INSIGHTS INTO TEACHERS' FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE: COMPARING LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS' STANCES TOWARD THE SAME POEMS IN EVERYDAY AND SCHOOL SETTINGS

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Abstract

Over more than a century of formal schooling in literature, generations of students have become acculturated to authoritative school-based discourses that devalue everyday literary practices. However, research indicates that when students draw on their everyday practices in the classroom, they engage in rich literary reading experiences. In the current study, we argue that school-based discourses may limit teachers just as they limit students, and that teachers' literary funds of knowledge may be another potentially powerful resource for closing the distance between school and everyday reading. Drawing on social and literary metaphors of distance and closeness, we compared the discussions of the same teachers reading the same poems in personal (book club) and professional (lesson planning) settings. Analysis showed that teachers' literary stances differed across conditions. For instance, in the book club condition, teachers were more than twice as likely to enact a close stance when reading—immersing themselves in the text-world and empathizing with characters. We recommend that researchers and teacher educators attend more closely to and make visible the constraints of school-based discourses and the value of everyday funds of knowledge—not just for students, but for teachers.

Key words: poetry, literature teaching, everyday reading, high school, teachers' funds of knowledge, stance, Sweden

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE DISTANCE BETWEEN IN- AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL READING PRACTICES

Over more than a century of formal secondary schooling, students have become acculturated to seeing school-based literary reading as distant from everyday literary practices. They may "draw a hard line between school reading and 'real reading'" (Wilhelm & Smith, 2016, p. 28). As one student explained: In everyday reading, "you don't have the pre-conceived notion of school. You have 'this looks like an interesting book, let's see what it's about'" (p. 30). Students' stances toward school-based reading can constrain teaching and learning, leaving students disengaged and teachers frustrated (Glazer, 2018; Jacobs, 2019; Shelton & Brooks, 2019).

Researchers and teachers have attempted to bridge the distance between in- and out-of-school practices by inviting students' everyday skills, resources, and ways of knowing into the classroom. *Funds of knowledge* (González et al., 1995; Lee, 2007), *funds of identity* (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2016), and *funds of feeling* (Levine & Mah, 2023) frameworks take as their foundational assumption that "people are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge" (González, et al., 2006, pp. ix), and that historically, schools do not often recognize or value these funds, especially if students are from minoritized groups. In the field of language arts, well-known examples of the academic value of students' funds of knowledge and identity come from Carol Lee's research on cultural modeling (e.g., 2007). Her work invited African American students to bring their everyday sociolinguistic practices in wordplay, metaphor, and hyperbole into the classroom, and applied those practices to school-based texts. When they did so, they were better able to build interpretations of complex literary texts. Further, their stances—that is, how they related to those texts—shifted. Other work similarly shows that when students can draw on their out-of-school interpretive practices in school settings, they are more likely to engage in rich, multidimensional reading experiences in school, including personal transactions, critical reading, and aesthetic judgments (Levine, 2022; Morrell & Duncan Andrade, 2005; Skerrett & Bomer, 2011; Sigvardsson, 2019, 2020).

In this study, we turn to teachers' everyday funds of knowledge (Andrews et al., 2005; Gupta, 2006; Hedges, 2012; Karabon, 2021; McDevitt & Kurihara, 2017); specifically, we turn to teachers' everyday interpretive practices. Like students, language arts teachers may also be acculturated to drawing a line between in- and out-of-school reading, approaching out-of-school reading with one set of stances, and in-school reading with another. For instance, in one of the few studies comparing teachers' situated stances toward literature, Sumara (1996) found that when teachers moved from personal responses to a text to considering that text for classroom use,

their "literary imagination was suppressed by the need to read with the 'teacher' identity. The schooled response gained dominance" (p. 227).

At the same time, like students, teachers' out-of-school interpretive funds of knowledge are also potentially powerful resources for closing the distance between school and everyday reading. These funds of knowledge are especially salient if teachers are lifelong readers who find fulfillment and challenge in engaging with literature, because we want our students to find the same lifelong satisfaction in literature. Thus, in this study, we hope to make visible the ways in which school-based disciplinary discourses may distance teachers from their own funds of knowledge and everyday practices and help improve in-school literary learning by identifying teachers' everyday reading stances and inviting them into the classroom.

To connect in- and out-of-school experiences, researchers often compare students' in-school reading practices and stances with their out-of-school funds of knowledge. Far fewer studies have done the same for teachers. In this study, we contribute to that effort by comparing the discussions of the same Swedish language arts teachers as they read the same poems in two different settings: a book club and a lesson planning setting. Drawing on both literary and sociocultural frameworks of distance and closeness, we asked: *What types of stances characterized secondary teachers' discussions about poems in book club and lesson planning settings?*

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAME AND LITERATURE REVIEW: DISTANCE AND CLOSENESS

To begin, we frame everyday and school-based practices in terms of distance and closeness to one another. We also find those metaphors useful in framing readers' stances toward literary texts.

2.1 Close and distant stances toward reading

Psychologists, literary theorists, and writers have long been interested in readers' approaches and relationships with texts, including their expectations before reading, their experiences in the moment of reading, and their reflections after reading. Scientists and novelists alike often use metaphors of closeness and distance to describe readers' stances toward texts. For instance, scholars interested in language and narrative have referred to readers as travelers (Gerrig, 1993) who get so close to narrative worlds that they are "transported" into them (Green et al., 2012). Literary education scholars posit that readers take close stances by *stepping in* or *moving through* a text, immersing themselves in the text world (Langer, 1990), or look through literary windows or step through sliding doors to enter a literary world (Bishop, 1990). Literary theorist Booth (1983) and novelist Tolkien (1964) similarly use terms like "fictional worlds" and "secondary worlds" to describe where readers go when they read from a close stance.

Part of the value of engaging with a text-world from close stances is that readers can create a simulation of a social experience (Gavins, 2007; Mar & Oatley, 2008). In

doing so, readers can engage with characters in a text as if they were real and worth caring about (Vermeule, 2010), building psychological and social insights about characters and, by extension, about themselves. As Zunshine (2006) argued, readers use literature as a place to practice mind-reading—getting as close to other people as possible.

