you really have to support any differing perspectives with textual evidence. (Not just a little text.)	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:59 AM	Find...
2. A lens of reader-response is a valid piece of the IB curriculum, but every bit of analysis must relate to the text in some shape or form.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:58 AM	Find...
3. I don't think a reader's interpretation can be wrong, but if there is a whole chapter about Religion or something and they interpret it as flying rabbits saving the world...then that should be considered wrong (for example).	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:57 AM	Find...
answered question		31
skipped question		0

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined.	3.2%	1
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) informs the interpretation.	19.4%	6
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft.	16.1%	5
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	38.7%	12
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period.	6.5%	2
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	16.1%	5
answered question		31
skipped question		0




8. How have you come to this understanding of how IB asks you to read texts? (Check all that apply.)

[Create Chart](#)
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	Response Percent	Response Count
Through classroom instruction (what teachers have directly told me) <input type="checkbox"/>	93.5%	29
Through IB Assessment Criteria (rubrics) <input type="checkbox"/>	58.1%	18
Through essay feedback <input type="checkbox"/>	64.5%	20
Through trial-and-error on assignments <input type="checkbox"/>	38.7%	12
Through trial-and-error in classroom discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	32.3%	10
I am unsure how IB asks me to read texts. <input type="checkbox"/>	6.5%	2
Show replies Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	9.7%	3
answered question		31
skipped question		0

9. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

[Download](#)

		Response Count
	4	
	 Hide replies	5
1. i sort of rushed through this	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 8:03 AM	Find...
2. I rushed through this survey. Sorry!	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 8:02 AM	Find...
3. I feel that IB allows us to make our own interpretations of the text as long as our interpretation falls under a general category that they want us to focus on.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:59 AM	Find...
4. In this survey I basically answered according to the New Critical perspective, although we are taught more than one perspective for reading. It seems like this is most prominent in IB, but that could just be Mr. Hlawaty.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:57 AM	Find...
5. I'm confused as to why we're not allowed to look at all at authorial intent in IB... I know it's not allowed, but I've never understood why. Maybe this should be clarified at some point?	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 7:56 AM	Find...
answered question		5
skipped question		26



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## How Literature is Read and Understood: IB Perspective Edit

Default Report

+ Add Report

### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 18  
Total Completed Survey: 18 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment. <input type="checkbox"/>	11.1%	2
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate. <input type="checkbox"/>	44.4%	8
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others. <input type="checkbox"/>	22.2%	4
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities. <input type="checkbox"/>	5.6%	1
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft. <input type="checkbox"/>	100.0%	18
We read literature to learn about other cultures. <input type="checkbox"/>	72.2%	13
We read literature to better understand history. <input type="checkbox"/>	27.8%	5
Show replies Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	5.6%	1
answered question		18
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself. <input type="checkbox"/>	50.0%	9
Meaning is determined by the author. <input type="checkbox"/>	22.2%	4
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place). <input type="checkbox"/>	50.0%	9
Meaning is determined by the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	61.1%	11
answered question		18
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text.	66.7%	12
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge.	27.8%	5
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it.	5.6%	1
No: the text should be able to speak for itself.	0.0%	0
Other (please explain)	0.0%	0
answered question		18
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written.	22.2%	4
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text.	33.3%	6
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent.	44.4%	8
answered question		18
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader.	16.7%	3
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it.	44.4%	8
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text.	38.9%	7
answered question		18
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	27.8%	5
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	66.7%	12
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood. <input type="checkbox"/>	5.6%	1
Hide replies Comments (optional)		3

1. It would be excessively stringent for IB to determine a single meaning for a text and expect all students to interpret the work in a same way. Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:26 AM Find...
2. If the reader cannot support his or her opinion using the text then the can be making to big of a stretch therefore it is more likely to be incorrect. Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:24 AM Find...
3. IB seems to have set things that are right and wrong even when it seems like there shouldnt be a right answer Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:24 AM Find...

answered question 18  
skipped question 0

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?


Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) informs the interpretation. <input type="checkbox"/>	5.6%	1
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	33.3%	6
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	5.6%	1
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	55.6%	10
answered question		18
skipped question		0


8. How have you come to this understanding of how IB asks you to read texts? (Check all that apply.)

[Create Chart](#)
[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Through classroom instruction (what teachers have directly told me)	88.9%	16
Through IB Assessment Criteria (rubrics)	88.9%	16
Through essay feedback	50.0%	9
Through trial-and-error on assignments	38.9%	7
Through trial-and-error in classroom discussion	55.6%	10
I am unsure how IB asks me to read texts.	5.6%	1
 Show replies		
Other (please specify)	11.1%	2
answered question		18
skipped question		0

9. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

[Download](#)

	Response Count
 Hide replies	1
1. I am not sure anymore of the difference between my personal opinion and IB's opinion. I think because I have become used to IB they are pretty much the same. Thu, Oct 8, 2009 9:25 AM Find...	
answered question	1
skipped question	17



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## How Literature is Read and Understood: IB Perspective, Period 3 Edit

Default Report

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### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 27  
Total Completed Survey: 27 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment.	0.0%	0
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate.	48.1%	13
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others.	44.4%	12
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities.	14.8%	4
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft.	74.1%	20
We read literature to learn about other cultures.	81.5%	22
We read literature to better understand history.	22.2%	6
Other (please explain)	0.0%	0
answered question		27
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself.	59.3%	16
Meaning is determined by the author.	48.1%	13
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place).	63.0%	17
Meaning is determined by the reader.	55.6%	15
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text.	66.7%	18
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge.	29.6%	8
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it.	3.7%	1
No: the text should be able to speak for itself.	0.0%	0
Other (please explain)	0.0%	0
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written.	33.3%	9
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text.	37.0%	10
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent.	29.6%	8
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader.	3.7%	1
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it.	70.4%	19
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text.	25.9%	7
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	7.4%	2
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	81.5%	22
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood. <input type="checkbox"/>	11.1%	3
Hide replies Comments (optional)		1

## 1. Often one interpretation of the text is presented as the only interpretation

Wed, Oct 14, 2009 9:46 AM

Find...

answered question

27

skipped question

0

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined. <input type="checkbox"/>	3.7%	1
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) informs the interpretation. <input type="checkbox"/>	7.4%	2
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft. <input type="checkbox"/>	14.8%	4
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	22.2%	6
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	51.9%	14
answered question		27
skipped question		0



8. How have you come to this understanding of how IB asks you to read texts? (Check all that apply.)

[Create Chart](#)
[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Through classroom instruction (what teachers have directly told me)	96.3%	26
Through IB Assessment Criteria (rubrics)	70.4%	19
Through essay feedback	48.1%	13
Through trial-and-error on assignments	37.0%	10
Through trial-and-error in classroom discussion	44.4%	12
I am unsure how IB asks me to read texts.	11.1%	3
Show replies    Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	3.7%	1
answered question		27
skipped question		0

9. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

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	Response Count
Hide replies	3
1. I remember learning about the two main literary schools of thought concerning authorial intent and relevance of culture and time period. In my classes we have look at text standing alone and text in context, so I think IB wants a little bit of both, but not to wander too far from the text itself.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 9:56 AM Find...
2. I would assume that justification is the most important thing in stating the meaning of a text, but all aspects of the text should be considered, but what do we do when our interpretation opposes that of the author? I am not very sure about this. Perhaps it just means that we need more information about the text.	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 9:55 AM Find...
3. If IB explained this to us completely, we'd all have a better understanding of how to score really well on the essays	Wed, Oct 14, 2009 9:48 AM Find...
answered question	3
skipped question	24



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## Period 1 Spring 2010 - How Literature is Read and Understood: Personal Perspective Edit

Default Report

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### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 27  
Total Completed Survey: 27 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment.	81.5%	22
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate.	22.2%	6
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others.	66.7%	18
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities.	37.0%	10
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft.	18.5%	5
We read literature to learn about other cultures.	40.7%	11
We read literature to better understand history.	25.9%	7
Show replies Other (please explain)	11.1%	3
answered question		27
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself.	55.6%	15
Meaning is determined by the author.	59.3%	16
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place).	48.1%	13
Meaning is determined by the reader.	70.4%	19
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text.	33.3%	9
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge.	63.0%	17
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it.	3.7%	1
No: the text should be able to speak for itself.	0.0%	0
Other (please explain)	0.0%	0
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written.	18.5%	5
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text.	70.4%	19
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent.	11.1%	3
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader.	7.4%	2
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it.	77.8%	21
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text.	14.8%	4
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?