Scholars also use metaphors of distance to describe more analytical stances toward texts, where readers pull back from the world of a text to examine its construction. Readers can zoom out to consider how unusual language or repeated motifs might have influenced their reading experience (Rabinowitz, 1987). Langer (1990) refers to such stances as *stepping back*, where readers build insights about themselves and their worlds, or *stepping out, where* readers become critics and examine features of the text or reflect on the experience of making meaning. And even though their approach has come to be called "close reading," literary scholars in the New Critical movement of the 1940s and 50s encouraged readers to take up distant stances to better appreciate the craft and coherence of a text. Critical scholars such as Edward Said (1983) and Toni Morrison (2007) encouraged readers to distance themselves from texts using political or cultural lenses to maintain skepticism toward potential textual biases or agendas.

Perhaps most famously, Louise Rosenblatt was concerned with the effects of readers' stances on their reading experiences. She argued that while a reader's context influenced their approach to a text, ultimately their reading was a "choosing" activity—readers choose what they will pay attention to when they read (Rosenblatt, 1988). Rosenblatt introduced a continuum of stances, anchored by *aesthetic* on one end and *efferent* on the other. On the aesthetic end, readers focus on the immediate, "lived through" experience of reading, drawing from "private feelings, sensations, and ideas" during each moment of reading (Rosenblatt, 1993, p. 383). In a predominantly *efferent* stance, readers focused not on the immediate experience of meaning-making but on a more reflective response that occurs after the immediate moment of reading. Although Rosenblatt's stances could be read in terms of closeness and distance, we will not use her terms here for several reasons. First, our study involves discussions that occur after participants read, which complicates our attempts to identify aesthetic stances and in-the-moment experiences. Second, we wish to explore ways that reading may *not* be a "choosing activity"; we propose that as a field, we have underestimated ways that social contexts and institutional expectations may influence teachers' choices about their closeness and distance to a text.

2.2 School contexts favor distant stances

Importantly, stances are not static. Readers move in and out of a text-world as they read, experiencing different but equally valuable sorts of engagement, challenge, and enjoyment. However, in many Western or Western-influenced countries, schools and exams have historically privileged relatively rigid distant stances toward texts. In the U.S., for example, early teacher guides like *The Practical Question Book*

(Stilwell, 1887/2016) favored questions about texts' authors and eras, as opposed to students' responses to the worlds built by those authors. Early classroom studies likewise showed that teachers had little time to explore students' experiences—feelings, judgments, experiences of setting and character. Instead, they asked questions at a "pace that kills" looking for specific correct answers (Stevens, 1912, p. 17). Then and now, these authoritative discourses suppress authentic questioning and curious exploration of texts (e.g., Andringa, 1991; Aukerman, 2004; Gee, 2008).

More recently, standardized exams and curricular designs have doubled down on distant stances, asking teachers to focus on literary devices and "central ideas" (Sigvardsson, 2020; Common Core, 2010; Swedish National Agency for Education 2011a, b; 2022). In Sweden, where this study took place, an analysis of national tests administered between 1968–2013 showed that the language arts sections were most likely to ask students to analyze authorial style (Nilson, 2017). In countries like the U.S., standards-aligned textbooks "position the reader as someone who must perform a set of skills and suspend ideas and opinions" (Sulzer, 2014, p. 147) and frame literary texts as repositories of evidence for claims, as opposed to social worlds worth exploring (Brett, 2016; Levine et al., 2023; Rabinowitz & Bancroft, 2014).

2.3 What are teachers' stances in everyday, out-of-school contexts?

We know that language arts teachers often take distant stances toward literary reading in the classroom. However, we know much less about how they read in their out-of-school lives. Many studies explore the practices and discourses of lay readers in book clubs and other literature-based gatherings, but as far as we can tell, there are no Swedish studies, and only a few studies in other countries, that explore the way literature teachers approach literary texts in everyday settings (Addington, 2001; Beach & Yussen, 2011; Bernstein, 2009; Flood, 1994; Smith, 1996; Smith et al., 2001; Sumara, 1996). Further, only a subset of those studies compares teachers' responses to texts in different settings. For instance, Smith and Connolly (2005) found that when one teacher played his regular classroom role, leading a planned discussion about a familiar poem, he focused on his interpretive authority—the "need to 'solve' an interpretive problem or avoid a misreading" (p. 282). However, when the teacher joined his students to discuss an unfamiliar poem, he felt more comfortable exploring, asking questions, and pushing back against students' claims. Levine et al. (2022) used an instructional rehearsal setting to compare language arts teachers' questions about the same poem as they played two different roles—leader and regular reader—in the same discussion. In their leader roles, teachers tended to ask questions about themes and "what the author is specifically trying to tell us" (p. 200). In their reader roles, they tended to ask about details from the world of the text. They were also more likely to express uncertainty and curiosity as opposed to authority.

These studies provide valuable insights into ways that school-based roles and discursive expectations might influence teachers' questions, their willingness to express uncertainty, and the textual elements they focus on when responding to literature.

In this study, we want to build on this small body of work to consider the stances that teachers—in this case, teachers who are lifelong readers of literature—take when reading in personal and professional contexts. The more we learn about the closeness and distance between teachers' everyday and school-based stances toward literature, the more we may be able to bridge that divide and help students become lifelong readers as well.

3. METHODS

3.1 Setting: language arts in Sweden

To explore teachers' stances, we organized synchronous online focus group sessions where Swedish language arts teachers discussed two poems in book club and lesson planning settings. The teachers in our study all taught at college preparatory high schools in Sweden. These schools require students to take three language arts courses focused on literary study, reading, writing, and oral presentations. The first year of Swedish language arts concentrates on knowledge of literary devices and the skills of literary analysis (Swedish National Agency for Education 2011b). In Swedish 2, students also read literary history. In Swedish 3, the focus returns to literary analysis. Students in college preparatory high schools also take language arts electives, including Literature and Rhetoric. Teachers are responsible for preparing students for national language arts exams in students' first and third years of high school. The first-year exam tends to emphasize analyses of literary style (Nilson, 2017).

3.2 Participants

We selected a purposive sample of secondary teachers of Swedish language arts who worked with upper secondary students (16 -19 years). We were interested in hearing from teachers from a range of settings, so we recruited participants from schools in different Swedish cities via direct emails or via school principals.

Once we identified a school with one interested teacher, we reached out to additional teachers at that same school. Our aim was to create discussion groups comprising colleagues who knew one another, shared professional contexts, and were likely to feel comfortable discussing texts and teaching.

Ultimately, we worked with 12 teachers from four different schools in small and large Swedish cities. We divided participants into four focus groups (Table 1) with three members each—a good number to allow enough speaking time for each participant (Wibeck, 2000). In three groups, all three participants taught at the same school. In one group, two participants taught at the same school, and one was a former colleague who had moved to a nearby school. All schools were college preparatory, and one school also had a vocational program.