Create Chart

Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader.	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.7%	1
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	81.5%	22
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood	<input type="checkbox"/>	14.8%	4
Hide replies Comments (optional)			2
1. This is only on certain occasions. If it says something explicitly it's not up for interpretation.		Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:13 AM	Find...
2. I think this depends on where the meaning is being used (i.e academically or personally)		Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:12 AM	Find...
answered question			27
skipped question			0

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?


Create Chart

Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined.	<input type="checkbox"/>	18.5%	5
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) inform the interpretation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	14.8%	4
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft.	<input type="checkbox"/>	7.4%	2
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	<input type="checkbox"/>	14.8%	4
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.7%	1
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period.		0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	<input type="checkbox"/>	40.7%	11
answered question			27
skipped question			0

8. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

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		Response Count
<hr/>		
	 Hide replies	5
<hr/>		
1. I'd say it varies depending on whether or not it is a fiction work. A non-fiction work's meaning is less based on my experience, whereas a fiction novel's meaning is very based on my experience in the reading.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:13 AM	<a href="#">Find...</a>
2. 7. This is also a difficult question to pick just one, becuae I think that the meaning of the text is a combination of everything.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:12 AM	<a href="#">Find...</a>
3. Monkey?	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:10 AM	<a href="#">Find...</a>
4. blah blah blah BLAH	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:10 AM	<a href="#">Find...</a>
5. Reading if FUN!	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:10 AM	<a href="#">Find...</a>
<hr/>		
	answered question	5
	skipped question	22



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## Period 2 Spring 2010 - How Literature is Read and Understood: Personal Perspective Edit

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### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 19  
Total Completed Survey: 19 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment.	84.2%	16
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate.	31.6%	6
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others.	63.2%	12
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities.	47.4%	9
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft.	21.1%	4
We read literature to learn about other cultures.	52.6%	10
We read literature to better understand history.	31.6%	6
Show replies Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	5.3%	1
answered question		19
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself.	63.2%	12
Meaning is determined by the author.	31.6%	6
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place).	47.4%	9
Meaning is determined by the reader.	89.5%	17
answered question		19
skipped question		0

### 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

[Create Chart](#)
[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	21.1%	4
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/>	73.7%	14
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
No: the text should be able to speak for itself. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
Show replies    Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	5.3%	1
answered question		19
skipped question		0

### 4. Does authorial intent matter?

[Create Chart](#)
[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written. <input type="checkbox"/>	26.3%	5
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text. <input type="checkbox"/>	68.4%	13
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent. <input type="checkbox"/>	5.3%	1
answered question		19
skipped question		0

### 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

[Create Chart](#)
[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	21.1%	4
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	78.9%	15
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
answered question		19
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader. <input type="text"/>	21.1%	4
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text. <input type="text"/>	63.2%	12
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood <input type="text"/>	15.8%	3
Comments (optional)		0
answered question		19
skipped question		0

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?


Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined. <input type="text"/>	26.3%	5
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) inform the interpretation. <input type="text"/>	26.3%	5
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft. <input type="checkbox"/>	5.3%	1
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period. <input type="text"/>	15.8%	3
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="text"/>	26.3%	5
answered question		19
skipped question		0

## 8. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

Download

	Response Count
 Hide replies	2
answered question	2
skipped question	17



8. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions. [Download](#)

1. I can't wait to read a book and not write an essay about it.....	Thu, Apr 29, 2010 9:42 AM	<a href="#">Find...</a>
2. Everything is far too subjective to make normative claims about. Meaning has so many different interpretations and there are infinite potential meanings.	Thu, Apr 29, 2010 9:40 AM	<a href="#">Find...</a>
<hr/>		
answered question		2
skipped question		17



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## Period 3 Spring 2010 - How Literature is Read and Understood: Personal Perspective [Edit](#)

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### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 25  
Total Completed Survey: 25 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

[Create Chart](#)

[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment. <input type="checkbox"/>	88.0%	22
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate. <input type="checkbox"/>	12.0%	3
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others. <input type="checkbox"/>	76.0%	19
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities. <input type="checkbox"/>	52.0%	13
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
We read literature to learn about other cultures. <input type="checkbox"/>	44.0%	11
We read literature to better understand history. <input type="checkbox"/>	16.0%	4
Show replies Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
answered question		25
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

[Create Chart](#)

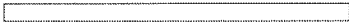

[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself. <input type="checkbox"/>	76.0%	19
Meaning is determined by the author. <input type="checkbox"/>	56.0%	14
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place). <input type="checkbox"/>	56.0%	14
Meaning is determined by the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	80.0%	20
answered question		25
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart


Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge. 	80.0%	20
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
No: the text should be able to speak for itself. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
 Show replies    Other (please explain) <input type="text"/>	12.0%	3
answered question		25
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart



Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text. 	88.0%	22
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent. <input type="checkbox"/>	8.0%	2
answered question		25
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader. 	20.0%	5
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it. 	76.0%	19
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
answered question		25
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	88.0%	22
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood <input type="checkbox"/>	8.0%	2
Hide replies Comments (optional)		1

1. Plenty of interpretations can be present, and some can be created through nonconventional views of a text. To prove an interpretation wrong would be a very tedious and difficult action, because you have to disprove an opinion of a text that, without clearly stated authorial intent, is open to many interpretations, whether all those interpretations are present to one person or not.

Fri, Apr 30, 2010 9:45 AM

Find...

answered question

25

skipped question

0

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?


Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined. <input type="checkbox"/>	12.0%	3
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) inform the interpretation. <input type="checkbox"/>	48.0%	12
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft. <input type="checkbox"/>	8.0%	2
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	8.0%	2
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period. <input type="checkbox"/>	20.0%	5
answered question		25
skipped question		0

8. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

Download

		Response Count
	 Hide replies	4
1. My responses would vary slightly when considering different works, as the creation of meaning is approached differently by different authors. Particularly notable in certain plays and novels, the context must be more greatly considered, such as the humor in Importance of Being Earnest, or the political comentary in Crime and Punishment. Without any knowledge of the background of the work, the text becomes largely meaningless. Whereas in other works such as A Doll House, there is very little emphasis on culture or meaning of a particular time period or region, and it is easy to read it in a valid way without prior knowledge of the context.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 9:46 AM	Find...
2. Meaning can also be realized through common social convention that can be accepted by a new reader attempting to make meaning out of a book.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 9:45 AM	Find...
3. My answers would be different among classical works, scholarly works, and less "highbrow" forms of literature.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 9:43 AM	Find...
4. Thank you for a wonderful year! I enjoyed this class.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 9:42 AM	Find...
	answered question	4
	skipped question	21



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## Period 1 Spring 2010 - How Literature is Read and Understood: IB Perspective Edit

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### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 27  
Total Completed Survey: 27 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment. <input type="text"/>	11.1%	3
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate. <input type="text"/>	37.0%	10
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others. <input type="text"/>	55.6%	15
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities. <input type="text"/>	11.1%	3
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft. <input type="text"/>	96.3%	26
We read literature to learn about other cultures. <input type="text"/>	70.4%	19
We read literature to better understand history. <input type="text"/>	33.3%	9
Other (please explain) <input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
answered question		27
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself. <input type="text"/>	85.2%	23
Meaning is determined by the author. <input type="text"/>	51.9%	14
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place). <input type="text"/>	40.7%	11
Meaning is determined by the reader. <input type="text"/>	59.3%	16
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text.	55.6%	15
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge.	40.7%	11
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it.	0.0%	0
No: the text should be able to speak for itself.	0.0%	0
Show replies Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	3.7%	1
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written.	25.9%	7
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text.	40.7%	11
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent.	33.3%	9
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader.	7.4%	2
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it.	74.1%	20
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text.	18.5%	5
answered question		27
skipped question		0

## 6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader.	0.0%	0
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text.	77.8%	21
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood.	22.2%	6
Hide replies Comments (optional) 2		
1. But it is easy to validate interpretations in IB.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:17 AM	Find...
2. If a person is trying to interpret a color, answers seem to be infinite. But if somebody tries to interpret a specified term, and does not understand it, then they understanding of the text is obviously incorrect.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:14 AM	Find...
answered question	27	
skipped question	0	

## 7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined.	3.7%	1
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) informs the interpretation.	18.5%	5
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft.	18.5%	5
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	14.8%	4
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	3.7%	1
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period.	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	40.7%	11
answered question	27	
skipped question	0	