Since our goal was to explore the everyday literary reading practices of teachers who regularly engaged and enjoyed literature outside the classroom, we looked for

participants who might qualify as lifelong readers of literature. During recruitment, we asked potential participants a question about their literary reading habits. Ten of 12 teachers said that they read poetry in their spare time, either occasionally or regularly. One regular reader shared that "poetry has always been in my everyday." An occasional reader said, "I have read and written a lot of poetry before—less now."

Table 1. Descriptions of four focus groups

Self-identified gender	Years in profession	School location	Type of program
1. Two women, one man	21,20, 3	Small city* North Sweden	College and vocational preparation
2. Two women, one man	19,7,1	Large city** South Sweden	College preparation
3.Three women	30,18,21	Large city Mid-Sweden	College preparatory
4.Three women	10,10, 6	Large city Mid-Sweden	College preparatory

**Small city, less than 50,000 inhabitants. **Large city, more than 100,000 inhabitants.*

3.3 Poems

We selected two poems from Swedish poet Helene Rådberg's collection *Det gula rummets små terapistycken (Small Therapy Pieces from the Yellow Room),* published in 2008. The first poem, "spegel spegel" ("mirror mirror"), is in free verse. It addresses the clashes between political ideals and the harsh working reality of the female speaker, who has a job caring for children. The poem intersperses her narrative with children's nonsense rhymes. In the excerpt below, we have translated the narrative from Swedish to English, but left the children's rhymes in italicized Swedish:

> I lead my simple work life at the leisure center
>
> The swan *o l e d o l e* there are always children
>
> who call for me *d o l e d o f f*
>
> there are always children who need me
>
> *k i n k e l a n e*
>
> …
>
> I go to staff meetings, study days,
>
> further training days
>
> listen to psychologists, consultants *b i n k e*
>
> children's doctors *b a n e*

"Terapistycke (första maj)" ("Therapy Piece (First of May)") is also free verse. This poem reflects upon a speaker's gendered experiences in relation to an older

generation of women. In this poem, an unknown interlocutor interrupts the speaker with questions (represented below in italics):

> I was schooled as a woman by my grandmother. Whole, clean, hold together
>
> and when I face doctors I stick together.
>
> I can not care.
>
> *Do you want to care?*
>
> …My doctor says
>
> that nothing can be cured anymore.
>
> I go there to endure.
>
> *Is the only way to bend?*

We chose these poems because they explore a range of themes, including teaching and learning, gender roles, and work experiences, which could be personally compelling to our participants and of interest to students. The poems are rich in metaphor, allusions, and unusual use of language. We included two poems to give teachers the opportunity to compare texts, which could expand possibilities for lesson plans.

We put the poems together in a pdf that included the poet's name, year of publication, and picture of the front page of the collection. The poem "mirror mirror" appears before "Therapy Piece." Participants received the poems a week before their first discussion. They were not familiar with either poem before our study.

3.4 Discussion prompts

We piloted our study twice with two groups of teachers who did not participate in the subsequent study. In the first pilot, we asked a broad, open-ended question to elicit teachers' personal responses to the poem: *Utifrån din läsning av dikten, vad skulle du vilja prata om? (From your reading of the poem, what would you like to talk about?*) That prompt did not yield personal responses; instead, teachers immediately talked about potential lesson designs. We thus revised our prompt for the second pilot: *Please talk with one another about your thoughts, feelings, and questions as you explore these poems.* We hoped this prompt would elicit an informal, book club-like discussion, but again, the teachers discussed ways of using the poem in a classroom.

After the pilot sessions, we workshopped alternative prompts with the volunteer teachers and revised our prompt again. We used the term "book club" in this final prompt to emphasize the out-of-school setting.

Here are the final study prompts (English translations only):

> *Prompt for book club setting*: Today you will be meeting in a book club setting to talk about your readings of these poems. You are free to choose what to talk about and

> organize the conversation in a way that suits you. Later, you will have a chance to talk about how you might teach these poems.
>
> *Prompt for lesson planning setting*: Today you will be meeting in a teacher planning setting to talk about your readings of these poems and explore how you might use them in class. You are free to choose what to talk about and organize the conversation in a way that suits you. Later, you will have a chance to talk about these poems in a book club setting.

We conducted the sessions between May 2021 and January 2022. Each session lasted between 45–60 mins and was recorded via Zoom. Each group met two times on Zoom, with a gap of 1–3 weeks between meetings. To counter potential order effects, two groups met first in the personal setting, and two groups in the professional setting.

In some ways, our design approximates the conditions under which participants might normally plan lessons or have informal, book club-like discussions about texts. In other ways, this design lacks ecological validity—these are one-time discussions about texts that we chose for teachers, and that teachers read only once or twice in advance of their meeting. Thus, our conclusions may have limited generalizability.

In each session, Author 2 read the appropriate prompt to participants, and invited them to ask questions about the prompt before or during discussion. Author 2 was present for each discussion but did not participate. Author 2 recorded each Zoom meeting and took notes during discussion to aid interpretation of the data.

A Swedish research assistant transcribed each discussion from the Zoom recordings. Author 2, who is fluent in Swedish and English, checked the transcripts against the audio files for accuracy. Next, we put the Swedish transcripts into Google Translate to generate a rough English translation. Then, Author 2 checked and corrected the English translations.

3.5 Analysis

To make a systematic comparison between teachers' discussions in each setting, we chose a single turn of talk as a unit of analysis. Then, each researcher separately coded four transcripts inductively to develop ideas about overarching trends in the discussions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, each author separately noticed that in both settings, teachers talked about the poet's choices of structure, allusions, or other aspects of craft. In response, we developed the code *authorial craft.*

We then used collaborative coding (Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014) and constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 2017) to further develop and revise our codes. During collaborative coding, coders work together throughout the coding process, which "provides a form of reliability that takes into account the dialogic nature of decision-making and that allows the coding scheme to evolve through continual discussion, coding, and refinement," (Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014, p. 34).

3.5.1 Primary codes: close, middle, and distant stances

After many passes through the data, we found that our codes aligned well with frameworks of distance and closeness in literary reading, where readers take on stances toward texts that move them closer and further away from the text-world. We adapted those frameworks to develop our primary codes (Table 2). Note that in the book club condition, we coded the stances the teachers took when discussing the two poems. In the lesson plan condition, we coded the stances that the teachers' lesson plans called for.