8. How have you come to this understanding of how IB asks you to read texts? (Check all that apply.)

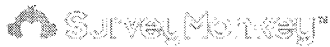
[Create Chart](#)
[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Through classroom instruction (what teachers have directly told me)	100.0%	27
Through IB Assessment Criteria (rubrics)	74.1%	20
Through essay feedback	81.5%	22
Through trial-and-error on assignments	51.9%	14
Through trial-and-error in classroom discussion	44.4%	12
I am unsure how IB asks me to read texts.	11.1%	3
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
	answered question	27
	skipped question	0

9. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

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	Response Count
 Hide replies	6
1. In general, I think that the understanding of a text is a very ambiguous thing. I think that often there are more right interpretations, however, I think that what people take away from a text comes from the reader's perspective and so their understanding is also valid.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:16 AM Find...
2. IB if swell.	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:14 AM Find...
3. Monkey?	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:13 AM Find...
4. IB if FUN	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:13 AM Find...
5. I LOVE IB!!!!	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:12 AM Find...
6. gghrgtjgfn	Fri, Apr 30, 2010 8:10 AM Find...
	answered question 6
	skipped question 21



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## Period 2 Spring 2010 - How Literature is Read and Understood: IB Perspective Edit

Default Report

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### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 20  
Total Completed Survey: 20 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment. <input type="checkbox"/>	5.0%	1
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate. <input type="checkbox"/>	40.0%	8
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others. <input type="checkbox"/>	55.0%	11
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities. <input type="checkbox"/>	15.0%	3
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft. <input type="checkbox"/>	85.0%	17
We read literature to learn about other cultures. <input type="checkbox"/>	50.0%	10
We read literature to better understand history. <input type="checkbox"/>	15.0%	3
Show replies Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	5.0%	1
answered question		20
skipped question		0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself. <input type="checkbox"/>	55.0%	11
Meaning is determined by the author. <input type="checkbox"/>	25.0%	5
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place). <input type="checkbox"/>	55.0%	11
Meaning is determined by the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	65.0%	13
answered question		20
skipped question		0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	25.0%	5
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/>	65.0%	13
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
No: the text should be able to speak for itself. <input type="checkbox"/>	10.0%	2
Other (please explain) <input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
answered question		20
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written. <input type="checkbox"/>	20.0%	4
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text. <input type="checkbox"/>	65.0%	13
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent. <input type="checkbox"/>	15.0%	3
answered question		20
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader. <input type="checkbox"/>	5.0%	1
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it. <input type="checkbox"/>	65.0%	13
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text. <input type="checkbox"/>	30.0%	6
answered question		20
skipped question		0

6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader.	<input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text.	<input type="text"/>	55.0%	11
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood.	<input type="text"/>	45.0%	9
Hide replies Comments (optional)			1
1. as long as a reader can use examples from the text to validly demonstrate their understanding IN CONTEXT WITH THE REST OF THE WORK, then it cannot be wrong.		Thu, Apr 29, 2010 9:42 AM	Find...
		answered question	20
		skipped question	0

7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined.	<input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) informs the interpretation.	<input type="text"/>	15.0%	3
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft.	<input type="text"/>	30.0%	6
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	<input type="text"/>	20.0%	4
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	<input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period.	<input type="text"/>	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	<input type="text"/>	35.0%	7
		answered question	20
		skipped question	0

8. How have you come to this understanding of how IB asks you to read texts? (Check all that apply.)

[Create Chart](#)[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Through classroom instruction (what teachers have directly told me)	95.0%	19
Through IB Assessment Criteria (rubrics)	70.0%	14
Through essay feedback	65.0%	13
Through trial-and-error on assignments	60.0%	12
Through trial-and-error in classroom discussion	45.0%	9
I am unsure how IB asks me to read texts.	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
	answered question	20
	skipped question	0

9. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

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	Response Count
Hide replies	1

1. I have come to realize that the most important thing about analysing literature the IB way, at least for me, is that it helps me to become a better writer myself

Thu, Apr 29, 2010 9:40 AM

[Find ..](#)

answered question 1  
skipped question 19



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## Period 3 Spring 2010 - How Literature is Read and Understood: IB Perspective [Edit](#)

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### Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 25  
Total Completed Survey: 25 (100%)

PAGE: DEFAULT SECTION

1. The statements that follow represent a variety of reasons readers give for reading literature. Select the top one to three reasons that you most agree with.