Table 2. Definitions and examples of close, middle and distant stances in both settings

Stance	Setting	Definition	Examples from discussions
Close	Book Club Setting	Participants are immersed in the world of the poem, referring to places and characters as if they were real; participants describe, sympathize with, and critique characters' actions, emotions.	"She is going through a nervous breakdown." "Where is she exactly? Is she in the sandbox?"
	Lesson Plan Setting	Participants discuss helping students do any of those things, or explicitly use terms like "experiencing," "diving into," or other terms that connote textual immersion.	"I also think that you should have students ask, "Who is the speaker talking to?" "Students should experience the poem first before analyzing."
Middle	Book Club Setting	Participants develop text-based thematic inferences or discuss aspects of human dilemmas; connect the text world to their personal experiences and social worlds; express insights about themselves.	"We have known for a long time that women are structurally exposed to wage oppression…because of the history we have been through." "This could have been my path."
	Lesson Plan Setting	Participants discuss helping students do any of those things, or explicitly use terms related to theme or thematic interpretation.	"This falls under the 'working life' theme."
Distant	Book Club Setting	Participants discuss author's choices (e.g., critiques of style, craft); refer to literary devices; situate texts in literary traditions; or explicitly use terms that describe approaches to reading, such as "critical lenses."	"The [language in this] section seems a little 'on the nose' to me."
	Lesson Plan Setting	Participants discuss helping students do any of those things or explicitly refer to new critical or formalist approaches.	"All these allusions—will the students know them?"

3.6 Secondary codes: references to speaker and other discussion condition.

We developed two subcodes to further explore categories of closeness and distance. First, we noticed that in the book club setting, teachers frequently referred to the poems' speakers, often as if they were real people worth caring about, judging, or asking questions about (e.g., "Why doesn't she just quit?"). We were curious as to whether teachers also made frequent references to the poems' speakers in the lesson planning setting, and what stances they took when doing so. To track this question, we created the code *reference to speaker.* To be coded as a reference to speaker, a turn of talk had to include reference to the words "she," "her," "the lyric I," "the speaker," "the person," or "the woman."

We also noted several instances in which teachers referred explicitly to either the book club or lesson planning settings, as in, "It's a good thing we are in the book club today," or "We can talk about that when we are lesson planning." These references helped us understand the kinds of stances teachers felt were appropriate to each discussion setting. We looked through all discussions for mentions of either condition, as well as any references to "last time," "next time," or "the other talk." We called these mentions *reference to other condition*.

3.6.1 Turns of talk

Sometimes teachers engaged one stance in a turn of talk; other times, they engaged all three. Thus, we double- or triple-coded many turns of talk. We did not apply codes to turns of talk in which participants simply agreed or disagreed with previous speakers without adding additional content (e.g., responses like "yes," "no," or "exactly").

The number of turns of talk varied in each discussion, with three out of four groups' book club discussion tending to have more turns. In Group 4, for example, the book club discussion comprised 260 turns, and the same group's lesson plan discussion comprised 130 turns. Group 2 was the outlier, with 86 turns in the book club and 92 in the lesson plan. On average, the book club discussions included 166 turns, and the teaching discussions included 125. Because of these variances, we will share our results in terms of percentages of total turns of talk.

3.7 Ethical considerations

We conducted this study in accordance with Sweden's ethical guidelines for social sciences research (The Swedish Research Council, 2017). We informed participants that this study explored teachers' perspectives on poetry and poetry teaching and explained processes for confidentiality and data handling. Teachers then consented to participate. We kept all recordings and transcripts in password protected files.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, we compared the same teachers' stances toward literary texts as they discussed the same poems in book club and lesson planning conditions. Our major findings include the following: First, regardless of condition, all groups engaged in all stances. Second, in the book club condition, teachers took up a close stance more frequently than they took up middle or distant stances (Table 3 and Figure 1). In other words, in their out-of-school discussion, teachers were most likely to immerse themselves in the text worlds, talking about the poems' settings as if they were real places and the characters as if they were real people.

By contrast, in the lesson plan condition, those same teachers took up a close stance less frequently than middle or distant stances. Importantly, teachers in the lesson plan condition were emphatic that they did not want to "ruin the experience" of the poems by starting with analysis of literary devices, but instead wanted their students to first "meet" or "experience" the poems holistically. However, as they planned lessons, they were least likely to talk about ways to help students immerse themselves in the world of the text, and most likely to imagine lessons in which students took up middle or distant stances.

Table 3. Average percentage of turns of talk coded in each stance, by condition

Condition	Close stance	Middle stance	Distant stance
Book club	47%	22%	39%
Lesson plan	20%	38%	54%

In the following sections, we organize our findings by stance. We first characterize teachers' discussions in the book club condition, starting with the close stance. Then we compare teachers' book club discussions with their lesson plan discussions. In this way, we explore the degrees of closeness and distance between teachers' everyday and school-based stances toward literature, and we highlight teachers' literary funds of knowledge.

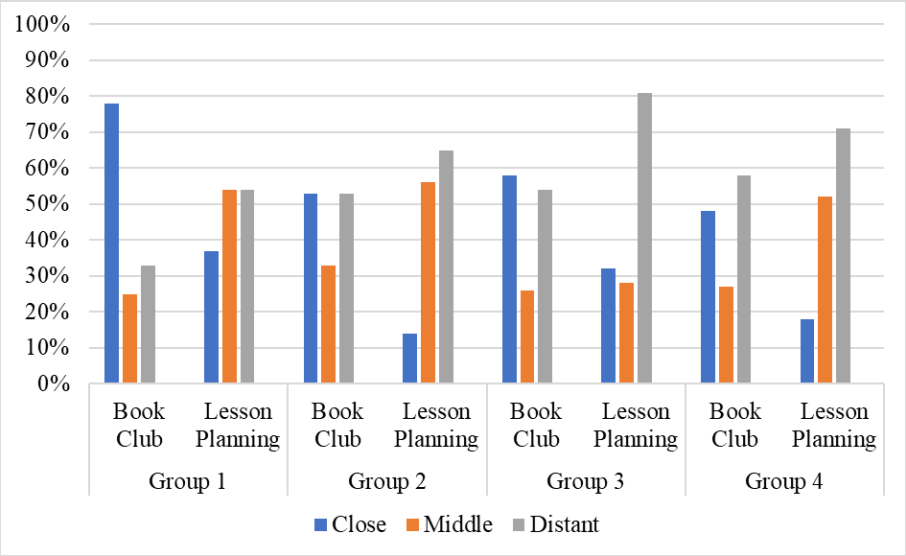
4.1 Close stance

4.1.1 Book club condition: literal sensemaking

In all book club discussions, regardless of whether teachers were meeting for the first or second time, teachers expressed confusion about the literal events in each poem; for example, they called "Therapy Piece" "dense" and "elusive." To develop a basic literal comprehension of the poems, teachers tended to take a close stance, tracking the poems' settings and the speakers' actions. Group 1 began with questions about those things: "Who is she talking to?" and "Where is she, like in a nursery school?" Teachers in Group 2 tried to make sense of the poems by imagining that the speakers were the same person, and then following the speaker's development

from one poem to another. Thinking about the speaker in this way allowed teachers to "get a much clearer picture of this woman…so that in the first poem there she is…on her way into some kind of breakdown, but here [referring to the second poem] it is after a breakdown...her like, the state of mind she is in." As a result, teachers felt that "the poem became more understandable."