[Create Chart](#)

[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
We read literature for the sake of entertainment.	0.0%	0
We read literature to determine what an author is trying to communicate. <input type="text"/>	48.0%	12
We read literature to better understand ourselves and others. <input type="text"/>	44.0%	11
We read literature to vicariously experience other realities. <input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
We read literature to analyze language and literary craft. <input type="text"/>	80.0%	20
We read literature to learn about other cultures. <input type="text"/>	76.0%	19
We read literature to better understand history. <input type="text"/>	32.0%	8
Other (please explain)	0.0%	0
	answered question	25
	skipped question	0

2. Where does a text's meaning originate? (Check all that apply.)

[Create Chart](#)

[Download](#)

	Response Percent	Response Count
The meaning is inherent in the text itself. <input type="text"/>	76.0%	19
Meaning is determined by the author. <input type="text"/>	52.0%	13
Meaning is determined based on the context in which the work is written (time and place). <input type="text"/>	64.0%	16
Meaning is determined by the reader. <input type="text"/>	56.0%	14
	answered question	25
	skipped question	0

## 3. Is it important to know about the historical context of a text?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Absolutely: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written is critical to having a proper and valid understanding of the text.	52.0%	13
Somewhat: knowing about the time and culture in which the text is written can influence one's understanding, but the text can be validly interpreted without this knowledge.	36.0%	9
No: what matters about a text is what the reader interprets from it.	0.0%	0
No: the text should be able to speak for itself.	12.0%	3
Other (please explain)	0.0%	0
answered question		25
skipped question		0

## 4. Does authorial intent matter?

Create Chart

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	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. If we are getting an entirely different meaning from the text, we are misreading what the author has written.	28.0%	7
Maybe. When we know authorial intent (i.e., what an author has said about his/her work) it should be considered in our interpretation of a text.	56.0%	14
No. The meaning of a text lies in the interpretation, not the author's intent.	16.0%	4
answered question		25
skipped question		0

## 5. What role does the reader play in constructing meaning?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Meaning is determined primarily by the reader.	0.0%	0
Meaning is determined by both the text and the reader; it is a transaction that occurs and is based on both what the text says and what the reader understands or takes away from it.	60.0%	15
Meaning is determined primarily by the text; it is the reader's responsibility to validly interpret the text.	40.0%	10
answered question		25
skipped question		0

6. Can a reader's understanding of a text be wrong? Create Chart Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
No. Meaning is entirely dependent on the reader.	0.0%	0
Maybe, if the reader's interpretation cannot be validated by the text.	64.0%	16
Yes. Texts have definite meanings that can be misunderstood.	36.0%	9
Comments (optional)		0
answered question		25
skipped question		0

7. We know what a text literally says in the sense that we can read and understand language, but how do we know what a text means? Create Chart Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
We know a text's meaning based on what we feel or experience as we read; meaning is individually experienced and determined.	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on our analysis of what the text says with attention to how personal experiences or ways of thinking (knower's perspective) informs the interpretation.	16.0%	4
We know a text's meaning based on close examination of language and craft.	16.0%	4
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis alongside consideration of what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	8.0%	2
We know a text's meaning based on what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on both our experiences (knower's perspectives) and what we know about the author, culture, and time period.	0.0%	0
We know a text's meaning based on close reading and analysis, our knower's perspectives, and what we know about the author, culture, and/or time period.	60.0%	15
answered question		25
skipped question		0

8. How have you come to this understanding of how IB asks you to read texts? (Check all that apply.) Create Chart Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
answered question		25
skipped question		0



8. How have you come to this understanding of how IB asks you to read texts? (Check all that apply.)

[Create Chart](#)[Download](#)

Through classroom instruction (what teachers have directly told me)	<div></div>	92.0%	23
Through IB Assessment Criteria (rubrics)	<div></div>	80.0%	20
Through essay feedback	<div></div>	60.0%	15
Through trial-and-error on assignments	<div></div>	56.0%	14
Through trial-and-error in classroom discussion	<div></div>	48.0%	12
I am unsure how IB asks me to read texts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
Show replies	Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	4.0%	1
		answered question	25
		skipped question	0

9. Please use this space to comment or elaborate on any of your responses, or to ask any relevant questions.

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	Response Count
Hide replies	1

1. All facets of a text are important and enrich an interpretation, but the interpretation should be mostly dependent upon the text.

Fri, Apr 30, 2010 9:47 AM

[Find...](#)

answered question	1
skipped question	24