Figure 1. Percentages of turns of talk in close, middle, and distant stances, by condition and group. (Note: Totals sum to more than 100% because turns of talk could receive multiple codes).



The other two groups asked fewer questions, but still began their discussion by establishing their understandings of speaker and setting, as when a teacher in Group 3 shared her vision of "Therapy Piece": "We are kind of in this therapy—in that therapy room with the therapist." In the beginning of the sessions, we saw that the teachers used their everyday funds of knowledge of people, social interactions, and settings to develop their first rough understanding of the poems, to have something to depart from in their talks. However, this route was less taken up in the lesson plans.

4.1.2 Lesson plan condition: literal sensemaking

In the lesson plan discussion, most teachers agreed that their students would find the poems engaging and personally relevant, citing the poems' explorations of anxiety, gender, and structural sexism. But they also agreed that students would likely have trouble making literal sense of the poems. We were curious to see if teachers sketched out lessons in which their students enacted the same close stance that the

teachers themselves had enacted in the book club condition, asking questions about speakers and settings as a lever for making literal sense of the poems.

For the most part, however, teachers' ideas for literal sense-making activities called for students to take up a distant stance, where students would examine the poems' structural elements or define unfamiliar words. A Group 3 teacher brought up reading comprehension strategies that included paying attention to "headings and subheadings and pictures and captions and all those things." She then applied those strategies to "mirror mirror," suggesting that students could focus on the poem's visual and structural elements: "You have very clear graphics with italics and what is not in italics, and these…all these allusions and rhymes and songs and so…it could be a way to just start looking and see what you see."

We found one case in which a teacher made specific reference to the relationship between understanding the speaker and comprehending the poem. He said:

> I think the students could also be excited if you asked from the beginning: "Who is the 'you' in the poem?" I think that you could maybe make a lot more like simple, classic clue reading, like, what do we have for textual evidence in the text? It becomes almost like a comprehension thing.

With this suggestion, the teacher echoed the questions asked in the book club condition—questions that had helped teachers make sense of the poems.

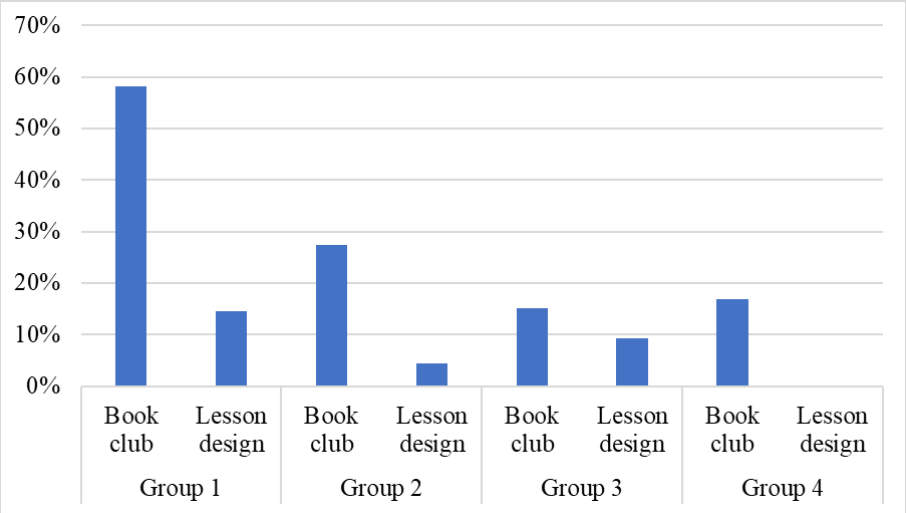
However, the teacher then went on to say, "I could definitely imagine at least discussing with students, but I have no idea of a good plan around it."
His statement suggests that for him, an everyday set of questions was not adequate or aligned with a school-based setting. The teacher's uncertainty—how to help students in the classroom do what he himself did as an everyday reader—makes a case for the need to highlight and integrate teachers' everyday funds of knowledge in their teaching lives.

4.1.3 Book club condition: references to speaker

Attention to the poems' speakers played a central role in the book club discussions. All groups in that condition were more likely to pay attention to the speaker than they were in the professional condition (Figure 2). While teachers often toggled between close, middle, and distant stances when discussing the speaker, most references co-occurred with teachers' enactment of the close stance.

In the close stance, teachers treated the speakers like real people worth caring about. They tracked the speakers' emotional states and explored their psychology, noting when the poem's speaker seemed resigned, exhausted, or "angry—a little cocky—even if it is just in resentment." They sometimes spoke directly to the overworked speaker of "mirror mirror," as a Group 1 teacher did, saying, "I pity you a lot, yes…But still …go home a little earlier and take a little longer coffee break. Try it!" Sometimes they took on the speaker's point of view, speaking in the first person, as when this teacher from Group 4 said, "This poem felt like, well, there is always something that interrupts me that I have to take care of."

Figure 2. Percentage of turns of talk in which teachers referenced poems' speakers, by condition and group.



Group 1 had extended discussions about the speaker in "mirror mirror" in which they speculated about, sympathized with, and critiqued the speaker's psychological state. For example:

Teacher 1 I would not like to be that woman.

Teacher 3 No, and that woman—the speaker here—I think this one is also on the verge of eh...either just before or in the middle of a sick leave… .She has worked too hard. She has not been able to prioritize…

Teacher 1 No, exactly.

Teacher 3 It's her own fault.

Teacher 2 Mm-hmm.

Teacher 3 And yes. Well, I guess that she's supposed to take care of everyone but do it like…you should prioritize and not do your job that well.

Teacher 1 Absolutely.

Teacher 3 [laughs] So she does not get burned out.

Teacher 1 Absolutely—you want to say to this speaker, "Yes, work your working hours and talk to your boss."

From a funds of knowledge perspective, it is worth tracking teachers' everyday sensemaking moves when discussing the poems' speakers in the close stance. Overall, the teachers treated the text as a simulation of everyday life. They sympathized with, critiqued, lectured, and adopted the perspectives of literary speakers as if they were real people worth caring for.

4.1.4 Lesson plan condition: references to speaker

Teachers were less likely to reference the speaker when planning lessons. On a few occasions, however, they did consider having students take up a close stance by asking questions about the speakers' psychology, as in this example from Group 2:

> There is a clear development in the poem ["mirror mirror"] that I also think you could sort of investigate together with the students, like what is happening to this speaker who exists in the poem? And in this ending, there is some kind of, like, almost explosion, so you can use that too.

Just as often, however, teachers in the lesson plan condition moved to middle or distant stances when discussing the speaker, treating speakers as a literary device or a representation of themes. For instance, Group 3 talked through a lesson in which students could analyze the speaker to understand "a woman's experiences of working life." Group 4 imagined a lesson in which students connected the speaker's exhaustion to a socialist critique of labor conditions. For the most part, teachers were less likely to imagine lessons in which students engaged the speaker as the teachers themselves had done in their personal discussions.

4.2 Middle stance

We now move to an examination of teachers' enactment of a middle stance, where they stepped back from the world of the text to develop text-based thematic inferences, discuss aspects of human dilemmas, or express insights about themselves.

4.2.1 Book club condition: personal connection

In the book club condition, teachers often toggled between *close* and *middle* stances as they discussed the poems and constructed both personal and thematic meaning. For example, teachers often connected the speakers' experiences with their own. A teacher from Group 1 noted that in his own career, he chose not to take the same course of study as the speaker from "mirror mirror"—a speaker who was professionally miserable. While reading, he said, "I got this connection like this could have been my path, so to speak…then I felt a certain relief also that I did not choose that path in the end." In Group 2, teachers spoke of the feelings they shared with the speaker of "Therapy Piece." In that poem, the speaker talks about trying to hide a menstruation pad behind a tree so no one will see it. The teachers discussed the feelings they shared with the speaker:

> Teacher 1 My mother did not say much about menstruation before I got menstruation as I remember. I also remember that it was not shameful, but it also was.
>
> Teacher 2 As well as embarrassing.
>
> Teacher 1 Embarrassing, yes, and it's very strange why it is so. And I can't be the only one to feel this way then, because it seems like this speaker also in some way relates it to shame.

In this exchange, teachers' uptake of the middle stance seemed to play the important psychological function of helping them feel less alone—they are not the "only one to feel this way."

4.2.2 Lesson plan condition: personal connection

In the book club setting, teachers generally engaged first with the speaker and the social world of the poems and then developed insights about themselves and their worlds. In the lesson design discussions, teachers seemed to take the opposite tack when planning for their students' experiences. In this condition, teachers envisioned lessons in which students first engaged with their own social worlds and then developed insights about the poems. For instance, Group 2 teachers outlined a lesson in which students would rewrite "mirror mirror" using children's songs from their own childhood. In doing so, they could explore what it meant to "be a student" instead of a worker:

> Teacher 3 Let them collect the songs they remember from when they were children and like create an updated version with like their own references!
>
> Teacher 2 "What it is like to be a student?" instead of "What it is like to be a worker?"
>
> Teacher 3 Yes, maybe! [laughs]
>
> Teacher 1 If we dare to read it. [laughs]

In this case, teachers may be right on the money in planning lessons where students reflected first on their own experiences before developing clearer ideas about the experiences portrayed in the poems. However, the teachers' everyday enactment of the middle stance (reflecting on speaker, then self) also seemed both personally and analytically generative. It is worth asking whether students might find that approach generative as well.

4.2.3 Book club condition: thematic meaning

In the personal condition, teachers similarly moved from a close stance to a middle stance when developing thematic interpretations. For example, one teacher first commented on the speaker of "mirror mirror" as if that speaker were a real person: "She does not like her job at all, and it is far too high demands and too few resources, and I interpret it as that she is completely beyond burnout." Then, the teacher stepped back from the world of the text and developed a more universal reading of human experiences: "And I think it's a great picture of how you think when you are burnt out…you have completely lost feeling."

Other groups showed similar moves from close to middle stances when developing thematic interpretations. Group 2 discussed a verse in "Therapy Piece" in which the exhausted speaker asks whether she must always surrender and sublimate her own needs to the unreasonable requirements of her work or to the demands of a

patriarchal society. The speaker wonders whether she must always "bend" to accommodate others. One teacher then shared a personal connection to the speaker and began the following dialogue:

> Teacher 2 I was with a psychologist when I myself had been burned out [laughs] and…we talked about my work situation and the workload. And then she said that it's not you that is wrong, it's the sick work situation. It's the unreasonable working conditions that you teachers have. And what the first poem does is, like, make [the speaker's] sick workload visible. I just think I can relate to this in some way… . This is how the world looks, and how… history has looked like too, that it's like in some way a description of the present and the past, and here we are, and [sighs] I don't know how to tie this together now in some clever way, but is it the only way, to bend? Is that what we can do? Only endure?
>
> Teacher 3 Exactly, what, when do we have to, when should we raise our voices to be heard?
>
> Teacher 2 And is it enough to raise our voices to be heard? Will something happen? It is a bit exhausted at the same time as it is the beginning of something.
>
> Teacher 3 Because maybe it's this kind of insight that calls for action… .It is an insight that urges us to change.
>
> Teacher 2 Yes, it does, but at the same time, can you handle change when you are so broken down? Because…it is the case that there are in some schools perhaps, in large parts of the country, a frustrated teaching staff who want to raise their voices but instead perhaps they bend, and do not feel that they have the strength to make a revolution.
>
> Teacher 1 Yes.
>
> Teacher 2 Not everyone has the strength, and everyone…now I'm going far beyond the poem, maybe.
>
> Teacher 1 No, but it is probably also important in some way. Is it not what the poem is about also? Some kind of powerlessness?
>
> Teacher 2 Yes!

The teachers' discussion offers an insight into teachers' funds of knowledge when it came to thematic interpretation. Their initial close stance—their engagement with the speakers' specific feelings and experiences—acted as a stepping stone to personal connections and then more abstract inferences about a more universal powerlessness.

4.2.4 Lesson plan condition: thematic meaning

In the lesson planning condition, the teachers were more likely to reference theme than they did in the book club condition. In general, however, teachers did not follow the pattern of moving from close to middle stances to develop thematic inferences. Instead, they proposed other ways of helping students focus on theme. For example, Group 3 suggested that students could "go on a word hunt, [like] words that are connected with children, words that are related to working life, words that are

related to the situation of women, or whatever you want… . You can have different thematic angles or contextual angles." Several groups envisioned lessons in which they situated "mirror mirror" and "Therapy Piece" in the context of other canonical texts about labor, such as pieces by Harry or Moa Martinson.

We noted a contrast between the teachers' construction of theme in the book club and lesson plan conditions. In their role as lifelong readers, teachers' thematic interpretations were emergent and dialogic, and further seemed driven by their positive and negative responses to the texts; for example, they noted the poem's negative portrayal of work (e.g., "sick workload") as they developed thematic interpretations about powerlessness. In contrast, in the lesson plan condition, teachers were less focused on lessons in which students responded to their feelings or engaged in emergent or dialogic interpretation. Teachers were more likely to design cognitively-oriented theme-based lessons in which students developed thematic interpretations by, for example, hunting for "words that are connected with children" or working life.

Teachers' professional discussions were not always cognitively-oriented; in several cases, teachers also designed creative activities for students. One Group 4 teacher outlined the following activity for her students, many of whom took classes in music, drama, or dance:

> My dance students have done choreographies for some poems, and I know that music students have set music and created slide shows and all kinds of things in order to show their own interpretation, and there you can get a little further with what it is that this poem actually says.

All those ideas are useful and generative, and the teachers were excited about how students might respond to such lessons. For the most part, however, even these creative middle stance activities seemed designed to move students to a prescribed set of topics or themes—either children, working life, women, or "what the poem actually says." These designs seemed more aligned with the known-answer discourses of traditional schooling.

4.3 Distant stance

With a few exceptions, teachers' personal and professional discussions were most aligned when they took up the distant stance.

4.3.1 Book club condition: emotional responses to authorial craft

When taking up the distant stance in the book club condition, teachers tended to discuss the emotional effects of authorial craft and their appreciations and critiques of that craft. When critiquing, they imagined ways to improve the poems so that they became, in the words of one teacher, "not as obvious" or "in your face."

All teachers in the book club condition reflected on the emotional effects of the poems' formal elements. For example, Group 3 compared the two poems' moods and tones:

> Teacher 3 ["mirror mirror"] is both I think blacker and…it is more sarcastic or sardonic in its expression, but that also makes it a bit invigorating. You become—
>
> Teacher 1 Exactly.
>
> Teacher 3 You become a little sadder—or I become, I should say. But the second poem feels just more—even more resigned, but the lines still have action.
>
> Teacher 1 Right, no, but there is an anger, a force in it in some way, and it is also related to what we were talking about with the rhythm and these intermixed rhymes, and with its shorter lines and fewer…words in the stanzas.

In the distant stance, all groups in the personal condition also shared their strongly felt responses to language, naming lines that "struck" or "hooked" them, or that they found images to be "playful," "powerful," or "amazing." A Group 2 teacher connected her appreciation of lines in "mirror mirror" to authorial moves: "I got hooked on it right away, and I think it was about this simplicity and all these style figures that were a bit suggestive." In Group 4, teachers shared their favorite lines in "mirror mirror," along with their emotional effects:

> Teacher 3 I think this [line], it is so beautifully apt for the female profession: "Working With People Is Developing" and "Working With People Gives A Lot Back," and "I am happy tra la lala". It is really this desperation over …
>
> Teacher 1 And this one too: "BE HAPPY—DON'T CRY." Keep it together whatever happens.

Teachers also critiqued authorial choices. Group 3 agreed that "Therapy Piece" felt a little "on the nose." One teacher said: "I was not so sure that I liked it, because it…maybe narrows my reading of the poem...like it says, 'This is what I want you to get out of this.'"

Whether critique or admiration, when teachers engaged these poems as everyday, lifelong readers, their enactment of the distant stance was often driven by their emotional responses.

4.3.2 Lesson plan condition: emotional responses to authorial craft

In the lesson plan condition, teachers discussed their desire—and struggle—to help students connect literary devices with feeling, and to move beyond mere identification of technique. As a Group 2 teacher said, "You do not want to ruin the experience of the poems by chopping it to pieces the first thing they do." Group 4 had the following discussion:

> Teacher 2 We do not want them to just list allusions.

> Teacher 1 No, exactly…and in some way I unfortunately think that many students stay there—that they point to [literary devices] and give examples of all sorts of devices but then that they do not, as we talked about before, they cannot...explain what it gives for effect. Why does this lyricist or author use precisely these concepts in this? What does it do with the poem and what does it do with the text?
>
> Teacher 3 I wonder how we can get away from that in teaching…it's probably because we are doing these lists [referring to a list of definitions of literary devices].
>
> Teacher 2 But it is very difficult for them, but I still talk about it—the effect of metaphor, the effect of allusions—but they must also get the feeling themselves, that is the thing, if you do not get the feeling, then it is very difficult. Then it becomes more mechanical.

To help their students connect craft with emotional impact, teachers sketched out several creative lessons. Group 4 imagined that students could compare the structures of the two poems and then explore "why we experience one as a little more playful and simple…and the other—why it gets heavier." Group 3 imagined a choral reading in which students attempted to "dramatize" some of a poem's structural choices. They imagined asking students, "Can you…in any way show a difference between the regular lines of text and what is italicized and what is in capital letters? How can you like…signal it in a reading?" These pedagogical approaches toward the distant stance echo the teachers' everyday feeling-based discussions of technique and effect.

When considering feeling-based lessons, teachers raised a concern that they did not touch upon in their book club condition: that students' emotions might lead them towards misinterpretation. Group 1, for instance, worried that because "mirror mirror" included children's rhymes, students would mistakenly perceive the poem to be a joyful one.

These concerns are reasonable but in their everyday condition, while teachers occasionally qualified their remarks with phrases like "I don't know" or "I guess," they did not express concern about misinterpreting the text or expressing incorrect feelings. Instead, they voiced their uncertainty, offered and revised interpretations, or expressed initial emotional responses and then reconsidered them over the course of discussion.

As lifelong readers with expertise in literary interpretation, it is perhaps not surprising that teachers did not express concern about incorrect interpretations. But we wonder what might happen in the classroom if teachers were to draw on and extend to students this everyday acceptance of uncertainty, willingness to follow interpretive hunches, and general rejection of the school-based paradigm of solving a poem or searching for one right answer.

4.3.3 Book club condition: playing with craft

Another aspect of teachers' distant stance in the book club condition involved playing the role of editor or tinkerer with the poems. Teachers toyed with potential rewrites—not necessarily to explore thematic understandings, but to reflect on the

poems as artistic texts. For example, Group 1 teachers imagined darkening the mood of "mirror mirror" by rewriting it in the style of another poet: "What an interesting thought, because if you had turned it up a bit like [18th century poet] Nordenflycht here, a little Hedvig Charlotta, then you would have had an even stronger blackness."

In Group 3, a teacher said she would enjoy "Therapy Piece" more if she could "remove that first feminist bit that I do not feel I need." Group 4 considered ways that the effects of "mirror mirror" might change if they removed the children's rhymes from the poem. One teacher asked, "Would you perceive it in a different way? I really like these intermixed [children's' rhymes] and that it makes you feel more, somehow… . It might have been a little heavier if you had removed it, and yet it is like the same message in some way."

In all these enactments of the distant stance, these lifelong readers assumed an authority that allowed them to imagine alternatives to the original text and play the role of creator as well as receiver. We were curious as to whether the teachers would create similar authority for their students.

4.3.4 Lesson plan condition: playing with craft

In the lesson plan condition, however, teachers generally did not imagine lessons in which students critiqued the poems or played with the poems' original language to create different effects. We found only one such instance; in Group 4, teachers imagined that students might change "Therapy Piece" to make it more readable: "[We could ask them] how could they change it…to make it easier to read for them? How could they sort of change it so that it would become easier to absorb?"

It may be that teachers felt constrained by students' lack of experience with texts; perhaps teachers felt that students did not have enough expertise to make aesthetic critiques or rewrite texts to create different effects. It is also possible that teachers were constrained by conventional school-based discourses in which the teacher and text—not the students—hold interpretive authority. In either case, we think this difference in personal and professional contexts acts as an argument for the value of inviting teachers' everyday practices into the classroom. If in their everyday distant stances, teachers enjoyed tinkering with language and style to explore moods and concepts, students might experience that same enjoyment in the classroom. Such lessons could provide opportunities for creative, text-based activities to support students' understanding of language and conception of themselves as authoritative readers and writers.

4.3.5 Keeping a distance between in- and out-of-school reading

Along with attention to teachers' stances in different conditions, we tracked teachers' explicit references to the personal condition while they were in the professional condition, and vice versa. Doing so shed light on teachers' perceptions of the distance between in- and out-of-school practices. For example, Group 1 first met in the

book club condition. When they began their discussion of the poems, one teacher made clear that formal analysis did not belong in the everyday sphere. She said, "I will not do an analysis of this. We'll spare ourselves; we're here in our spare time."

Groups 3 and 4 met for the first time in the lesson planning condition. In their case, they indicated that personal responses and questions might not be appropriate for lesson planning. For instance, a Group 2 teacher wanted to share his appreciation for the style of "Therapy Piece." Instead of simply voicing that appreciation, he said, "I don't mean to precede the book club discussion, but…what I appreciated about the poem is that it almost becomes a bit like *To the Lighthouse*, a Virginia Woolf-ish piece."

In Group 3, teachers expressed confusion about aspects of "Therapy Piece." However, they indicated that resolving that confusion was not appropriate for a lesson planning setting. Instead, they prefaced their questions about the poem with a nod to the book club condition, as when one teacher said, "One thing that I just—we'll have a book talk next time, I know, but I wonder anyway…who is the speaker?" Interestingly, when that same teacher returned a week later for the book club discussion, she asked if she could share a reflection: She said, "What is the big difference between having a book club and [a lesson planning session]? I think the book club is very similar to what we do in the classroom."

We would like to see more similarities between the everyday and the classroom. However, our analysis suggests that in many ways, teachers still perceive those two settings as distant from one another.

5. CONCLUSION

As educators, we hope that students will enjoy a close relationship with literature for the rest of their lives. We also recognize that the norms and expectations of school-based reading may push students away from such relationships. For decades, educators and education researchers have looked to students' literary funds of knowledge to disrupt those expectations and decrease the distance between everyday and school-based reading practices. In this study, we analyzed the everyday literary funds of knowledge of language arts teachers who were also lifelong readers. Our findings about their everyday stances towards literature—as compared to their school-based stances—have implications for practice and research.

One of the most salient findings is that in the book club condition, teachers enacted the close stance much more frequently than they did in the lesson planning condition. More specifically, they tended to focus on the poems' speakers not only as a way of making literal sense of the poems, but as a way of building psychological and social meaning. They empathized with speakers' personal and social dilemmas, critiqued speakers' judgment, and talked about them as though they were real people worth caring about. These findings underline the value of engaging with literature from a close stance as a means of simulating social experiences (Mar & Oatley, 2008), mind reading (Zunshine, 2006), wrestling with human dilemmas, developing

empathy, and constructing and reconstructing identity and community (Booth, 1983; Rosenblatt, 1938/1995).

Our findings also indicate that in the book club condition, teachers frequently used attention to the speaker in the close stance as a jumping-off point to productive enactment of other stances: thematic interpretation and personal connection in the middle stance and engaging with authorial craft in the distant stance. Our analysis suggests that even though standardized tests in places like Sweden and the U.S. tend to focus on theme and authorial craft, teachers can help students get to those interpretive places by beginning in the close stance. Similarly, our analysis indicates that even though many standards-based curricula do not emphasize readers' feeling-based responses to texts, teachers consistently drew on their funds of feeling as they discussed poems, and those feelings drove not just character evaluation and sympathy, but thematic interpretation and aesthetic critique.

Studies of teacher beliefs and epistemologies often call for teacher education programs to help teachers take a closer look at their own funds of knowledge (Gupta, 2006; Hedges, 2012; McDevitt & Kurihara, 2017). We obviously join that call. We hope that comparisons like those in this study help crystallize the value of teachers' everyday interpretive practices as pedagogical resources.

We also add a call for teachers, researchers, and teacher educators to take a closer look at the powerful ways that school-based discourses may distance teachers from their own funds of knowledge and everyday practices. Teachers in the lesson planning conditions identified authentic questions and instances of personal appreciation as appropriate for a book club discussion, but not necessarily for lesson planning. To our minds, these instances act as evidence for the constraining influences of school-based contexts on teachers' pedagogy. We hope that shining light on those influences, as well as on teachers' powerful and productive funds of knowledge, will bring both teachers and students closer to the literature they read and to each other.

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